

SENATUS ACADEMICUS.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 11.

While the report of the Trustees, already published, was under consideration, Judge Clayton, of Clark, Mr. Prince, of Bibb, and Mr. Nesbit, of Morgan, addressed the Senatus Academicus, at length, explaining and enforcing its topics.

SPEECH OF JUDGE CLAYTON.

Mr. President—It is doubtless expected by the Senatus Academicus, that some member of the Board of Trustees will at large explain the objects of the Report just submitted to their consideration. I ask the indulgence and patient attention of this body, while I attempt that delicate task, and I would beg to commence the subject with a short history of the University, from its endowment to the present time. The objects of a work so vitally important, are best understood by reference to the sentiments which lie at its broad foundation, and these are to be found in the preamble to the charter of the University. These generous and noble motives, expressed in a language of rare composition and peculiar force, are known and felt but by few, because, they are concealed in the rubbish of statutes entirely out of the field of literary taste and enquiry. It is the production of one of the ablest and most useful public servants of which Georgia can boast; it is none other than the venerable Abraham Baldwin. I ask the permission of the Board to read this preamble.

"As it is the distinguishing happiness of free governments that civil order should be the result of choice and not necessity, and the common wishes of the people become the laws of the land, their public prosperity, and even existence, very much depends upon suitably forming the minds and morals of their citizens. When the minds of the people in general are viciously disposed and unprincipled, and their conduct disorderly, a free government will be attended with greater confusions and evils more horrid than the wild uncultivated state of nature. It can only be happy where the public principles and opinions are properly directed, and their manners regulated. This is an influence beyond the stretch of laws and punishments, and can be claimed only by religion and education. It should therefore be among the first objects of those who wish well to the national prosperity, to encourage and support the principles of religion and morality, and early to place the youth under the forming hand of society, that by instruction they may be moulded to the love of virtue and good order. Sending them abroad to other countries for their education will not answer these purposes, is too humiliating an acknowledgement of the ignorance or inferiority of our own, and will always be the cause of so great foreign attachments, that upon principles of policy it is inadmissible."

"This country, in the times of our common danger and distress, found such security in the principles and abilities which wise regulations had before established in the minds of our countrymen, that our present happiness,

med to the alluring prospects, should con-
spire to make us feel ourselves under the
strongest obligation to "orn the youth, the re-
surg hope of our land, to render the like glo-
rious and essential services to our country."

It will be found, Mr. President, by the re-
cord just submitted, that in the year 1784,
our forefathers, actuated by a spirit of bene-
volence, unparalleled, for the infancy of the
country, early felt the urgency of the claims of
education upon a young but growing society,
and impelled by a sense of duty, from the active
influence of that spirit, hastened to make
such provisions for the object, as might se-
cure to the increasing population of the coun-
try, all those rich blessings that are ever
flowing from intellectual illumination. It is
peculiarly important to fix the attention
strongly upon the zeal and generosity of
those, on this interesting subject, who have
gone before us—a people from whom we
could expect but little, because they had but
little to give; because they lived at a time
when the country was almost a wilderness, and
certainly a frontier on every side but one, and
without the tenth part of the advantages
which we enjoy, either from religion, refine-
ment, wealth, or intelligence. For this pur-
pose, I would first refer the Board to an act
of the Legislature, passed in the same year
with that of the charter granting to the Uni-
versity twenty thousand acres of land in each
of the several counties, in a territory then
but lately acquired from the Indians. A most
noble and liberal donation, especially when
it is considered to have sprung from an
infant state, wanting almost every thing
necessary to the physical and moral sup-
port of government. This land, from
some unaccountable neglect, was never all
surveyed and granted to the University.
It was to have been allotted in five thou-
sand acre tracts, and accordingly we receiv-
ed a grant for five thousand acres in the
County of Hancock, the same in Greene, the
same in Jackson, ten thousand in Oglethorpe,
and the same in Franklin. This generous boun-
ty, however, from the infancy of the coun-
try, from the great quantity of waste land,
easily acquired from the state, by emigrants
and others, under what was usually termed
head rights, remained long unproductive, and
indeed for many years produced but little
more than paid for the improvement of the
lands. Besides, this donation was most un-
fortunately impaired by causes entirely be-
yond the power of the trustees to control.—
The state of Georgia had a dispute with our
sister state, South Carolina, on the subject
of territory, the latter claiming lands south
of the Altamaha, and the former asserting
boundary to the Keowee, the most northern
branch of the Savannah river. This dispute,
by a convention at Beaufort, resulted in a
relinquishment on the part of South Caroli-
na of her claim on the Altamaha, and a ses-
sion on the part of Georgia of all the lands
north of Tugaloo river. By this arrangement
the University lost ten thousand acres of its
land, which happened to be situated between
the Tugaloo and Keowee rivers. Again, in
the very act, which bestowed the lands on the
College, there was a reserve of all the terri-
tory between the North and South forks of
the Oconee river, for the term of one year,
to be appropriated, as the courts afterwards
determined, *exclusively* to the soldiers and
seamen of the revolution,—five thousand acres
of the Universitys land was unhappily survey-
ed within this reserve, and consequently lost.
This reduced the original gift down to 20,000
acres, five thousand of which, in the county
of Franklin, as some gentlemen on this floor
well know, was very poor and worth but lit-
tle.

