

and should be administered to large numbers of them together, was long accounted unpropitious to the diffusion of knowledge among them. But the genius of benevolence has recently discovered, in these very circumstances, a principle peculiarly promotive of the efficacy and the best effects of education. It may be hoped that this genius in alliance with the true interests of democracy will discern and exemplify (as no government is more fitted than a democratical one to do) the advantage of rendering the acquisition of the elements of education legally compulsory on every citizen of the commonwealth. "Knowledge," said the illustrious Washington, in his first address to congress as president of the United States, "is in every country the surest basis of public happiness. In one in which the measures of government receive their impressions so immediately from the sense of the community as in ours, it is proportionably essential."

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NOTE XXXIV. Page 559.

A good deal of irritation was excited in America, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, by a discussion that took place in parliament with regard to a project for the employment of felons in the royal dock-yards of England. A bill for this purpose was passed by the House of Commons, but rejected by the House of Lords, as tending to discredit his Majesty's service in the dock-yards. This was commented on with just displeasure by an American journalist, of whose lucubrations some specimens have been preserved in Smith's *History of New York*. By making felony a passport to the advantages of an establishment in America, says this writer, the number of criminals is multiplied in England; and the misery of the industrious poor is aggravated by the discredit attached to the only certain means of improving their condition. He maintains that this policy is at once mischievous and insulting to the colonial settlements; and that it would be much less injurious, and not more unjust, to burden them with the support of all the decrepit or lunatic paupers in England. "There are thousands of honest men," he continues, "laboring in Europe at fourpence a day, starving in spite of all their efforts, a dead weight to the respective parishes to which they belong; who, without any other qualifications than common sense, health, and strength, might accumulate estates among us, as many have done already. These, and not the felons, are the men that should be sent over for the better peopling the plantations."

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NOTE XXXV. Page 560.

FROM the time when one of the earliest assemblies of North Carolina prohibited the inhabitants of that province from accepting commissions to sue for debts due to foreigners, down to the present day, the North Americans have been charged with deficiency of strict and honorable justice in their commercial policy, especially with regard to the interests of creditors and payment of debts. To a certain extent, the reproach is doubtless well founded. But those who have endeavoured to account for it, by supposing that the commercial morality of the Americans was tainted by the frauds incident to the Indian trade, have assigned neither the most honorable nor the most ample and satisfactory explanation, — which may be derived, I think, partly from the circumstances mentioned in the text, and partly from the popular sources and consequent bias of American legislation. The majority of every people are debtors, or at least more akin to the condition of debtors than of creditors; and hence, when the majority rules, the