

Jones, Thomas P.

Adress On The Progress Of Manufactures And Internal
Improvement In The United States...

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AN ADDRESS

ON THE

PROGRESS OF MANUFACTURES

AND

Internal Improvement,

IN THE UNITED STATES;

AND PARTICULARLY,

ON THE ADVANTAGES TO BE DERIVED

FROM THE

EMPLOYMENT OF SLAVES

IN THE

MANUFACTURING OF COTTON AND OTHER GOODS.

DELIVERED IN THE HALL OF THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE,
NOVEMBER 6, 1827.

BY THOMAS P. JONES, M. D.

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NOTICE.

THE following Address is published in conformity with the desire of several gentlemen who were present at its delivery. For the sentiments expressed, on the subject of the employment of slaves in the southern states, the author is alone responsible; although delivered before the Franklin Institute, it is not to be viewed as emanating from that body, as all interference in the question discussed, would be foreign to the objects, for the promotion of which that society was formed. An individual who knew and approved the views of the writer, wished him to promulgate them, as he believed that good would be thereby produced: the hope excited was sufficiently powerful, and the occasion of opening the Institute for the present session was embraced for the purpose.

The essay was written in haste; not for the press, but to be once publicly read, and then placed upon the shelf; the writer is sensible that it might be greatly improved by a careful revision, and a remodelling of some of its parts; but his other avocations forbid the devotion of any time to this purpose, without delaying the publication, and thereby lessening the chance of its utility. Should the editors of papers, or others who feel an interest upon the subject, deem the whole, or any portion of it, worth promulgating, it is entirely at their disposal.

In the few days which have elapsed since its delivery, the author has heard of the recent adoption of measures in Richmond, Fredericksburg, and other places to the south, for the establishment of cotton factories, in some of which slaves are to be employed; as his views are *American*, and not sectional, and as he is a warm friend to the manufacturing system, the intelligence has afforded him unmixed pleasure. If the strength of the body politic will be promoted, by the value which the manufactured article will possess over the raw material, it will be equally so, whether this value be impressed at Natchitoches, at Eastport, or at any intermediate point of the union.

Philadelphia, Nov. 12th, 1827.

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ADDRESS.

WE live at a period the most eventful, and the most fruitful of glorious anticipations, as respects the improvement of the human mind, and the consequent exaltation of the species. In almost every corner of Christendom, we see the light of moral and political truth, dispersing that darkness, which it has been the interest, and the endeavour, of most of those who have had the direction of political and ecclesiastical affairs, to perpetuate. The principles of freedom, and the rights of conscience, are now asserted and claimed in despite of autocracy and despotism. The ball is rolling onward, increasing in volume as it rolls, and will eventually break away those barriers which the occupants of tottering thrones are raising to oppose its progress. Edicts for perpetuating the institutions of the dark ages, aided by censorships on the press, with their accompanying efforts, may, for a while, retard, or rather divert its course; but the final issue is as certain as the laws of moral and physical nature.

Although it would manifest an entire ignorance of history, to claim for our country the first promulgation of the truth, that 'the Creator has made all men equally free,' yet, to us is justly due the honour of being the first people who have given to these principles their full development, by the establishment of a government of which they are the very basis; and, it will not be denied, that the example which we have thus exhibited, has advanced the cause of freedom in Europe, many ages in one.

The United States exhibit a striking example of the influence of free institutions in aiding man in the pursuit of happiness, by the promotion of all those arts which contribute to his security and his comfort. Where the productions of mental and physical efforts belong to the individuals with whom they originate, the native energies of the human mind are incomparably more effective in attaining the objects desired, than any artificial encouragements derived from other sources. It must be confessed, that we owe much to the situation in which Providence has placed us; as for example, to the fertility of our soil, our exemption from tithes, and almost from rents, in consequence of the facility with which

