

THE  
EDUCATIONAL NEEDS  
OF  
APPALACHIA.

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*An Address Delivered at Morgantown, West Va.,  
By W. J. HOLLAND, LL.D.*

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*At the Commencement of the West Virginia University  
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## *The Educational Needs of Appalachia.*

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Mr. President, Gentlemen of the Faculty, Fellow Students, Ladies and Gentlemen: This is the third or fourth occasion that I have had the pleasure of visiting Morgantown, and I can assure you that with each succeeding visit I am increasingly charmed with the beauty of this fair region and impressed by the exceedingly gracious hospitalities which I have always received at your hands.

It was to me a pleasure yesterday afternoon to leave behind me the clouds of smoke which hang like a pall over the country to the north, and as the train glided over the divide of the hills, to come in sight of the beautiful river, no longer lashed and churned by the wheels of passing craft, but lying a beautiful mirror under the shadow of the mountains reflecting their wooded slopes from its bosom. Last night it was a joy to look up and to see the skies "all palpitating with stars," to see the Milky Way, and all those familiar constellations which I have not clearly seen for months. Surely bright skies and fair woodland scenery are in themselves a possession in which the people of this region ought to find pleasure. It is not a small matter to live in a country possessing the "dower of beauty."

In the year 1606, on April the 10, O. S., James I issued a charter under which England's first colony was established. I do not read that there were any "antis" to oppose his policy. This charter defines the limits of Virginia, declaring it to extend from the 34th to the 45th parallel of north latitude and from the seashore one hundred miles inland. In 1609 a second charter was granted, extending the limits of Virginia between the same parallels from sea to sea. The significance of this act was not understood. The width of the continent was at that time supposed to be not more than two or three hundred miles.

It was believed that the lands which were granted under this charter constituted a portion of a northward prolongation of the narrow Central American region by traversing which it was already well known to be easy to pass from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Where the great valley of the Mississippi is now known to exist the old geographers placed what they styled the Sea of Verrazano, an eastward extension of the Pacific Ocean. It is not my purpose to weary you with detailing the history of the successive grants of charters subsequently made, but in 1682, on the 4th day of March, Charles II granted a charter to William Penn and his heirs, conveying to them, roughly speaking, the lands extending westward from the Delaware between the 41st and 43rd parallels of latitude for a distance of five degrees of longitude. You will see that these two grants, the one to Virginia and the other to Pennsylvania, overlapped. Virginia laid claim to lands lying to the north of what was subsequently known as Mason and Dixon's Line, and regarded herself as entitled to hold much of what is now western Pennsylvania and all of Ohio and other Western territory. The terms made by these old charters proved at one time a fruitful source of controversy between the colonies of Virginia and Pennsylvania. I have quite recently been permitted to examine the records of the District of Augusta, a name which was applied to the greater part of what is now known as West Virginia, including southwestern Pennsylvania as far north as the Kiskiminetas. Virginian courts were established within this region, which was subsequently divided into three counties known respectively as Ohio, Monongalia, and Yohogania. The records of Ohio County are still in part preserved at Wellsburg. The records of Monongalia County, which were at one time deposited in Morgantown, were destroyed when your court house was burned in the year 1795. The records of Yohogania County, covering the region in which Pittsburg is situated, will shortly be published in the Annals of the Carnegie Museum. One of the first acts of the court was to provide a ducking stool to be located at Pittsburgh. There must have been termagent women in the region at that time. There are none now, ladies. The study of the

history of this region has deeply impressed upon my mind the truth, that while according to the figment of the law "the king can do no wrong," these sovereigns were acting blindly and without knowledge of existing conditions. The Appalachian mountain region, drained by the upper waters of the Ohio, is a region as distinct geographically and from the standpoint of its population as Scotland is distinct from England. Its mountain valleys became the home of the Scotch and of the Scotch-Irish, whose immigration, owing to persecutions in Ulster, set in in 1719, and continued without abatement until the year 1782. Were I an American czar, and had I the power to revise the work done by James I and Charles II and the various Congresses of the United States, I would throw down the political lines drawn by them almost at haphazard, and, recognizing the wisdom of those old Virginians who established the Ohio Company, I would create a new State, calling it Appalachia, or Allegheny, and I would put into it all of West Virginia contiguous to Pennsylvania and by river way and railroad centering in Pittsburgh, its metropolis, and all of western Pennsylvania west of the central mountain ridges, together with the eastern counties of Ohio, the cities and towns of which are today practically suburbs of the Birmingham of America, and, (I have been told you will mob me if I say it, but please bear with me,) to old Virginia I would restore the southern counties of your State, which are by history, tradition, and local sympathies more closely related to the Virginia from which they were sundered as the result of the events of war than they are to the northern half of your Commonwealth. I know that to propose such a scheme as this is idle and chimerical, and yet such an arrangement would be, in the light of what we know to have been the course of events under existing conditions, highly natural. This Appalachian highland region, drained by the Allegheny, the Monongahela, and their tributaries, extending westward for several hundred miles along the banks of the Ohio, has had by the force of events a history peculiarly its own, and an industrial development more and more tending to weld these communities existing under separate political relationships into a compact whole. The greater portion of West Vir-

