

formed under a few simple regulations, by paying one dollar each, will purchase the means of much knowledge and information. These few books in a neighborhood as joint stock, and read by the whole in rotation, and conversed on when together, will at once create a spirit of inquiry that will rapidly extend its influence and become important in leading youth of both sexes to thirst after knowledge.

There is a certain point at which the minds of youth must arrive in their progress in literary pursuits, before their views are sufficiently expanded to thirst after learning. When they arrive at that point, unless it be some dull and indolent subject, the difficulty is over; there is no occasion for drilling or compulsion; give them the means of improvement and the work goes on of its own accord.

You will not mistake me, my friends; I am not expecting to make all your sons and daughters professional men or women, who will shine in the literary world as authors, &c. I want you to qualify them by a decent and respectable education to become respectable members of Society, understanding well the common and necessary method of transacting their common business, to read and understand the common and current news and politics of the day, and above all the Sacred Scriptures, with taste enough to be desirous of employing a portion of that leisure which almost all persons employed in agricultural or mechanical pursuits have, in the cultivation of their minds. How much more respectable and useful it would look, for a society of young men to be employed in reading a portion of the history of their country, studying its geography, or any other branch of common literary pursuit, of a long winter evening, than passing their time perhaps at the tavern, at a game of hazard, or any other worse than useless employment. The employment and exercise of the mind, my friends, at intervals of rest and refreshment of the body, is the surest and most effectual method of giving full effect to that rest and refreshment. Thus a young man who is employed in husbandry, while resting himself and his beasts in the middle of a long summer's day, by taking a book and reading for two hours, or as the case may be, will rise to his labor with more spirit and energy, and better qualified to pursue his business, than if he had lounged two hours on a bed of down; and the ideas he has collected will afford an agreeable reflection while plodding after his plough. I can assure you that I have been acquainted with many valuable men, who have had no education only at a common school, and what they have derived from books in the casual intervals of a busy life employed in agricultural pursuits, who would have done honor to the senate house, or almost any other public situation.

In pursuing this subject it cannot but be obvious that a good common education is absolutely necessary for every person in society, as a qualification to exercise with judgment his rights as a freeman. Living under a government where we are allowed the elective franchise, it is necessary to qualify us to judge of the conduct of public men and public measures; whether those measures are the best calculated for the interest of the country or not. Because in every free government, founded on principles and laws, whether depending on written constitutions or on customs and rules long established; whether the administration of the government be vested in a king, a president, a governor, or by whatever name he be called, public opinion must and ever will give such an impulse to its operations, as no oth-