every industrious man may become a proprietor; and to the advantages presented by noble rivers, and their numerous tributaries, by which intercourse is facilitated, commerce and manufactures promoted, and the land irrigated. We need not, however, travel far from the confines of our own country, to find others possessing all these physical advantages; yet as the same moral causes have not been in operation, gifts even superior to our own have remained unimproved, and, in many instances, unperceived. Under the blessing of that guardian Providence, which directs the affairs of men, we are mainly indebted for the freedom which we now enjoy, to the correct ideas of the inherent rights of conscience, which distinguished the first settlers of our country, who sought in it an asylum from that oppression to which the violation of these principles subjected them in the land of their nativity: and although their views were narrowed by the prejudices of the age in which they lived, and they sometimes adopted measures which were at variance with the rights they themselves claimed, the germ still remained, and the glorious harvest which their descendants reap, has sprung from the seeds planted by them.

Time will not allow, nor would the occasion be a proper one, for us to take a view of the rapid advancement which this country has made under the fostering aid of a free government, and the patriotic exertions of liberal and enlightened individuals. That spirit of free inquiry, and that exemption from oppressive restrictions, which are the very essence of our political institutions, have manifested themselves in the readiness with which we have availed ourselves of the peculiarities in the situation of our own and of other countries, so as to extend our commerce, our agriculture, and our manufactures. The wars consequent upon the French révolution, throughout the greater part of which a wise neutrality was preserved, opened a wide field for mercantile enterprise, secured to us a large portion of the carrying trade of the civilized world, afforded an extensive foreign market for the productions of the soil, raised our country to a high degree of maritime importance, with a rapidity which the most sanguine could not have anticipated; secured full employment to our whole population, and rewarded industry, not only with comfort, but with wealth.

We will pass over those political occurrences which produced and accompanied the termination of this artificial state of things. An almost universal repose from the strife of

nations, has restored to each, an opportunity of employing its own internal resources, and of transporting to other countries, the articles resulting from its industry; this new born, or extended attention to manufactures, in the various kingdoms of Europe, created a large demand for some of the unelaborated productions of our soil; and the income thence resulting, continued to enable us still to import from foreign countries, many things which are absolutely necessary to our comfort. We cannot, however, possess that portion of independence which ought to belong to us as a nation until we have secured the means of producing these among ourselves; the truth of this position was abundantly proved by the experience of the last war. As had been foreseen, by a few thinking men, the resource just spoken of, was only temporary; over production, co-operating with other causes, has depreciated the value of our staples, until the sum which can be obtained for them, will not insure even a moderate compensation for the labour necessary for their growth and transportation. Whilst men are prosperous, they generally act as though the sun of their prosperity would never set; instead of providing for the changes which attend all human institutions, they too frequently enjoy the good things of the day, and think not of commencing those pursuits, which wisdom might have taught them, must come next in their turn, until compelled so to do by imperious necessity. It has long been felt by many, that we possess the capacity, and that our dearest interests demand that our energies should be directed to the establishment of manufactories upon a large scale. Enough has long since been effected to falsify the predictions of those British economists who had foretold that we never could become a manufacturing people, and that, in this particular, therefore, our independence would be but nominal; and the advances which have been made within a few years, have removed, or, at least, have shaken the opinions of those among ourselves, who were sceptical upon this subject. It is true, there still exists much honest opposition to the change which is being effected; but these honest oppositionists will, ere long, become honest supporters of the *American system*; and the few *refugees*, whose affections are wedded to other countries where they believe their interest lies, and who have, even now, almost become an extinct race, will scarcely be remembered.

The perfection already attained in the manufacture of fine flint glass, and the extent of these establishments, are such as

would have appeared altogether visionary, had they been foretold but a few years ago; for, although it was believed that considerable progress might be made in those manufactures where labour-saving machinery could be used, yet few were prepared to expect, that in the nice operations of blowing and cutting flint glass, which can be effected only by manual labour, and individual skill, the American would not only expel the foreign article from the market, but would be afforded at a price much lower than that, even under the duty formerly existing. A gentleman, perfectly conversant with this business, one, in fact, who has been an importer, and is a dealer in fine glass, has informed me, that he now sells at ten dollars per dozen, tumblers which, if imported, could not be sold for less than twenty-two dollars. We have, in this, a striking example of the advantage derived by the consumer, from the advanced duty imposed by the tariff of 1824, which, not only protected the home-made article, but has also greatly reduced its cost.

