SPEECH

OF THE

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—ON—

HIGHER EDUCATION,

Delivered in the Hall of the

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Mr. President and Gentlemen of the General Assembly:

I am glad to have the opportunity of speaking to this body, at this time, upon this great subject. I can almost go the length of a hearty Georgian, who said to me today, "You speak to the cleanest Legislature, in the cleanest capitol, of the cleanest commonwealth, of the cleanest union, on the cleanest continent of the cleanest planet in the universe." (Applause.)

I speak from a standpoint that may bring a phase of the subject before you, which, otherwise, might escape your attention: from the standpoint of one who presides over a religious institution. Mr. President, the church in the United States (meaning by that, all the churches), has a right to be heard upon this subject, and her opinions are much to be valued, for she may be regarded as an expert in higher education, however unable she may be to take care of the primary schools.

There are 365 colleges and universities in the United States, according to a recent report of the National Commissioner of Education. We have one for every day in the year. Of these 365 institutions, 278 belong to the churches of America; of the 65,000 college students of the United States, 50,000 are in church schools.* These colleges, gentlemen, do not ask of the state, appropriations or other help, but they do ask of the state that she will give them the protection of good government, and enact no legislation unfriendly to them. They think they have a right to ask this much. They know they serve the country well.

I cannot speak definitely of all of them, but I am sure you will pardon me if I speak definitely of the institution over which I have the honor to preside, and from which I was graduated. She graduated her first class in 1841, and except during the four years of the war when her boys were off at the front, she has graduated

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* The cause of higher education would go forward in the United States if no state appropriations were ever again made to it.

a class every year since that time, until at length she has graduated 1,000 Georgians. I do not think they have been worse citizens, or worse statesmen, or worse soldiers, or worse anything that it is good for men and citizens to be, because they learned science at a religious school. I do not think that L. Q. C. Lamar, Associate Justice of the United States, is any the worse judge tonight because on another night under the oak trees of Emory's campus, he found God as a personal Saviour, and thereafter continued the study of science under the inspiration of that religion. I do not think that the Hon. John T. Clark, whom all Georgians mourn today—who preached righteousness as a preacher, who stood up against a military commander and refused to bend the civil law to usurping military authority—I do not think he was any the worse judge because he learned science at Mercer's altars. (Applause)

The religious colleges have done well for the state. I observe that Emory college has graduated 53 college presidents and professors. It may serve to give you some comprehension of how much she has done on this line, to compare her work with other institutions. I wish I had the figures for all, but I have not. Up to 1875—I think it was that year Chancellor Tucker delivered an address in which he said the University of Georgia had graduated 30 presidents and professors of colleges. Emory has graduated 15 circuit judges, two judges of State Supreme courts, one judge of the Supreme Court of the United States, 15 congressmen, 2 bishops, 5 generals of the Confederate army and 10 foreign missionaries. She is doing this country good, and extending her influence bevond the seas. She is serving the state and it is costing the state nothing; she gives but asks nothing in return, save that she shall be protected by law, and not hindered by any unfriendly influence or legislation. Can the state, can anybody in the state, who really loves the state, whatever may be his theory of education, refuse to foster these religious institutions that do the work of higher education as well as any and cost the state nothing for the doing of it?

I have had some opportunity to observe the educational interests of Georgia, and I love the cause. I have been observing the work of Emory college and of the other colleges in Georgia since I was a boy; for when a college boy I wrote articles in the newspapers, pressing this cause of education. To this cause I have given mind and money since I came to manhood. You will pardon me for saying that I have not been able to accomplish a gross income for all the years of my life of as much as $15,000, but I have laid down $1,000 of it for the cause of higher education in Georgia. It cannot be said, therefore, that I have been an indiffernt observer of this great work and of the best method of accomplishing that which we all desire, the most and the best education for all the people. I beg you to believe me, as I address you tonight, to be the friend and advocate of higher education in the best sense of the word.

