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on the arts would have returned a hundredfold reward. Indeed
it may be safely asserted that many colleges of the present day,
exercise no salutary influence beyond the studies of divinity,
physic, and law, and the poor farmer, and mechanic, are left to
puzzle out, the little they may know without their aid.

Again, when any work fell from the hands of the learned of
former days, their subjects were often dressed in terms derived
from dead languages, and technicalities incomprehensible to the
humble reader. Difficult subjects were treated with still more
difficult words, and ideas were expressed far too great for
an empty head to contain. But a new and better day has dawn-
ed upon mankind, and if it ever was the object of the learned to
withhold their knowledge from the humble orders of society, it
has now become the aim of many to impart the precious gift.

Let it not be supposed that I would attempt to throw a sha-
dow upon the motives of those to whom we are so much indebted,
and from whose labours we have received rich supplies of infor-
mation. No, they acted in accordance with the prejudices of
their times, and the monuments of learning they have erected for
themselves will never decay. In England much talent and la-
bor have been devoted to discover the best system of education
for youth, and the names of Bell and Lancaster will long be re-
membered, as advocates for the general instruction of the poor.

The system of education in Scotland has been remarkably
successful, and in the Edinburgh College, lectures are now de-
livered in all the physical sciences. Germany and Prussia have
also plans by which general instruction is diffused among all
ranks of society. Many of us can remember thirty years ago,
when a boy was trained to be a scholar by the use of Dilworth's
spelling book, and the catechism of the assembly of divines.—
Now there is an abundance of books so admirably fitted to the
infant mind, that the lesson is rendered playful, and pleasing.—
Now young urchins not ten years old, dare to dispute on astron-
omical subjects, and the child is taught geography.

But the more immediate object before us this evening is to
consider the means of transferring the useful and practical know-
ledge contained even in the highest branches of literature, and
science, to mechanics and all those who by their daily avocations
are capable of carrying into effect those principles which will
improve the various productions of their industry. And cer-
tainly an object so benevolent, and important, is worthy the place
it has found in the heart of every member of this Institute, and
the largest and most respectable body ever associated for a si-
milar purpose in British America. Here uninfluenced by those