The advances which have been made in the spinning, weaving, and printing of cotton, are, to a considerable extent, generally known. In these manufactures also, the benefit of the protecting duty has been clearly manifested. In the report drawn up by Mr. Niles, the chairman of the committee appointed by the Harrisburg Convention, there are the following remarks:

“One pound of cotton makes nearly four yards of shirting. Now look at the progress of the manufacture of cottons in the United States. In 1815, when cotton was at 20 cents per pound, a yard of shirting sold for 25 cents, and the cost of the cotton ($\frac{1}{4}$ lb., worth 5 cents,) being deducted, the manufacturers had 20 cents for their labour and profit, and yet very few of them made money, because of the want of machinery, or of management and skill: and when the price of cotton in 1818, was 32 cents, and the stock of a yard of cloth cost 8 cents, the price of it was only 21 cents; leaving 13 cents to the manufacturer; and, with this advance on the raw material, the most of them were actually ruined. But, at the present time, 1827, when the price of cotton is $9\frac{1}{2}$ cents, the same sorts of shirting are sold at $9\frac{1}{2}$ cents, leaving only seven cents for the manufacturer, (the cost of the cotton being deducted,) the business of making such goods, *though made cheaper than they are made in England*, is a good one!”

Much interesting matter might be added upon this sub-

ject, but as I have some other topics to embrace, the prescribed limits of this address admonish me to be brief.

Connected, intimately, with the growth of manufactures, is that system of internal improvement, which is now in such successful progress. We can scarcely pay too high a tribute to our enterprising neighbours, the citizens of New York, for the great work which they have accomplished, and the glorious example which they have placed before us. If they boast, they have good reason so to do; and I apprehend that when we have accomplished as much as they have, we shall not deem a little boasting to be vainglorious.

The citizens of Pennsylvania are, happily, emulous of joining in the contest, of which shall be foremost in improving the gifts of Providence, by turning our rivers to the best account, in making them become the feeders of navigable canals; and in connecting, by rail roads, those parts of the country where these may be found most eligible; and those sections of our internal navigation, where the want of a sufficient supply of water, or other serious obstacles, render this adjunct means desirable.

That which may be properly denominated the first section of the Pennsylvania Canal, will, before the end of the present month, be so far completed, as to afford a passage from the Delaware to the Susquehanna, through the Schuylkill navigation and the Union Canal. Much also has been done both on the eastern and western sections of the Grand Canal, which, with the assistance of a rail-road on the summit of the Alleghany, will unite the Susquehanna to the Ohio at Pittsburg, by the aid of the Alleghany and Kiskiminitas rivers. Those who have traversed that mountain region, can in some degree estimate the proud trophy of human skill and perseverance, which will be furnished by surmounting the barriers which appear in all directions to obstruct the course. On the banks of our own Delaware, also, the excavations have been commenced, which will give an easy conveyance from Bristol to Easton, a distance of between seventy and eighty miles, passing the falls and the rapids which now interfere with the navigation. Many other similar works, either in contemplation, or in progress, in our own, and other parts of the union, might be made to add brilliancy to this sketch, but cannot now be even named. The most satisfactory point of view in which they can be contemplated, is, as connecting links in the great federal chain, which, strengthened by their means, will, we believe, endure for ages, a pattern and a proof of the ex-

cellence of republican institutions. The great progress which has been made in the work of internal improvement, and more especially in the establishment of manufactures, has hitherto been principally confined to the eastern, the middle, and the western states. There are, however, several works for the spinning of cotton to the south of the Potomac, and others are on the eve of being established; and if I am not greatly in error, another bond of union will, in the course of a very few years, be added to the confederacy by a community of pursuit, in the extension of manufactures, over that important section of our country.

