Feliciana Sentinel.

WHAT SORT OF SCHOOL

OUGHT THE LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY AND AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE TO BE?

To the Editor of the Picayune:

Before entering upon any undertaking, it is of the first importance that we have clear and distinct ideas of what the undertaking is, and the means and appliances at hand to attain the end in view.

In seeking to apply this trite proposition to the organization of the above mentioned institution, I do not propose to write an exhaustive essay on the subject, but only to give my ideas, hoping thereby to provoke others, and especially the planters and farmers of the State, to give theirs, in order that the Board of Supervisors may know the sentiments of the people, and have something to guide them in their difficult task.

I know there are those who wish to regard the new institution as simply a continuation of the Louisiana State University; and the Agricultural and Mechanical as a branch of that institution. This is pardonable, prehaps, in those who have a parental fondness for the university, and who insist in the blindness of their devotion that the university is not dead. But I cannot take that view, and shall insist that the bill uniting the Louisiana State University and the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Louisiana, destroyed the two pre-existing institutions, and created another, which is to enter upon a new life, and to make a name for itself apart from any reputation, either good or bad, which may have attached to either of the defunct schools. What sort of a school then is this new school to be? Is it to be a literary institution, a so-called university added to the list already too long of feeble, poorly supported, second rate universities and colleges scattered all over the land? Is there any demand in our State for such an institution? Is there any necessity for establishing another rival for those schools in our own State and neighboring States, which can barely keep alive owing to the want of patronage and the want of money. In my opinion all of these questions must be answered in the negative. I do not believe that the people of Louisiana feel the want of such a school; of a school which must come before the Legislature at every session to beg for an appropriation, which if once withheld, will leave the school in the condition of the Louisiana State University. Those of our people who have the means to give their sons a finished literary education will send them to the old and long established colleges and universities of other States—while the larger class of our citizens, who cannot afford the expense of a collegiate course, costing from $500 to $1000 per annum, must be satisfied to see their sons growing up without the advantages which might be theirs if this new institution were organized and conducted for the especial benefit of this class of our people. Louisiana is and must remain for ages to come, an agricultural State. The chief business of her people will be cultivation of the soil. Then why should not her State College be so organized and conducted as to fit her people for that employment which must be their life work.

If the Agricultural and Mechanical College is to be henceforth one of the schools of a great university, why not begin by putting this school in operation first, especially as all the available assets belonged originally to the Agricultural and Mechanical College? Then, as sufficient funds are acquired, the other schools may be organized as occasion demands.

No State in the Union presents such an opportunity for the practical application of science and agriculture as ours does. Here agriculture is carried on upon a more extensive and costly scale than in any other State; and more knowledge and skill are required in the conduct of the sugar planting interest than is at present available anywhere. There is a present demand for men whose education fits them to take charge of the manufacture of sugar, now carried on in so slovenly a manner that but little more than one-half of the crystalizable sugar is obtained from the cane. When we reflect that a vast amount is invested in costly machinery which stands idle nine or ten months in the year, we cannot avoid the inquiry. Is there not a chance here for the application of science in so conce trating the cane just as to secure a dry product to be easily handled, shipped and stored in the warehouses of the refiner, whose costly machinery can thus be kept at work all the year round? Then, there is the important subject of underdraining and saving of thousands of acres now unproductive—as open drains. And in connection with drainage there is the question of using the great river which flows through our State in order to irrigate our fields and thus make the planter independent of seasons. These are only a few of the great and important subjects needing through study and scientific investigation, which would, if not at once, yet soon attract the attention of the corps of scientific men whom we hope to have as professors in our agricultural college, and whose work would result in a vast addition to the wealth of the State, doing for our sugar production what has been done in Europe by scientific method applied to the beet root sugar manufactory—the only rival of cane sugar in the world.

I have not touched upon the great and important problem of renovating the worn out lands of the State, counted by millions of acres, and bringing them back to their original fertility. This can be done economically and certainly only by scientific agriculture. The haphazard unmethods of our day must give way scientific methods, and those scientific methods must be taught our young farmers in our agricultural college. Just as our young doctors are taught medical science and art in our medical college and hospital—and our young lawyers the science and practice of law in the lecture-room and in the moot court. The man who doubts this is a long way behind the advanced thinkers of the age both in Europe and in our own country.

Then, again, when are our young farmers to learn the science and art of that varied agriculture from which alone is to come certain wealth to our farmers? We have too long confined ourselves to the production of two staple crops, and need to be taught by the professors in any agricultural college that there is wealth in the production of butter, and of cheese, as well as in cotton and sugar, to say nothing of the breeding and raising a better class of stock, horses, cattle, sheep and hogs. Who in our State knows anything correctly of these matters now—and where shall we learn quickly and accurately but in a school whose chief business it is to teach these very things so much needed to be known. I think the large majority of our people, both in the city and country, will admit the correctness and wisdom of these views without further argument.

Now, in order to teach scientific agriculture it is absolutely necessary to have a farm adjoining the college well furnished with all the appliances adapted to teach this branch of knowledge, just as it is necessary to have a hospital in connection with a medical school in order to teach the young doctor the art as well as the science of medicine. To have a farm it is necessary to have money. How to get this money shall form the subject of another communication in these columns.