In the year eighteen hundred, when the
trustees believed the time had arrived to carry
into effect the benevolent designs of the foun-
ders of the College, when the demands of
a rapidly growing country called aloud for
the fulfilment of the great purpose so laudi-
dibly proposed by the Charter, they resolved
no longer to delay a work, laid in such gene-
rous affections and promising such lasting
good. But even then they were without the
active resources calculated to overcome the
first great want that presented itself in the
very beginning of their operations—I mean
a College Edifice. The rental of the lands
had not yielded more than a fourth part of
what was indispensably necessary for this
object, they were therefore compelled to part
with another tract of their lands, the Han-
cock property, the most valuable of what re-
mained, and which left but the scanty endow-
ment of fifteen thousand acres. Under these
circumstances, the College commenced its op-
erations; with a most unprofitable income
it struggled many years, after giving most
fearful signs of dissolution; but it has now
gone through, it is to be hoped, its greatest
tribulation, and is this day presented to this
honorable body for that parental aid which
will enable us to realize the inestimable bless-
ings intended by its founders, those great
and good men who have gone hence and left
it as an inheritance worthy of all regard and
above all price.

That the present age may still further wit-
ness and admire the anxious solicitude of
those who have gone before us, on the subject
of education, and who lived at a period far
less auspicious than the present for its encourage-
ment, permit me to read the following
clause of the constitution adopted in the year
ninety eight.—"The arts and sciences *shall* be
promoted in one or more Seminaries of learn-
ing, and the legislature *shall*, as soon as con-
veniently may be, give such *further donations*
and *privileges*, to those *already* established as
may be necessary to secure the objects of
their institution; and it *shall be the duty* of
the General Assembly, at their next session,
to provide effectual measures for the improve-
ment and permanent security of the *funds* and
endowments of such institutions."

From the year then, Mr. President, '84,
down to the year '98, it will be perceived
what was the estimate placed by the first set-
tlers of this state upon the interesting subject
of education, & what their unceasing anxiety
to establish for themselves and perpetuate to
their posterity, its unspeakable blessings.—
What are the reflections naturally inspired
by the contemplation of these facts, render-
ed venerable by every consideration which
their age, the difficulty of the times, and the
political penury of their authors, can bestow.
Are we prepared, at this day, when the march
of science has so peculiarly advanced the
prosperity of man, and elevated his charac-
ter beyond all former example, to recede
from those proud and animating sentiments so
long indulged and so often expressed by the
founders of this government? Shall this
state, one among the first, the wealthiest and
most patriotic in the Union, evince to the
world that it has less use for knowledge, less
taste for literature, and less regard for the