It was upon this question of higher education I was invited to speak to you, and I suppose you mean that I shall speak upon that question as it presents itself today, with the conditions in Georgia such as they are. We are not here to discuss this question as we might have discussed it had we been with the fathers away back in the latter part of the last century. The question is not what it was then. We are not here to discuss it as we may discuss it twenty years hence; the conditions will have

changed; our financial condition, our educational status, all that goes to shape our educational policy—all will have changed by then. But as we have it today, what is the best way of fostering higher education in Georgia? My opinion is, the best way to do this, is to appropriate every dollar that you have to appropriate to education, to the education of the common people—to our common schools. (Applause.)

Two theories of education exist in the minds of men; good men, honest men in Georgia to-day. One theory is, that we should begin at the top and reach downward; the other theory is that we should begin at the bottom and work upward. The first theory has had a long trial. It was begun before the close of the last century. In 1784, 40,000 acres of land were voted to establish a seminary of learning for higher education; 5,000 of these acres were lost by the treaty of Beaufort. The 35,000 remaining were sold mostly for notes of hand, secured by mortgage and personal security. They did not realize interest. The funds were incompetent for the work of the college which was in due time begun. The state came in and said to the trustees at their request, "If you want to subscribe for bank stocks and you cannot realize on these notes, bring them up, and I will furnish ready money to the amount of two-thirds the value of them, and will guarantee you 8 per cent. interest on your notes in perpetuity." So that has been continued through the years until upwards of $500,000 has been thus paid to the university. When a difficulty has arisen additional relief has been provided by the Legislature in one way or another; now a loan, now a gift for repairs, now one thing and now another, until I find by a recent publication of the Educational Bureau at Washington, our university has come to a point where according to its centennial catalogue, it owns property estimated as worth $663,000.00 and has an annual income of over $30,000. Has all this produced common schools? I think we are all familiar enough with the facts to know this method has not built up the common schools. Virginia tried the same policy with much the same result. The University of Virginia has had under its tuition 9,000 students, and it has made in the course of its history only about 500 teachers, according to a recent publication of the Bureau of Education at Washington, a publication entitled: "Thos. Jefferson and the University of Virginia." It has produced in that time about 2,000 lawyers, but they won't teach school. (Laughter.) This process does not make teachers, but does create a ruling class. Mr. Jefferson saw the difficulty, and so he wrote to his friend, Joseph Cabell, Jan. 13th, 1823. "Were it necessary to give up either the primaries or the university, I would rather abandon the latter, because it is safer to have the whole people respectably enlightened, than a few in a high state of science and the many in ignorance. This last is the most dangerous state in which a nation can be. The nations and the governments of Europe are so many proofs of it." Mr. Jefferson was right, and our experiment has confirmed the wisdom of his words.

We shall not be able to lift the common school from above, but by getting down under the common school we shall be able to lift it up, and all that is above it. We may lift in the middle and prize the upper part of our population higher and press the lower part lower, until there shall be a yawning chasm between them that will not be good for any of us. (Applause.) But if we work upon the common school, we will lift all together, for getting an education is a good deal like getting rich. It is the first

thousand dollars that costs the most labor and is the hardest to get; after that the next comes easier, and the next easier still, and the next easier still. I am sure of this by experience, for I have not yet secured the first thousand. (Laughter.) If you will give a boy the keys that unlock the vestibule to education, depend upon it, if he is fit to be initiated into the inner shrine he will find the pass word. grips and signals and secure admission to the higher degrees. Here was that able Chancellor of the University, Patrick Mell, a poor boy in Warren county.

DR. NUNNALLY:—Liberty county.

DR. CANDLER:—I thought it was Warren, so I saw it stated the other day. He got the beginning of an education and then worked his way to Amherst college. Down at Emory this last year there were fifty young men working their way through college. While I speak tonight they are all about in Georgia working to make their expenses for the next term; and I have thought if the angels who watched over the slumbering Jacob that first night from home, have not lost their sympathy for struggling boys, they are nearer tonight to those 50 boys, and others like them in Georgia, than to any other people between Tybee and Rabun Gap. (Great applause.)