ginia and Western Pennsylvania are alike in their population, their industries, and their interests. They are in certain respects widely separated from the people of the seaboard region and from the people of the flat lands lying west.

This Appalachian region, the home of the Scotch immigrant, has had a mighty influence upon the development of the national life. Let me commend to you, in this connection, the attentive perusal of the last chapter of Fiske's "Old Virginia and her Neighbors." No man can read the stirring words which he utters without feeling within himself a kindling glow of pride, and no man can thoughtfully study existing conditions without, I think, sometimes wishing that things were to-day as I have said that I, if Czar, would make them to be.

It is of one aspect, however, of the life of this region that I wish particularly to speak. What I have to say to-day relates not to the history, the commerce, or the manufactures of the upper Ohio valley, but to the work of education.

The men who came into the upper valley of the Ohio, pressing across the mountain defiles and taking possession of the land, were Scotchmen, or Scotchmen who had been temporarily domiciled in the north of Ireland, in whom, under press of persecution, the Scotch love of liberty had been intensified, and who were if possible more Scotch than the Scotch. Mingling with them was a stream of German descent—descendants of men who likewise had found escape from persecution in the colony of Penn. These first settlers brought with them devotion to church and to school, and among their very earliest acts was the establishment of academies for the instruction of youth. The first institution of learning chartered by law in this broad domain was the institution of which for many years I had the honor to be the Chancellor, which in February, 1787, came into being. No man can study the provisions of that old charter and the supplements and amendments thereto without realizing that whatever may have been subsequent performance, the men who called the institution into being had broad

and liberal ideas as to human culture. At a time when religious controversy and denominational acerbities prevailed they provided that no test of a religious character should be imposed either upon teacher or taught. In the broadest and grandest sense they created an institution which was intended to be of and for the people. In subsequent years denominational jealousies and rivalries, striking through the community, made men antagonistic to an institution which stood as this one stood, and as many others—including your own institution here—stood, for large freedom. Fortunately the day of bitterness has in a measure passed, and as we look back now we can see that those who laid the foundations for educational effort in this region builded better than they knew when they laid the corner-stone of educational effort.

While the first settlers, the founders of the institutional life of the region, proposed broad plans, the educational historian records with sorrow the fact that those who came after them showed little of the zeal and enthusiasm for the cause of culture which they displayed. It was soon discovered that these highlands were rich in buried treasure of fuel. Mining and manufacturing began; industrial pursuits became dominant in thought; the race for wealth accelerated, and in the rush of affairs educational interests were neglected. I cannot wholly account for the strange apathy and indifference to matters touching the higher life of these communities which prevailed from 1820 to 1870, a period of fifty years, and which has even continued to the present day with greater or less extent, except by the assumption that men were so taken up with material interests that they seemed to themselves to have no time to think of the higher interests of the community. Of course there were here and there notable exceptions, and here and there men arose who gave their best thought and effort to the great work of education, and here and there one was found who from his wealth was ready to consecrate a portion to the advancement of culture.

Statistics are sometimes said to be dry, but statistics sometimes teach us useful lessons. In the upper valley

