The unusually large number of original communications in this number, leaves no room for editorial matter and little for the usual educational selections. But no doubt the reader will be satisfied with the number, as it is. We are proud to present it as a sample of what the teachers and educators of the State can do, even under the existing excitement, which seems to derange almost every other business, and especially all literary enterprises that do not tend in the warlike direction. In this point of view, the contributions of our friends are doubly welcome;—welcome as aid to ourselves, and even more so, as indicative of their devotion to the good cause, throughout all changes and under every trial.

The next number of this Journal will, as usual in September, contain a full account of the proceedings of the annual meeting of the State Teachers' Association, this year to be held at Lewisburg. Already it promises to be a full and interesting assemblage.

We ask the attentive perusal by all County Superintendents and Teachers, of the table under the official head, showing the number of Teachers examined during the past year, and the lowest grade of Provisional certificates issued in each county,—with the lowest grade of qualification to be recognized during the current year. If sustained in this movement to gradually but steadily elevate the standard of professional qualification amongst Teachers, we shall hope to see, in a very few years, an entire and most beneficial change in this matter.

Educational Departments: A few newspapers are again opening their columns to school affairs. This is a good sign. The Juniata Democrat at Mifflintown is of the number, and its views are right. Its educational column is to be mostly original and mainly on local topics. The teachers of the counties should support all such movements in their favor.

Home Events: The war has so completely engaged public attention, that we have not been able to glean even a column of educational events for the Journal. Nothing is transpiring in school affairs, so far as the newspapers tell, except the usual meetings of candidates for examination by the County Superintendents. We are glad to see that fuller notice is given, and more precise rules adopted for these meetings, than heretofore, and that the prospect for a full supply of teachers for the schools, as well qualified, at least, as those in charge of them last year, is probable;—notwithstanding the fears entertained a short time ago. There will be no doubt on this head, if Directors do their whole duty, and keep up the salaries of the teachers and the terms of the schools.
THOUGHTS ON COMMON SCHOOLS.—NO. 2.
Their National Importance.

"Let me write the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws," is a very well-put half-truth; though at a time like the present, when patriotic impulses are fired by "The Star-Spangled Banner," "Hail Columbia," and other national airs, it would seem to be a whole truth. Yet, like all stimulants, patriotic songs are intermittent in their influence;—at one time seeming to give sole guidance to the popular thought and will,—at another hardly producing a ripple on the surface of the common mind. Music, however inspiring and effective, is an evanescent influence; and, to mould a nation's character it requires a steady, pressing, controlling force which may act as a guide, yet form a well established habit for the common people. This simple statement naturally suggests the Common School, as a universal educational agency,—exerting as it does a breadth and permanence of influence which no other human instrumentality can command.

It is only repeating a truism to say, that people will be what they are educated to be,—that as a general fact, the course, character, influence, and destiny of every individual are determined by the educational circumstances of his youthful years. "Poets are born, not made;"—and, doubtless most persons are naturally possessed of a peculiar aptitude for some special work, if they could only discover it; but the truth still remains, that nearly all are what their education qualifies them to be,—not merely in their vocation, their position in society, but in their actual character and influence. In a country like ours, where every citizen theoretically holds in his hands the nation's sovereignty equally with any other citizen; where the laws, social customs, literature and religious culture, depend so immediately upon the intellectual and moral development of the masses; where the popular voice acts upon the ruling power more distinctly and effectively than in any other land,—it must be of momentous importance to have the primary, forming education of future citizens as thorough, judicious, and full as possible. The stability and excellence of our republican institutions depend mainly upon three personal characteristics, which all Americans should possess, and which good Common Schools are admirably adapted to promote, if not to create:—

1. Intelligence. It needs no argument to prove that, as a general fact, the wisest, most intelligent men are the best citizens. It is so inevitable a necessity that it would be folly to argue it. On the other hand, it needs little vision to see that the one grand agency for the diffusion of general intelligence among all classes, especially among the poor and unambitious, must be the Common School. The College, the Academy, and the private school are not necessarily exclusive in their benefits, but to a certain extent they are so: the children of wealth can enjoy the special advantages which they offer, while the sons and daughters of poverty must stand without.