I have, for some years, been convinced, that the slaves in those states might be advantageously employed in the manufacturing of some staple articles, and more particularly in that of cotton; this conviction I have long forborne to promulgate, because I have thought that the only result would be to affix on myself the imputation of singularity, at least, if not of absurdity. I rejoice, however, to perceive that the question of the practicability, and the eligibility of the measure has lately become a subject of discussion in the public papers, and that much has been said in its favour. While expressing my own convictions and anticipations upon this point, I am aware that they will appear sanguine, if not extravagant, even to those who, to a certain extent, think favourably of the proposition: these opinions, however, have been the result of much observation and reflection, under circumstances particularly favourable to the formation of a correct judgment.

It has formed no small portion of my occupation through life, to render myself familiar with the structure of machines, and their application to manufactures; and to estimate the portion of skill required in their management, in establishments upon a large scale, where the division of labour is necessarily carried to the utmost extent. I have also resided for a considerable number of years in the southern states, and have, in consequence, acquired some share of knowledge, with regard to the habits, inclinations, and capacities of the negroes; the result of which is, that I am thoroughly convinced, not only that they may be profitably employed as manufacturers, but that they are peculiarly suited to this purpose. It would be improper, here, to enter into a discussion of the question, whether the negroes are absolutely inferior to the whites in intellect; and indeed were we able to settle this question, it would scarcely affect that upon which I am speaking, as only

a small degree of intelligence is necessary to the acquisition of the utmost skill in the performance of an individual operation, however delicate it may be. In all extensive manufactories, we meet the veriest dolts, who become, as it were, a part of the operative machinery; performing, from habit, the business allotted to them, with a degree of dexterity and precision which appears almost miraculous, and which those who are adepts in other departments of the same business, might essay in vain.

The object proposed to be accomplished, is to teach the negroes to work machines which have already been invented, and extensively used; their occupations would be those of mere routine, and for this they are peculiarly fitted; their deficiency in imagination and inventive genius may fairly be thrown into the scale of advantages, rather than into that of objections. With respect to the actual employment of slaves in manufacturing hempen bagging in Kentucky, I extract the following remarks from one of the essays upon this subject, which appeared first in the *Ariel*, published at Natchez, Mississippi, and since in the *American Farmer*, and some other papers:

“Strange as it may appear to those who have never observed for themselves, nor reflected on this matter, it is demonstrably true, that *slaves* are the most profitable of all *operatives* in the business of manufacturing coarse fabrics, where ingenuity has furnished them with suitable machinery. In Kentucky, for instance, by the assistance of trifling machines, slaves manufacture vast quantities of *hempen bagging*. We, indeed, scarcely see any other *operatives* in the great factories of Lexington, Paris, Danville, Shelbyville, and other towns in Kentucky.

“If we except a manager or two, and a machinist, neither Englishmen, Scotchmen, nor even New Englandmen, are to be seen in these profitable establishments. Why are slaves employed? Simply because experience has proved that they are more *docile*, more constant, and *cheaper*, than freemen, who are often refractory and dissipated; who waste much time by visiting public places, attending musters, elections, &c. which the *operative slave* is not permitted to frequent.*

* The cheapness of slave labour may be seen from a statement made by Mr. J. T. Kilby, of Virginia, which appeared in the *American Farmer* of the 2d inst. The following are the rates at which he estimates it.

The quantity of bagging and cordage used for the packing of cotton, is immense, as will appear from the statements of the demand for them in some of the cotton growing states. In Louisiana and Mississippi, only, the last crop was estimated to require 800,000 yards of bagging; consuming, if made of cotton instead of hemp, 2500 bales of 400 lbs. each; and should the cordage be made of the same material, the amount used would be doubled, say 5000 bales, or two millions of pounds. The facts appear to be sufficiently well ascertained, that the bagging and rope can be made much cheaper from cotton, than from hemp; that it is equally suitable for the purpose, and in some respects superior; it is averred, that cotton bagging can be made at 16 cents per yard, which shall equal in quality the hemp bagging, formerly imported in large quantities from Scotland, and that it may be advantageously substituted for the Kentucky bagging, which is about 40 per cent. dearer.