of the Ohio as I have defined it, covering western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and the ten eastern counties of the State of Ohio, the census taken last year shows that there were at that time 3,938,000 inhabitants. Of these, 2,450,000 reside in the western half of the State of Pennsylvania, 960,000 reside in West Virginia, and something over half a million reside in the ten border counties of Ohio, within a hundred miles of the metropolis of the region. In this territory there are located two universities—the Western University of Pennsylvania and the University of West Virginia. There are in attendance upon these two institutions about eighteen hundred students, nearly equally divided between them, and there are eight or nine small colleges in which there are enrolled about twenty-five hundred students, including those enrolled in the preparatory departments of these institutions. Were the latter to be excluded, as ought to be done, the number of students pursuing higher courses of study would be reduced to about eighteen hundred. The student population of the region engaged in the pursuit of liberal or professional studies does not at the present time exceed 3,600, if the enrollment of the sons of the wealthy in attendance upon distant institutions be not taken into account. If the latter—these sons of rich men, who “go east” in order to return to us mighty connoisseurs in football, which they do not play, but upon which they bet, and in cigarettes—be added, the total enrollment would be brought back to a figure showing that there are in the neighborhood of five thousand young persons who are engaged at the present time in the effort to secure an education higher than that which is furnished by the secondary schools. Translating these figures into another form it appears that in Appalachia about one person in seven hundred and fifty is at the present day engaged in study leading either to the practice of one or the other of the professions, or to a broad, liberal culture. In the institution over which I have until lately presided, not more than one out of ten of the students is engaged in pursuing what are, strictly speaking, liberal studies. All of the rest of the entire University population, amounting to nearly a thousand students, are engaged in



studying law, medicine, pharmacy, dental surgery, or engineering—"bread and butter pursuits", as they have been called. The same remark holds good of your institution here. I do not believe that there is another community of equal extent and resources in the United States in which so little attention is being paid to pursuits which are purely scholarly and in which such a large mass of men appear to faintly appreciate the positive advantages to the community of an uplift in the direction of intellectual culture. It is marvelous and anomalous.

But reverting again to statistical details, we may show by the consideration of the present condition of the institutions of higher learning within the region how small has been the practical interest shown in education. The following table, based upon the latest returns that are accessible to me, is instructive.

	Students.	Volumes in Library.	Productive Funds.	Benefactions Received in 1900.	Estimated Value of Endowment Plant.
Western University of Pennsylvania.....	822	20,000	480,000	40,000	950,000
West Virginia University.....	885	15,200	114,250	.....	350,000
Allegheny College.....	326	17,000	200,000	17,000	450,000
Grove City.....	634	4,000	.....	6,500	125,000
Geneva.....	206	4,500	114,000	.....	200,000
Thiel.....	137	8,000	62,600	.....	150,000
Wooster University.....	450	21,500	350,000	20,000	575,000
Washington-Jefferson College.....	350	16,000	263,000	.....	450,000
Westminster.....	302	5,500	96,000	.....	175,000
Pennsylvania College for Women, Pittsburgh.	250	3,000	.....	.....	250,000
	4,362	114,000	1,679,250	183,500	3,675,000

From this it will be seen that the total value of all the institutions of learning located within this region, including buildings, land, endowment and equipment, consisting of apparatus and books, amounts to about three million six hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars. With a population of three million nine hundred and thirty-eight thousand and more, as given by the last census in the region, it is shown that the average amount per inhabitant invested, as the result of a hundred years effort on behalf of higher education in these institutions, is less than one dollar per inhabitant. A study of the educational and populational statistics of eastern Penn-

sylvania shows that in the eastern half of that Commonwealth there is an aggregate investment in the interests of higher education of nearly fifty-five millions of dollars, making an average per inhabitant of over eighteen dollars per capita. And what is true of the eastern half of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is matched by what is generally true of the New England States. The average amount invested per capita in so recently settled a community as Illinois is vastly larger than the amount invested in Appalachia. What Appalachia has set apart for higher education in her borders is vastly less than the amount invested in any European country the statistics of which are accessible to me. I am prepared to say, without fear of having the statement successfully challenged, that there is no other community of equal population and equal resources in the world in which so little proportionately has been done to advance the cause of higher learning as represented in the activities of the college and the university. Great and noble gifts have been made to the cause of physical suffering in this region. Probably there is no other community in which more has been done for hospitals and in which more is being contemplated in this direction. There is no danger that the suffering bodies of men will fail to be cared for. Hospitals are constantly being multiplied; hospitals of every kind, of every class, for all manner of diseases and complaints to which human flesh is heir are being provided. Every village and hamlet is being supplied with a hospital, and every physician who has had a misunderstanding with the staff of a hospital is calling for another,—and an appropriation from the Legislature to maintain it. But the regnant mind has been in all these years more or less forgotten and neglected. Yet wealth amassed by men who have controlled the resources of this region has been consecrated to the promotion of intellectual culture in other communities. Chicago to-day boasts one of the largest and most thoroughly equipped and amply endowed Universities in the world, the bulk of the money represented in which superb endowment was taken from under the hills of Western Pennsylvania and of West Virginia. Western Pennsylvania oil built the University of Chicago,

built the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, has covered Florida with palatial hotels and aided scores of institutions in other states, while the colleges founded in our midst have been left to struggle along, environed by difficulties and hardships which have made those who were concerned in the administration of their affairs over and over again sick alike in head and in heart. Other communities have profited, while we who live upon these western hills are left an inheritance of empty holes in the ground. I suppose that those who have amassed huge fortunes through the mineral resources of this region have abstractly the right to bestow their wealth where it seems best to them to give it, but surely it would be a graceful thing for some of those who have reaped large harvests of wealth from the region to do something for the promotion of the intellectual and thus of the social prosperity of the country.