For these, and for many of what may be termed the middle class of society, the Common School is the only source of instruction; from it they gain whatever of mental discipline, habits of thoughtful study, and literary taste they possess. The University and the Seminary stand in the far distance, sometimes coveted, not unfrequently hated as haughty, unsympathizing; but the Common School, coming down to the comprehension of the weakest, imparting instruction suited to the most limited capacity, extending its benefits to all alike,—must soon or late win the confidence and attract the affections of that large class, whose intelligence is mostly limited to its teachings, and whose character as citizens is greatly determined by its influence. Any one but slightly acquainted with political operations,—the intrigues and manoeuvres of demagogues, knows how easy a prey to deception, to flattery, to appetite, the ignorant always are; now, in thousands upon thousands of instances, a man's vote, which ought to be the intelligent, conscientious expression of a freeman's will, is purchased by unscrupulous politicians for less than "a mess of pottage." This is one of the weakest points in our republican institutions,—that allowing nearly every man to vote, we have so insufficient a safeguard against the machinations of unprincipled, selfish men who seek to cajole the unthinking, easily prejudiced to be mere tools for the accomplishment of their base designs. It is not imperative, either to the times or to the subject, to inquire how far the present troubled state of our country is owing to the lack of intelligence, good common school education, and the thoughtful habit of mind which such an education should form.

2. Intelligent obedience to law. Without acquiescence in the requirements of legitimate authority, there can be no safe society; without intelligence sufficient to discriminate between laws that are just and those which are unjust, there can be no proper obedience, such as a free man should render to law,—only a servile yielding to force. These two things,—a habit of obedience, and a disposition to know the justice of the authority,—can and should be carefully inculcated upon all the attendants of our schools. Children very rapidly perceive the distinction between right and wrong; their moral judgments are generally correct, and it can be only ruinous to their characters to teach them that any requirement, or law of any kind or origin, is right unless it is just.

On the other hand, the habit of cheerful obedience to superior authority is one of the ideas which youthful Americans readily pronounce "very good," but rarely reduce to practice. In the common schools is a most favorable place to fix this habit. The good teacher requires only what is best for his pupils to perform, and he insists upon prompt obedience until
it becomes a firm habit to obey unreluctantly and without question. Very much can thus be done to make amends for imperfect home discipline; and, while the teacher should, whenever practicable, show his scholars the justice and propriety of his demands, he must require implicit obedience of all his pupils, not simply for the best good of the school, but yet more for the great excellence of the habit when those pupils shall become citizens, for “those only are fitted to rule who have first learned to obey.”

3. Moral Principle. A good citizen is a good man, not merely one who refrains from positive wrong, but one who does the right which he sees to be done; he does not by weak compliance or limit self-distrust, strengthen the wicked cause, but boldly attacks evil as something which just “vengeance suffereth not to live.” This moral vigor, though somewhat dependent on constitutional character, may be greatly fostered and developed by judicious instruction. I would not have the teacher encroach upon the domain of the theologian, but I would have him sedulously cultivate in his scholar’s mind the habit of regarding the moral character of actions, of words and of dispositions, and of being governed by principles of inflexible morality. That Common School is very imperfect in which the scholars have no instruction that qualifies them to judge of right and wrong and inspires them to act as conscience dictates.

Common Schools promoting these three characteristics, are manifestly of incalculable importance to the prosperity and perpetuity of our nation.

A. Smith.

EDUCATION A POLITICAL NECESSITY.—NO. 1.

Education, in its most comprehensive and unlimited sense, includes the culture of man physically, intellectually and morally; and no system of public instruction can be said to meet the wants of the age, unless based on this three-fold nature of man.

Having prefaced this much, we will dismiss the subject of physical education for the present, expecting to recur to it in future.