“It is computed that North Alabama consumes 300,000 yards of cotton bagging annually, at an average expense of \$100,000, which large amount is principally paid to the Kentucky manufacturers in *money*. Of the coarse clothing which is annually imported, it is impossible to take even a conjectural estimate of the quantity.” Some progress has been made in supplying coarse cottons from slave labour in Tennessee, where a factory has actually been established, in which the entire labour is performed by negroes; a large por-

An able man may be hired for a year for	- - - - -	\$35
Feeding from 18 to 25, say	- - - - -	20
Clothing 10 to 15	- - - - -	12
Taxes, about	- - - - -	2
		—
		69
Boys or girls, under 12 years of age,	- - - - -	8
Feeding	- - - - -	20
Clothing	- - - - -	8
		—
		\$36
Women—hire	- - - - -	17
Feeding	- - - - -	20
Clothing	- - - - -	8
Taxes	- - - - -	2
		—
		\$47

It is easy for any one to contrast the foregoing with the prices usually paid to white labourers, which will average about three times the above amounts, whilst from the causes enumerated in the extract, the negroes, in steadiness, will very far surpass the great mass of the whites.

tion of Tennessee and North Alabama are supplied from it with coarsé cotton goods; the works are said to be very profitable, being quadruple that of the cotton grower, with the same number of hands.

A proposition to encourage the employment of slaves in the manufacturing of cotton bagging, cotton cordage, cotton blankets, and coarse clothing, was made at a public meeting convened for the purpose, at Natchez, in July last, and such preliminary measures adopted, as were thought to be necessary for the attainment of the end. The resolutions passed were conceived in a spirit of liberality, embracing the promotion of manufactures in every part of the union. Their views were, very properly, restricted to essaying, in the first instance, the coarser fabrics; it will be seen, however, in the course of this address, that I am of opinion much more than this, can, and will, be accomplished, as I believe the slave population to be peculiarly fitted to learn, and to perform most of the operations required in the cotton mill.

Early impressions, and habit, are alone sufficient to account for the expectations, and even the desires, of the slave being circumscribed within very narrow limits; one of his most ardent wishes, however, is to learn some mechanical business, and he who has a trade is, by common consent, considered as superior in situation to him who works upon the plantation, and even to the house servant. Many, indeed the greater part of them, are but indifferent workmen; this, it is evident, does not arise from a want of capacity to become otherwise, but from defective instruction, indifferent tools, and that slovenly habit of doing almost every thing with make-shifts, as they are called, which is perhaps unavoidable under existing circumstances. Indeed it is rather matter of surprise, that so much skill exists as is frequently manifested, where nearly every plantation has its blacksmith and its carpenter, whose operations are limited to the immediate wants of home; were white men brought up under the like circumstances, it may fairly be questioned whether they would exhibit any portion of that superiority which is so generally ascribed to them.

In all the larger towns, and in many of the smaller, there are negro workmen, particularly blacksmiths, who execute with great cleverness, and, sometimes, with extraordinary skill. I have seen several well made screw presses, for baling cotton, which were entirely the work of negroes; the gins, which are almost as numerous as the larger plantations of cotton, are usually tended exclusively by them, although

they exact as much care and skill as are generally required in the processes of the manufacture of that article into yarn and cloth.

The negro possesses, in general, a degree of emulation, equal, at least, to that of the white labourer; I say at least equal, but, in my estimation, it is superior; I have been repeatedly struck with the avidity with which they seek, and the gratitude with which they receive instruction on any point relating to their business; and surprised to hear how anxiously the wish has been expressed that they could visit the north, to see and to learn new methods of working; a wish entirely unconnected, I am sure, with any other idea than the simple one expressed. Although thus emulous, the emulation of the negro is limited to his own particular business, and if this be one simple operation, requiring to be perpetually repeated, he is perfectly satisfied to pursue it, and will be proud of any superior skill which he may acquire.