moral character of her citizens, than did our ancestors in the earlier and ruder settlement of the country? Shall fifty years experience profit us nothing, add nothing to the refinement of our character, the improvement of our morals, the enlargement of our judgement, the liberality of our sentiments, and the exaltation of our pride? Nay, are we prepared to let the records of our legislation, when contrasted with former times, testify, that we have renounced those high-minded feelings cherished by the sages of old, and are no longer willing to promote and continue the work, so nobly begun by them, and which is such an imperishable monument of their wisdom and virtue? I trust not, indeed, Mr. President, I will not believe it. I know, sir, that against learning, in every country, there has been an unnatural jealousy, and of this hateful passion, the University of Georgia has been doomed to meet more than its full share. It has been considered only as intended for the education of the wealthy, and that its advantages are placed far beyond the reach of the poor. This was never its design, this is not the fact. Though it may apparently seem to result in such a consequence in reference to individuals, it is not true in regard to principle or effect. It requires but a single effort of the intellect to perceive the usefulness of such an institution to every class of society. We are too apt to consider education in relation only to its immediate action on those who are its personal subjects. We seem to value nothing but the private advantages to be derived from its pursuit; never once contemplating its great influence upon the moral condition of a people. We never view it in connection with the reputation of the government, the wisdom of its institutions, the purity of its laws, the refinement of society, the advancement of the useful arts, and the lofty character of the citizen. These are considerations in which we seem to take no pride, unless we meet with some severe reproach from abroad, for our want of information, the boorishness of our manners, or the great declension of our morals. Then all classes feel the smart. There is no man, rich or poor, who does not desire to have his country respectable for its knowledge, and renowned for its civilization, and surely there is no man, rich or poor, who is so weak as to believe that these desirable objects can be attained without institutions of learning, and those of the very highest order.

But this, though a purpose of high estimation, is but a limited effect of intellectual cultivation. Besides its direct advantage upon the councils of the state, upon the learned professions of society, rendered so necessary by the infirmities of both body and mind, of what avail are all our generous efforts in the erection of free schools and academies, and the dissemination of practical science, without teachers? From whence are they to come? From abroad? With habits and customs different from our own, principles unsuited to the genius and spirit of our government? Forbid it interest, forbid it pride. Then, where are they to be educated? I need not wait for the answer, it is upon every man's mind. We should not be jealous of the University because the sons of wealthy men are educated there; let us entertain more magnanimity, and let us remember that wealth can purchase education any where; if we had not a college in the state, it would seek that great boon at some other place, and carry from our own country the very resources which it should be our care to keep within its bosom, besides, returning upon us the youths of the country, perhaps, filled with principles hostile to the best interests of the state. Time would fail me to pursue the multiplied channels through which the most essential benefits flow to every citizen, from a well regulated University, and I will not suffer myself to imagine that there is any folly so great as that, which would destroy a general benefit, because, to some, that benefit is relative and remote. Thousands, Mr. President, may drink at some distant point of the stream, and be well satisfied, who may never be permitted to shake their thirst at the cool.

We constitute one of a sisterhood of States, all laudably ambitious to excel in every thing which will ameliorate the condition of the people. In all the great purposes of Internal Improvement, Education and Domestic Manufactures, there is rivalry between them and a strong continued effort to produce some happy consequence upon the state of society. Shall we decline to enter the lists of such a grand and spirited contest? Already we have spent our thousands on subjects of physical improvement, eager to attain the wealth of Commerce and the luxuries which follow in its train, and yet we hang and linger in the execution of an infinitely more important good, the furnishing the necessary and more wholesome supplies of the mind. Shall we strive to be independent of other countries for food and raiment, and yet servilely beg or buy the provisions of the intellect? Are we prepared to say that all which has hitherto been done has profited nothing, nay worse than useless, and that with one wide sweep the whole structure shall be buried in ruin? This must be the case, if we do not begin with generous aid what has been so well begun.

The Report on your table has two objects in view: the first, to institute two additional Professorships in the College, and to ask the means for their support; the other to add certain necessary buildings to the College establishment. The former requests but twenty one hundred dollars for its complete success; and with a State of such vast resources, possessing a treasury of two millions of dollars, and appropriating its tens of thousands to commerce and navigation, withheld from the greater object of Science the sum of twenty one hundred dollars?—As to the latter, the good sense of this Board must determine upon the measure of its liberality; I leave that part of the subject to their sound discretion.

It has been the misfortune of the Board of Trustees too long to be viewed in the character of graceless mendicants, supplicating the Legislature in their own behalf. This is an unhappy mistake; unhappy, because it has occasioned the rejection of many a just demand in favor of the College. They have, they can have no personal interests to serve. They occupy a thankless station: nothing but a strong desire to sustain the cause of learning, and to promote the welfare of the "rising hopes of the State," could keep them for a moment connected with such an unprofitable trust. We are truly, as stated by the report, nothing but the representatives of the people, in this the farthest portion of their interest, and as it is made

our bounden duty by law, to represent to
body the honest condition of their country
they should not for one moment hesitate
respectfully, but firmly, to proceed for-
ward to the discharge of that high re-
sponsibility. Precisely in this temper and
the report on your table been offered to
honorable body.