No fact seems more thoroughly established by the history of the world, than that the prosperity and safety of a nation depend upon the intelligence and morality of the people; and especially, is this true as regards all Democratic and Republican forms of government. While despotic governments train their people, so as to make them good subjects, upon us, in a republican form of government, devolves the higher responsibility of so educating the people, that they may not only be good subjects, but good sovereigns,—as all legal authority primarily originates in and returns to the sovereign people. That individual who supposes we may safely count on success without having provided ample means for an adequate amount of intelligence and integrity among the people, is seriously in error. While proper training is necessary to fit men for the government under which they live, doubly necessary is it, that they should be intelligent and virtuous to manage successfully the affairs of State. Men are not born Legislators nor conversant with the science of government. These requisite qualities do not spring up by spontaneity. They are attained only by culture.

The destiny of this nation has long been a subject of speculation and anxiety. Its founders fondly hoped that here, in this cis-Atlantic home, there should be an asylum for the oppressed and liberty to the captive; that here there should be a broader and more congenial humanity than that of the old world; that here the arts and sciences should strike their roots deep down, and bring forth a fruitage unparalleled in the history of the race; that here, man should extirpate those terrific monsters that infest society,—ignorance, bigotry, intemperance, slavery, war, and feudalism, and under the progressive forces of civilization, become imbued with the spirit of freedom, duty, benevolence, equality, scientific and moral truth, and thus approximate to the “first good, first perfect, and first fair.” Whether we are to realize this hope, or whether our country is to take her place in the sad procession of empires run down and destroyed by their own unhallowed ambition, their lust of power, their injustice and wrong waged upon morality and all the laws of the universe, remains to be seen. Where shall we confidently look for a solution of this question? Certainly, not to the strong arm of any army; not to political demagogues; nor to an unlettered people. The sword, from time immemorial, has been the argument of the oppressor; and in a civilized country, the case must be an extreme one to justify its use. Armies may throw off oppressive yokes and afford temporary relief; it is intelligence and public virtue only that can lay the solid foundation of permanent peace, unsullied freedom and national prosperity.

In a government like ours, the people are the acknowledged fountain of all authority. How necessary, then, that their action should be guided by wisdom. The people make the laws and control the execution of them. But do an ignorant people make wise and humane laws; and do they execute even good ones? If rulers go wrong, the people must right them. This presupposes them qualified by culture and conversant with the affairs of State.—If demagogues seek positions of responsibility and trust, the people must refuse them. But how is this to be done, without knowledge with which to judge, and moral stamina with which to deny? The people direct the Senate and overawe the Cabinet.—The people give intellectual and moral character to the very age and body of our institutions. The people control the destinies of the nation. If, then, we are to be a great, happy and prosperous people, it must be through the intelligence, virtue and power.
of the masses. This is a truth as clear and undeniable as those which God spoke from Sinai, and it needs no Hebraist to translate the thunder.

—George Washington.

In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened. In our country, not only does the government give force to public opinion, but public opinion gives force to the government, good or bad.

Judge Story said: "I do not hesitate to affirm, not only that a knowledge of the true principles of government is important and useful to Americans, but that it is absolutely indispensable to carry on the government of their choice, and to transmit it to their posterity."

Edward Everett, the practical educator, said:—"Education is a better safeguard of liberty, than a standing army. If we retrace the wages of the schoolmaster, we must raise those of the recruiting sergeant."

It is evident to the slightest observation, that the conviction of the importance of popular education is not so deeply inwrought into the mind of society as it ought to be; for there is not that earnest feeling in its behalf, which the subject, in view of its acknowledged weightiness, justly demands.