The Indians have a legend that is not altogether a legend; it is also a parable. It is to the effect that a warrior slain by another imparts his strength in death to the hand that overcame him. It is so with a young man struggling for higher education. His difficulties help him; they give him education which books cannot give. They give him education of strength and courage and independence which can be acquired in no other way than by struggling and conquering. There are half a million children in Georgia between six and eighteen years old who need to have a chance to enter this struggle. If we shall send down to them through the common schools all the money we can spare, we shall stimulate these young lives to thoughtfulness. to thirst and hunger after learning. They will begin to work, friends will begin to help them and our colleges will be filled with students. But if, on the other hand, we give sparingly to them, and follow the old ante-bellum policy, that before the war was adopted all along the south Atlantic slope, we shall continue to have multitudes unlearned and a few taught at the expense of the many. If we ever have higher education in any great degree, it must be by helping primary education Who of us can be opposed to higher education? God bless every institution of learning in Georgia; the institution of the Baptists; the University of Georgia; Emory and that unborn University of the Presbyterians, but most of all may the kind Father in Heaven send the spirit to our people to give help to the 500,000 children in the country who most need it! (Applause.)

Mr. President do we comprehend how many of these children there are, and who they are? There are 560,281 in Georgia. Where do they live? In your cities? No, they are not there; 490,270 do not live in cities. It is worse than that, 465,738 of Georgia children live outside of all the incorporated cities, towns and villages in the state. They do not have the stimulation of the passing train; they do not have the stimulation of the multitude going to and fro; they do not have the inspiration of commerce. Living in the country untaught, poor, how sadly they need help! Among them are some of the brightest and best minds, among them there are some like Patrick Mell, Alexander H. Stephens, and this start which we ought to give them would bring them up to our colleges, to our uni-

versities, but they can never get that start of themselves. Why? For this reason: you cannot get teachers for them. Have we not graduated teachers? Yes. Why don't they teach? I answer, the rewards in other lines of life are so much greater than the rewards of teaching they cannot afford to teach. They prefer to follow the more profitable lines. I wish they and all of us were more self-denying and more patriotic, but men are as we find them. They will not teach without fair compensation, without that which gives them permanent support. I take it that graduates of our university, and our other colleges, are not worse than others, that they are good men, that they love Georgia, but not many turn to teaching. We have graduated enough, yet do you know it is a fact that we have not graduated men willing to bear the burdens of even the colleges yet. I think I am correct when I say that our State University which has just celebrated its 100th anniversary, (a little prematurely, perhaps, for I believe the first class graduated in 1804; but she has just celebrated some kind of centennial,) has never found a chancellor among its own alumni. Its graduates are men of ability, why have they forsaken the walks of teaching? Why turn aside elsewhere? Just because you do not make it profitable enough to teach, but other things are profitable; that is why. That is a hard saying may be, but that is simple truth. If we put the money down which the common people have not, and which they are not likely to have for awhile, we will find teachers. Georgia has educated men but the means to secure them as teachers has not been put down by the people.

There are 460,000 children who do not live in any town, much less a county town. You can not reach them by putting money down in ten congressional districts. They could not get to these schools. Schools for them must be at their doors. One must be in each militia district, and on "this side of the creek" to all of them. If on the other side they will never get across. (Laughter.) And to do all this, means money, and a very great deal of money, money enough to make these schools run eight months in the year; for you must remember that a teacher does not eat, sleep and wear clothes three months only. The other nine months of the year he goes on sleeping and wearing clothes and eating, and you must make provision for his year's support.

Building up the common schools is the shortest route to higher education in Georgia. If our colleges are waning at all, it is for the lack of the material which the common schools should supply. The university and all the colleges, so far as I know, have had to do sub-freshman work. But now high schools are springing up. There is a school at Barnesville, Gordon Institute, a splendid training school. There is still another at Wrightsville, and one north of the Blue Ridge, Young Harris Institute; there is an excellent school at Cave Spring, and another at Edgewood. Some of the smaller towns, Newnan, Cartersville and West Point, and others, are establishing good training schools. When these schools have done all they can for their pupils we have the University already in possession of property estimated at over half a million of dollars, and Emory and Mercer for their higher education. Below them, however, we must have the common schools, or these high schools can do nothing. The common school will feed the high schools, and the high schools will feed the colleges. That will make the colleges at Athens and Oxford and Macon flourish, for they will be sup-

plied with the prepared material that colleges must have before they can be of any service to the country.