Here, then, is the plain truth, stripped of all sentimental disguises. In a region containing a population greater than that of ten States and territories that might be named, populated by men and women who racially belong to the very finest stock, capable of doing the very best that man can do, we have a smaller amount set apart for the promotion of those interests which are represented by the college and the university than has been set apart in any other community with which comparison may be fitly made. The crying necessity of the day and the hour is the awakening of the attention and the interest of those who can help in this good work to our pressing necessities. We are not ungrateful for what has been done in the past, but when every week records munificent gifts bestowed upon the cause of higher education in other portions of the land it does appear as if the time had come for us to lift up our voices and tell to the world the story of our pressing educational necessities. If nobody else will speak I have resolved to-day that I will do it.

Is the neglect of the higher institutions of learning in this broad region to which I have called your attention to be set down to the unworthiness of the efforts of those who have been concerned in doing educational work in the institutions which are represented here? Surely I think

not. The test of the worth of effort is in its results. The test which the great Teacher of men applied to the tree may be applied to human institutions—"By their fruits shall ye know them." Thus tested the small, struggling, scantily endowed colleges and universities of Appalachia can give an account of themselves of which they need not be ashamed. The late James G. Blaine, an alumnus of one of those poor, struggling colleges, once said that he met more men eminent in public life who were the graduates of that institution than of any other. Among the alumni of these poverty-stricken, poorly endowed institutions of learning I find to-day scores and hundreds of men eminent on the bench, at the bar, in the ranks of the various professions. The chief executive of the United States to-day William McKinley, received his education at one of the small colleges of Appalachia. And the work done for the advancement of science and human knowledge among the people by the men who have been connected with the teaching force of these institutions, or who have been raised up from among the body of their alumni, is work which may well challenge admiration in view of the paucity of the resources at their command. The institution of which I lately was the head has been declared by an eminent man of science recently deceased, to have been "the cradle of the modern astronomy." The achievements of a Langley and of a Keeler are not to be spoken of lightly. Surely institutions which have done and are doing so much may not be passed by with indifference on the ground that they have proved themselves barren fig-trees and have yielded nothing but leaves. Gathering into their class-rooms the descendents of the sturdy Scotch and Scotch-Irish pioneers, they have made men of them of whom the nation has heard, and of whom the nation is justly proud.

But what shall we do? Standing here to-day like John the Baptist, feeling that I am but a voice crying aloud in the wilderness of educational need and educational neglect, appealed to for advice by those who, like myself, have for years struggled to awaken some responsive interest on the part of those who have it in their power to aid these good causes, I counsel courage and

perseverance in well doing. Neither you nor I, my friends, are rich, nor have we the power to provide what wealth alone can minister to the necessities of these deserving institutions. But we can continue, as we have been doing, *to give ourselves* to this good work. And after all, is not this the best gift that a man can make—the gift of his learning, his talent, his power, his heart, his self? Some day the men of wealth of Appalachia will perhaps awaken to the splendor of their opportunity, and those who have achieved wealth will see to it that the educational institutions of the region no longer are compelled to struggle as they have for a century to keep lighted the lamp of knowledge and to hand down the treasures of human experience to the generations that come after them. What shall we do? Be instant in season and out of season. Work on in hope.

And there is reason to be filled with hope. I believe that a better day is not far distant, so far as our colleges and universities are concerned. Yesterday I came up from Pittsburgh as far as Uniontown with my honored friend, Mr. J. V. Thompson, whom many of you know. Day before yesterday he gave to Washington and Jefferson College one hundred thousand dollars. As I met him I congratulated him from the bottom of my heart upon having had the power, the good heart, and the courage to do the splendid thing which he the day before had done. He admitted to me that it required some courage to make the gift which he had made. "But," I said to him, "what you did yesterday will make your name forever to be remembered." I could not help noting, as he stepped off into the throng which crowded the platform, how deferential and respectful was the bearing of all about him, and I heard the words whispered through the crowd, "There goes a man who yesterday gave a hundred thousand dollars to endow a college." Enjoying, as he all his lifetime has enjoyed, the sincere respect and admiration of his fellow-citizens, that respect and admiration has been heightened, deepened, intensified, by the noble act of self-renunciation which he has performed. All honor to the few in Appalachia who have the heart and courage to do such things! All honor to J. V. Thompson!