We stand in the same relation to posterity that our ancestors did to us. We have no less duties to perform than they had. It was their especial and appropriate duty to found the institutions we have received—the noblest legacy in the gift of any people. It is our duty to preserve and perpetuate these institutions we have received at their hands. The boon they would bequeath to the latest posterity, can never reach them and bless them, except through our instrumentality. The next generation will, in a great degree, be what we make them. If our whole duty be done, they will start high up in the scale of intellectual and moral excellence; they will be happy and prosperous through our wisdom, or miserable and wretched through our folly. From this responsible agency there is, there can be, no escape.

Mainsburg, Tioga, July, 1861. H. C. Johns.

THE COMMON SCHOOL TEACHER.

No. 2.—The School-room.

Before our friend, the teacher, has yet learned the names of all his pupils, he will have observed that the walls of the school room are not as neatly papered as those of his mother's little parlor, nor its ceiling as nicely whitewashed; he will have felt the melancholy and blank appearance of those walls, without a single picture to furnish a loophole of escape for his imprisoned spirit; he will have looked in vain through the uncurtained windows for something to remind him of his sister's flower garden—fragrant with roses and heliotropes and honeysuckles, or his father's apple tree—loaded with russets, or rambos or water-cores; he will have missed the little home-world of light and love in which the sun of his existence had heretofore risen and set; and, if he had been a student at the neighboring academy, or the distant college, he will also have missed the familiar faces of his classmates, his companions, his friends. He will have been grieved to find so many of his pupils noisy and unmanners, and perhaps unawashed and unkempt; and, in the general aversion to study, he will have encountered the suspicion that the boys and girls have but little faith in his capacity to teach them anything they do not now know. It is a trying period in the life of the teacher. He is in a new world, treading an untrodden path. Will he ever feel at home in that world? Can he ever learn to lead little children along that path and do them good? No wonder if, for a moment, his heart sinks within him as he ponders these questions. No wonder if the unwelcome thought flits through his brain that he has miscalculated his powers and misunderstood his mission. Thus comes to the true teacher his first trial.

But, if the naked walls and the usually barren surroundings of the school room, and the unprepossessing appearance and conduct of many of the pupils, are not attractive to the teacher whose professional experience is embraced within a few summer days, how much less attractive must that school room be to the forty or fifty boys and girls who add to the naked walls and hard benches the dread of hard tasks and an exceedingly hard fare! If the teacher of mature age longs for those manifestations of the lovely and the beautiful to which he has been accustomed, how can we expect the child, yet unused to the mental application which makes the scholar, and with its mind filled with the largest idea of individual freedom, to become reconciled to a daily confinement of six hours within walls which so repulsively chop off the line of its roaming vision and impede the flight of its weary spirit! So unattractive to a child are a majority of our school houses, in their location and finish, and so steep and rugged to little feet is the hill of science, that, but for the observance by teachers of some or all of the instrumentalities of which we are about to speak, few children would ever represent any other character than that of Shakspeare's whining schoolboy.

"________ creeping like snail Unwillingly to school."

Surely, truancy, a frequent offence in our common schools, is traceable to no other cause than the unattractive associations of the village or country school house. Positive distaste for study and extreme fondness for out-door sports will not produce it if the cause we have assigned be wanting. We would at once prevent truancy and render the
school room attractive to teacher and pupils, by the following simple means. As hinted above, they are not novel. We sum them up here for the benefit of our friend, the young teacher.

I. Always wear a pleasant countenance.—Although, at the outset of your experience, you may be almost ready to despair at the apparently gloomy prospect before you, you should not forget to remember that, to meet and conquer difficulties is true heroism, and to yield to them is cowardice. At once banish the idea, which is at first a stumbling block in the way of every young man, that life is a succession of delights, unmingled with vigorous blows to be given and unfriendly thumps to be taken. That truth firmly impressed upon your mind, and this erroneous idea thoroughly eradicated from it, the next thing for you to do, is, to resolve always to wear a pleasant countenance.—“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.”—Like a good gift given in season, it blesseth him that giveth as well as him that receiveth. It doeth good to the teacher, by making light his most arduous duties; and it maketh glad the countenance of his pupils because their sympathetic spirits, ever ready to rise and fall with the temperature around them, cannot resist its influence. Children naturally love the sunshine, and the teacher who needlessly casts a shadow over any part of their young lives, wrongs them much and does not benefit himself. Whatever the discouragements and vexations of the school room may be, it is the duty of the teacher always to look on the bright side. Every profession has its disadvantages and its perplexities, and school teaching is not without its full share. To be hopeful and cheerful when clouds lower around you; to rise superior to every obstacle; to keep straight on your way, making the best of everything, is the proof of your manhood and the tailman of your success. “A fretful spirit drieth the bones” of the teacher and sappeth the sources of his usefulness. Be careful, therefore, to radiate sunshine through the school room, and thus take the first step toward rendering it attractive to yourself and your little charge.