Assuming these positions as facts, and such I know them to be, it will readily be admitted, that better materials for making workmen, in any regular, and ordinary manufacture, where labour-saving machinery is employed, do not exist any where. It is not merely in cotton bagging, and other fabrics of the coarser kind, that the negro may be employed; although these will necessarily come first in order, he, I am convinced, will be found equal to the production of some of the finer articles furnished in the spinning factory, and by the loom; what valid reason can be urged to the contrary, I am utterly at a loss to divine.

So little aware of this fact, or so averse to its manifestation, have been those persons who have conducted the establishments for cotton spinning, to the south, that in mills which have been in operation for three or four years, none but white persons are, or were lately, employed, excepting in offices of mere labour. Some enterprising individuals are now establishing cotton works in the vicinity of Petersburg in Virginia; a gentleman who has taken great interest in this subject, accidentally met with the superintendent, and inquired whether it was his intention to employ negroes in the manufactory; he replied that it was a thing of which he had never thought; and until very lately, all the owners of slaves appear to have been in the same predicament: even now, there are but few of them prepared to give credit to the doctrine which I have so confidently advanced; this, however, need not excite surprise, as most of them are acquainted with the manufac-

tured goods in their finished state only, and cannot, therefore, estimate the moderate portion of skill required by each individual employed in their formation—this can be done only by those acquainted with the details of the workshop.

Should the truth of the doctrine which I have advocated be admitted, the philanthropist, and the political economist, will hail with equal pleasure the change which will be effected in the south, by the introduction of manufacturing establishments; as it will, at the same time, add greatly to the comfort of the slave, and to the solid wealth of the community. For a considerable period the planters in many places have found it extremely difficult to pay their current expenses, and to feed and clothe their negroes, from the annual produce of their lands; and thousands have removed to the more fertile regions in the western states, not with the expectation of accumulating wealth, but merely for the purpose of obtaining a ready and abundant supply for their negro families; thousands more of our southern fellow-citizens will be compelled to adopt the same expedient, unless some new resource be obtained.

Do not imagine that I am the friend of slavery, or that I would willingly promote any measures which I believed to be in the slightest degree calculated to extend, and perpetuate, this great moral evil. At the present day slavery has but few advocates; and they are as rare among the intelligent slave-holders to the south, as they are with us. A long residence among them, and an intimate acquaintance with many of them, enable me to make this declaration with the most undoubting confidence; and I feel therefore that in making it, I perform an act of simple justice only, and should be much gratified if I were able to remove any portion of that prejudice which tends to estrange one part of our country from the other. When I first removed to the south, I carried with me many of those prejudices which are common in the non-slave-holding states; and although, from the very nature of moral truth, it was impossible for me to see any thing which could lessen my abhorrence of slavery, in the abstract, I yet found that much more had been done than I had apprehended, and that much is still in progress, to lessen its attending evils; and was also thoroughly convinced, that its removal is a problem of no easy solution. The work, however, is making a sure, though slow, progress; the slaves are gradually acquiring information, and their owners generally both confess, and *feel* the iniquity of the system. Examples of

cruelty are very rare, and indelible disgrace affixes itself to him who has the character of being a bad master. The friends of emancipation must rejoice should one of the most serious obstacles to its accomplishment be removed, by training the slave to habits of industry, in a business which will tend to prepare him for a state of freedom, and thus pave the way for the gradual removal of an entailed evil, which cannot be directly, or suddenly, touched, without committing monstrous injustice in the case of both the parties concerned.

At present, the occupation of the plantation slave, is, in many instances, an alternation between absolute idleness and severe labour; most of the crops raised, demanding at one period, unremitting attention, and at others, allowing long intervals of complete relaxation. The principal product of the plantation which exacts regular attendance, and affords employment to the younger negroes, is the cotton crop; and this circumstance has operated as a strong inducement to many planters to cultivate it; as every intelligent man is aware that moderate, and regularly continued labour, is the most favourable to the physical, and moral constitution of man. The period, however, has arrived, when, as I have already remarked, the cotton crop will not, in many situations, pay for its culture, preparation, and carriage to market; and it is absolutely necessary that other employment should be found for the hands, there being no probability, and scarcely a possibility, of an advance in the price; indeed, the very reverse of this may be anticipated. I have attempted to indicate that new employment, which is so much needed, and to prove that it is not only necessary and desirable, but practicable.