May I not ask of the country press to copy this article in order that the farmers in every part of the State may have their attention called to this important subject. What more interesting and profitable question could be discussed in the Granges of the State?

R. H. RYLAND, M. D.

THE SPEAKERSHIP.

Washington Capital.

Sam Cox would make the most accomplished speaker, could he have as much lead in his heels as genius in his brains—were he a member of the Mrs. Rutherford B. Hayes Temperance ass., were he a little sincere—more sedate. With a few additional qualities—such as the above—he would make a first-class speaker.

Milton Sayler would make an honest, conservative "Old Reliable" sort of speaker. Being from Ohio hurts him with the house, and in view of the prevalence just now, in the political market, of Ohio pork, from the White House down to the sergeant-at-arms of the house, it will hurt a really good man with the nation. Only one created being on earth was ever benefited by being born in a stable.

Sam Randall would make a shifty, go-to-hell sort of speaker, with a mouth full of white teeth and a brain full of subtlety. There are worse men, though, than Sam Randall. Most of them in jail.

Fernando Wood would make a dignified, old Turveydrop sort of speaker. He is an "old Mustache" of the empire, though, and these are the halcyon days of the republic.

N. P. Banks would make a good speaker if he hadn't that "mysterious carriage of the body to conceal the defects of the mind which men call dignity." We quote from Montaigne. To use slang—to which we are averse in discussing classics and fine old ruins—Nathaniel has played it once and the people "won't have it again."

Our real choice is Ben Butler, if he will emigrate to Colorado and raise sheep, instead of staying around peaceable communities and raising Cain, as he has been doing for twenty years.

MORE FACTS ABOUT CHOLERA MORBUS.

Cholera Morbus is now traveling through the country, ostensibly for its health, but really in the interest of Sorrow and Suffering. It has been to Oil City, and having had a brief but spirited interview with it, we desire to warn the public against it. Cholera Morbus doesn't say much. It appreciates the fact that actions speak louder than a street merchant with a new kind of glue. It is quiet and unassuming, and allows its victim to make all the fuss. It is the champion wrestler of the world, catch-as-catch-can or any other hold, and as a prize-fighter is to be avoided. It has no respect for the rules of the P. R., and will strike below the belt nine times out of ten. Without a word of warning it will catch a man in the stomach, and double him up quicker than the kick of a mule. If the victim be a short man, he will roll up like a dough-nut. If he be a tall man, he will fly together like a watch spring. In this condition he is of no earthly use, unless as a worm in a distillery. A man rolled up like a thread on a spool can't be expected to do much work. But to hear him groan and complain and carry on in one way and another, you would think he did more hard work for less wages than any other man on the face of the earth. In this condition he will do almost anything. He will roll over the floor like a hoop-snake, to the infinite amusement of the neighbors' children, who are doubtless peeping through the blinds. And to hear him yell for the camphor, or mustard plasters, the turpentine, his wife and mother, and all the doctors this side of the Rocky mountains, is enough to move the stones of Rome to pity. But it doesn't move the cholera morbus. Because the cholera morbus is a stayer. Every time the victim yells, say for aqua fortis, the cholera morbus might be hard to reply: "O, I'll give you aqua fortis, you miserable worm!" and then it thumps him in the bowels until he prays for the rocks and hills to tumbled in upon him. He does this because he realizes that, compared with the cholera morbus, the rocks and hills will sit as lightly upon him as an alpaca coat. There is nothing too mean for cholera morbus to do. It will take a man of the build of Carl Schurz, tie a bow knot in his middle, and offer to sell him for a neck-tie. Avoid it as you would the tax collector.

☞ Simple and unpretending ignorance is always respectable, and sometimes charming; but there is little that more deserves contempt than the pretense of ignorance to knowledge. The curse and the peril of the language in this day, and particularly in this country, is that it is at the mercy of men who, instead of being content to use it well according to their honest ignorance, use it ill according to their affected knowledge; who, being vulgar, would seem elegant, who, being empty, would seem full; who make up in pretense what they lack in reality, and whose little thoughts, let off in enormous phrases sound like fire-crackers in an empty barrel.

☞ Behind the scenes. Stage Manager—"John, go and see whether the ballets are all dressed." John returns—"About ready, sir; got most of their clothes off."

ED. W.

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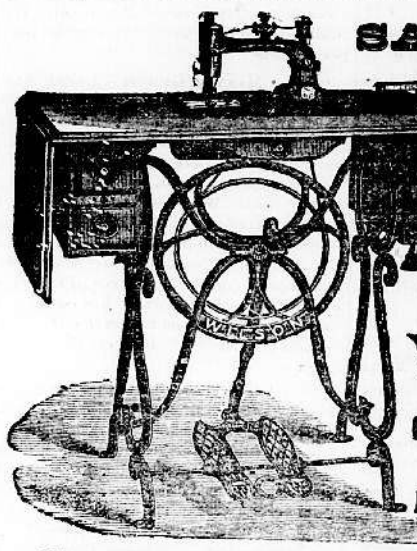

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