II. Cultivate the beautiful.—Begin at the beginning. Teach your pupils to exercise due respect for the beautiful form which God has given them, by keeping it and the clothes their parents have given them, in the words of the old maxim, “neat and clean.” “Cleanliness is next to godliness,” and the children who make free use of cold water, who do not allow their apparel to resemble that of the “ragged Pennsylvanians” in the War for the Union, whose hair is never permitted to look thrity-two ways for the different points of the compass, have learned the first lesson in true refinement; and until that lesson is learned no school room can be attractive to pupils or teacher. Do not neglect this much neglected matter. Nothing is so repulsive as dirt. If necessary, keep a basin, towel, comb and cloth brush in one corner of the school room. Of course, you will see that the school room itself is daily dusted and swept, and that, in winter, it is properly heated and ventilated. There should also be a place for every textbook, cap, bonnet, and satchel; and, when not in use, all of these articles should be in their place.

Next to personal cleanliness in the cultivation of the beautiful, comes a cleanly and well-ordered school room.

Next, see that your pupils are taught to sing; and be sure that you have at least one song per day at the close of school in the afternoon. If you cannot sing yourself, some of your pupils can; and they will soon teach the rest. Singing imparts a charm to the existence of children, and in a school room it wakes up pupils when all other means fail. It is also true that many unpleasant circumstances which will happen in a school room will be forgotten by teacher and pupils in the fervor of a sweeping chorus. The Germans have long taught singing in their schools, with beneficial effects upon the minds and hearts of children. We Americans sing in our homes and at our work; we sing in our churches and at our festivals; even our soldiers sing when they bivouac around the campfire or make a desperate charge on the battle field. Why should not the throats of school-going children warble their songs of cheer when their minds are jaded and their bodily energies almost exhausted?

Thus far your efforts to render the school room attractive have been attended by little, if any, pecuniary cost. We propose now to take a few dollars from your purse for that purpose—convinced that, like bread cast upon the waters, they will return to you after many days. Obtain half a dozen good pictures with which to beautify and sanctify your naked walls. Don’t forget to feed the souls of your pupils, and to purify and exalt their imaginations, by the representation of some old castle, some historic scene, some glowing landscape, or the portrait of some of the heroes whom the world loves to honor. Life itself should be a beautiful picture, without spot or blemish, and the school boy and school girl will be encouraged to make it such, if other pictures daily tell them of the good men who have gone before them, of the glorious principles for which they contended, and of the wonders of nature and art which show the greatness of God and the rewards of a noble ambition. Lithographic or steel engravings have become so cheap that for five dollars quite a gallery may be obtained, and the pupils would cheerfully add to it by occasional contributions of pennies and half dimes. A good map of the United States
teach them what little of military tactics you happen to know. On rainy days suggest in-door games of an intellectual character, but permit none that are rude or boisterous.

To recapitulate: If the young teacher always wears a pleasant countenance; if he studiously cultivates the beautiful; and if he encourages proper physical recreation, the difficulty of governing his school will be lessened; regularity in attendance will be secured; the repulsiveness of the school room will disappear; and the pleasure of teaching school and going to school will ripen into a “joy forever.”

James M. Swank.
Johnstown, Pa., June, 1861.