Again, suppose you continue the old plan, and that, as has never been the case, you should be able to graduate by means of larger appropriations to higher education many teachers; you cannot get these teachers through college before this generation of country children will have gone beyond school age. The school age of a child lasts for a few years only. Georgia's half million children cannot wait for teachers to be made; they are getting older every day, every night; while they wake and while they sleep they are getting older, and I tell you tonight there are 460,000 in the country, away from the towns, away from the cities, our "country children," as we say—I tell you there are 460,000 of them who will very soon be past your teaching, or anybody else's teaching. If you are to do anything for them, you are to do it quickly. If we shall rob them of their chance, we will have done them an irreparable injury, one such as the summer would suffer in the blight of the spring. It is a chance that comes but once; and if the common schools shall continue inefficient for four or five years until we can, in the colleges, prepare teachers who will work for next to no pay—if, indeed, we can ever prepare such—this generation of children will be gone past teaching.

Other things, it seems to me, in Georgia can wait, but not this. I am not sure but that we can wait to have some more railroads built. I think we can wait to get rich; the good old Book has some wise suggestions about those who make haste to get rich. But our children can wait no longer for good common schools. They must have them now or never.

I think we are less alarmed in the United States when we ruin a crop of children than when we lose a crop of cotton or barley. What must become of a 460,000 crop of children down yonder in the country unless something is done.? If it was 460,000 colts, I think our friends of the Farmers' Alliance would have something to say about it.* If it was 460,000 sheep that were being slain by the dogs, that dog-law which is before you would stand a better chance of passage. (Laughter.) But it is 460,000 children, and we say "if they can get to school it is all right, and if not it is still all right." We must not waste children that way. At last this world is made for people, and not people for this world. God did not put us down here to keep things from being lonesome, but he made things for us, and the cattle on a thousand hills, and our harvest fields and our railroads are absolutely nothing until we have turned them into blessings to our children. Remember this, and remember that down yonder among the poor are 460,000 of this young crop of children that need helping and not wasting. There is where the money of the state should go today. Our university and colleges will in their present condition, without additional appropriations, work up all the material the common schools and academies are likely to supply. And if they must have special help let our rich men supply them for awhile until the state has done for the common schools all that is needed.

Mr. President, have you thought about the duty of our rich men to our colleges? They do not give enough for higher education. The churches look too much to what they call "financiering." I shall be sorry whenever I see the trustees of Emory college go to "financiering." There is no way to financier a church college into plenty of money except a little process that hangs about six inches in length, if your pocket don't hang too low. (Laughter.)

*Since these words were uttered the Alliance has spoken with no uncertain sound.

Our people don't give to the state college as they ought. Jefferson said, and he was not disappointed, that the benefactions to the University of Virginia would, by and by, overtop all the state could or would spare to it, and his word has come true. I look at this pamphlet [holding up a pamphlet on the University of Virginia,] recently prepared, and I find since 1865 private benefactions to the Uiversity of Virginia have run to $891,000. What have we done in Georgia? Some have waited upon foreign efforts; some have financiered and have looked somewhere else than to going into their pockets, and doing by voluntary benevolence that which needs to be done for our colleges and university. We have been depending upon something else than giving. We need a revolution at this point; we need preaching upon it, and writing upon it, and talking upon it, and may be, a little wholesome, good humored quarreling upon it.