All honor to Felix R. Brunot! All honor to William Thaw! All honor to Andrew Carnegie! Though we have lived through nearly a century of intellectual night in Appalachia, there have been some stars of the first magnitude in the galaxy of her philanthropic sons, who have not forgotten the people from whom they sprang, who have not failed according to the measure of their ability "to do good and to communicate". Of such men Appalachia may well be proud. They are the brightest jewels in the diadem of her greatness, and they will be remembered forever.

But, as my mind comes back again to the thought of these weak, straggling institutions, called upon to do a Herculean task without adequate resources, as I think of underpaid professors and instructors engaged in teaching the sons and daughters of the region, as I think of their scanty equipment, the agony of economy in which those who have charge of their affairs forever dwell, I again ask the question, what shall we do? We have appealed again and again for help, but save for an answer here and there we have appealed in vain. Are there no practical steps which may be taken to meet the necessities of the case? As the train brought me down through the great coal fields the thought was impressed upon my mind—as it has frequently been before—that the mineral resources of this region are a diminishing quantity. It took the sun, laboring together with the earth, a million of years to provide the wells of oil and the beds of coal which man is today depleting. Everywhere as I came up through the country lying to the north I heard the snort of steam and piston strokes. Everywhere with the mightiest machinery which human skill can bring to the performance of the task the bowels of the solid earth are being rent and torn by the surgery of commerce and of manufactures. In comparatively a few years the arterial supplies of oil will run dry and the beds of coal will be exhausted. What then? We shall still have upon the surface of the soil a vast population of men and women. As my imagination carried me forward into the years, I said to myself, shall all this wealth which the ages have labored to create for the good of man be by man quickly dissipated and for-

forever lost? Cannot some way be found to preserve at least a portion of this wealth in the form of institutions which shall continue to bless and to enlighten mankind? Have the people no power under their laws to exact tribute in the years of plenty to provide against the years of want which will surely, though slowly, come? I have a suggestion to make. I am speaking in the presence of some of the ablest legal minds in this Commonwealth. I understand that your Legislature at its last session appointed a Commission to take up the whole question of taxation and to devise methods by which an adequate revenue for the creation and maintenance of the needed institutional life of the State may be provided. Through you to that Commission I suggest the levying of a small tax upon every barrel of oil and upon every ton of coal exported into distant parts the amount of this tax to be applied to the creation and maintenance of educational institutions within your Commonwealth. If we light with material light the homes of the nation, and of distant nations, if we kindle a ruddy glow of flame upon the hearths of distant Commonwealths, should they deem it a hardship to help us to some small extent to keep alight the lamp of knowledge in our midst? I admit there may be constitutional difficulties in framing such a law as I suggest, but there are legal minds of great acumen and ingenuity in this Commonwealth, and they may be relied upon to provide a constitutional method by which such a tax might be levied. One great corporation in Appalachia is every-day mining thirty-three acres of coal seven feet thick, and carrying it away. One hundred and thirty-seven millions of tons of coal were mined in Appalachia last year. A small tax—so small that it would not be felt by those who are the consumers of this our wealth—would yield a return sufficiently large to greatly aid in creating and maintaining those institutions of which we stand so sorely in need, for the privilege and opportunities of which our sons and daughters are crying out. But and if the thought cannot be executed, what shall we do? Labor on, my friends, believing in the sovereign goodness of the cause for which you stand—the cause of truth, enlightenment, culture. If men heed not, there is One that does surely

heed. The cup of refreshment which you—I speak to my brethren of the teaching profession—press to the thirsty lips of him who longs for knowledge shall not be forgotten. Nor shall you fail in due time to receive your reward. Do not be discouraged. Labor on in hope and in faith and in love. In my life as a teacher, covering now more than a quarter of a century, I have tested the everlasting truth of the promise, that unto him who gives it shall be given again. And though not in material good comes reward, it comes in the gracious thankfulness of men and women who have been helped to be more manly and better than they would have been had it not been for the ministries of the teacher. To have a boy whom you helped to bear the burdens of youth and to make a man of himself, come back again after the lapse of years and thank you for what you did for him, is better than to have laid up treasures of silver and gold.