In the introduction of every new system, difficulties are to be encountered, and removed; but those which at first appear insuperable, yield readily, and rapidly, to the energy of determined perseverance. In the present instance, as in most others, prejudice and habit, both stand in the way. The south will not supply persons able to establish, or to superintend these new manufactories, and the proper management of the slave, requires considerable knowledge and experience; his usefulness, and even his happiness, demands that the kind of familiarity which is admissible among white persons should be avoided, and that the difference of situation should be constantly, and distinctly marked; and all this may be, and is done, without violating the duties of kindness, or of humanity. Persons brought up to the north, frequently err in this point; for although there are some whose understandings

will enable them at once to adopt the right course, the greater number are inclined to be at first too familiar, and subsequently too severe, and there is consequently some well grounded prejudice against making them the managers of negroes. This may limit the number of suitable managers, yet it is not an insuperable objection to the system I am advocating; the practice of a few years would enable the south to supply her own superintendents, and in many respects with manifest advantage to herself.

There is another class of persons existing in the southern states, who are in fact, though free, less happily situated than the slaves themselves, and which by the extensive introduction of the manufacturing system, would not only be redeemed from wretchedness, but become a mine of wealth to the country, instead of remaining a degraded *cast*, and a heavy burden; I allude to the poorer portion of the white inhabitants; among these there is a very large number of widows, with families of children, who, with the utmost efforts of their industry, earn a miserable and precarious subsistence; of these, all who are able, would soon be employed. That the number of widows and orphans, in the situation represented, should be comparatively much greater, in the southern, than in the northern states, may, to some, appear paradoxical and incredible; it is, however, a fact; and one for which it would not be difficult to assign a reason, were it necessary, or suitable to the occasion.

It is a subject of increasing difficulty in the part of our country of which I am speaking, that the occupations are so few, which are deemed reputable for the sons of those who are in good circumstances; and, in the present state of things, this difficulty is a real one. The encouragement to become planters is very small indeed, and the professions of medicine, and of law, are overstocked; manufactories do not exist upon a scale sufficiently extensive to afford acceptable stations; and until they do, it would argue but little knowledge of the state of affairs in the south, or of the principles of human nature, to expect those who are considered as holding a station in the higher walks of society, to devote their attention to the mechanic arts. A deficiency in the requisite talents will not be expected, for although the opportunities of displaying it have been less numerous, the same aptitude at invention and adaptation, exists in the south, which is so characteristic of the inhabitants of the northern states. The records of the patent office, and numerous ingenious contrivances which have been

devised, and are in use, might be adduced, were proof of this thought necessary.

Of the awakening attention of the south, to the diffusion of information on the important subject of the mechanic arts, many evidences might be adduced; one only shall be mentioned; the board of visitors of the University of Virginia, have, by a recent regulation, made it the particular duty of the professor of natural philosophy, to include in his course of lectures, the application of this science to operative mechanics.

It may be thought by some, and perhaps correctly, that a subject might have been chosen better suited to the purpose of an opening address, to the Franklin Institute, than that to which I have given a prominent place. The uses and importance of science to the artisan have been so frequently treated on, that the subject has become trite, and they are now so generally admitted, as scarcely to need being insisted upon: that which I have preferred appeared to me to be one of high interest to every citizen; and one also which will inevitably, and quickly, force itself upon public attention. A topic so immediately connected with the extension of manufactures in our common country, cannot be out of place when brought before an institution, which, though nominally Pennsylvanian, is essentially national.

To the political economist I commit the discussion of the question as it respects its connexion with his inquiries. I have very slender claims to knowledge upon this subject; in fact, I can scarcely say, that I have formed a theory for myself; although I, of necessity, entertain opinions which appear to me to have their foundation in practical truth, which is my only guide.—In the field of political science I have been only a gleaner; my attention has been directed almost exclusively to the physical sciences; and these admit of no Procrustean bed, but consider every well established fact as standing upon a basis which no theory can remove.

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