I was told to-day that, up to this time, no alumnus of the University of Georgia, many of whom have grown rich by means of the culture acquired there, has ever made a gift to the University notable enough to get into history. It is time we had done better. We have begun to do something for Emory. Mr. Roberts, the Financial Secretary of the College, and myself have worried the Methodists until we have got them to give us about $25,000 during the past year, and they will have to give us $25,000 more between this and Christmas year, or be the worst bothered folks in this country. (Laughter.) I worry them, and tease them, and pray for them, and cry over them, and work with them, and will continue to do so until they do something for Emory worthy of themselves. And I hope my good friend the Chancellor, will worry the graduates and the friends of the University until they divide their wealth with it. If he gets them aroused, their spirit may become contageous and the Methodists may catch it. And I trust that Dr. Nunnally will worry the Baptists in behalf of Mercer. If he will get after the Baptists on this line we Methodists will have peace for awhile. Now we can't build a church that the Baptists don't turn a creek down that way and come bothering us. (Great laughter.) If you will annoy and bother them they will do something for Mercer and forget to quarrel with the Methodists.

DR. NUNNALLY:—They are not having any rest.

DR. CANDLER:—That is right. Shake them up. They cannot fall from grace; what is the use of their resting. (Tumultuous laughter and applause.)

Our people yonder in the country are poor, but many of our people in the cities have grown wealthy. They sometimes cry "hard times," but these are not hard times. These are the best times I ever saw, and I have seen lots of them. (Laughter.) At any rate our rich people have means abundant to take care of the higher education, at least for awhile, until the State has given us common schools for eight months in the year, which is much more urgent. This great work will tax every resource of the State, and these resources ought to be taxed until there is an eight months school within reach of every child that is born in Georgia. (Applause.)

Suppose, Mr. President, you begin to make schools, not for all the people in every neighborhood, but in the county towns, or other favored localities. What will be the result? You will make those towns richer and the country neighborhoods poorer; for by and by Squire Jones, who lives in the country, and who happens

to be a little better off than the rest of the neighborhood, will say: "Look here, I am tired of working for you 'poor white trash.' I am going to move off and leave you. You have no efficient school. I am going to town, where I can educate my children." He and all his sort will go. You will then have congestion in the towns and atrophy in the country. The people who least need schools will flock to town, and they who need them most will be left behind. This will blight our agriculture as well as damage our people. And remember that Georgia must always be an agricultural state. But if the state puts a good school in every neighborhood, you will find that one of the great temptations for moving to town will have been removed, and you will hear the country people say, "We will stay here, educate our children in the schools that the state has provided, live at home and be happy." Such of their boys as have developed a zeal for learning will go to the high schools, and when a boy has gone through some one of our good training schools, if he has pluck, he can go to the college, and if he has no pluck, he would do no good if he went through a thousand colleges. (Applause.) You will then find young men at Athens, at Oxford, and at Mercer toiling and struggling, and they will succeed and be all the better for their struggles, just like that noble old Roman, Junius Hillyer, succeeded, and Alexander H. Stephens succeeded, and Patrick Mell succeeded. Then colleges will flourish; then country schools will flourish; and when we have flourishing country schools, a prosperous University, and splendid colleges, what more in the line of education will we need?

Mr. President, I am not so old, and you are not so far away from youth, that we are free from its enthusiasm. These old men on a fourth of July may sometimes talk about Georgia as if they really meant it, when they are in fact cold blooded; but you and I are too young to talk of Georgia without fervor. Every thought of the old state stirs us, and I tell you when this thought comes to me of what the state can do if she will build up her common schools my emotions are unspeakable. I see a splendid prospect before her, not a prospect like the history behind us, with a multitude of unlearned, and a few taught with crippled common schools, with universities and colleges none too well filled; but a splendid State, rich in all that goes to make a state great and powerful, earnest in her commerce, and honest with all, independent in her manhood, and prosperous in every part; with a sky above her as fair as Italias; with an earth beneath her as beautiful as the valley of Sharon; above her and all about her every prospect pleasing and none of her people vile. I believe if this Legislature will deliver all its strength and every dollar that the state can spare to help our 460,000 country children down yonder, there is before Georgia a future as fair as the Eden which lingers as a golden age in the memory of mankind, cloudless as the heaven which fills the hopes of the race. (Long and tumultuous applause.)