
Primary Readings

Statutes of Harvard, 1646

1. When any Scholar is able to Read Tully or such like classical Latin Author *ex tempore*, and make and speak true Latin in verse and prose *suo (ut aiunt) Marte*, and decline perfectly the paradigms of Nouns and verbs in the Greek tongue, then may he be admitted into the College, nor shall any claim admission before such qualifications.
2. Every one shall consider the main End of his life and studies, to know God and Jesus Christ which is Eternal life. John 17. 3.
3. Seeing the Lord giveth wisdom, every one shall seriously by prayer in secret, seek wisdom of Him. Prov. 2. 2, 3 etc.
4. Every one shall so exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day that they be ready to give an account of their proficiency therein, both in theoretical observations of Language and Logic, and in practical and spiritual truths as their tutor shall require according to their several abilities respectively, seeing the Entrance of the word giveth light etc. Psalms 119, 130.
5. In the public Church assembly they shall carefully shun all gestures that show any contempt or neglect of God's ordinances and be ready to give an account to their tutors of their profiting and to use the helps of storing themselves with knowledge, as their tutors shall direct them. And all Sophisters and Bachelors (until themselves make common place) shall publicly repeat Sermons in the Hall whenever they are called forth.
6. They shall eschew all profanation of God's holy name, attributes, word, ordinances, and times of worship, and study with reverence and love carefully to retain God and his truth in their minds.
7. They shall honor as their parents, Magistrates, Elders, tutors and aged persons by being silent in their presence (except they be called on to answer) not gainsaying showing all those laudable expressions of honor and reverence in their presence, that are in use as bowing before them standing uncovered or the like.
8. They shall be slow to speak, and eschew not only oaths, lies, and uncertain rumors, but likewise all idle foolish, bitter scoffing, frothy wanton words and offensive gestures.
9. None shall pragmatically intrude or intermeddle in other men's affairs.
10. During their residence, they shall studiously redeem their time, observe the general hours appointed for all the Scholars, and the special hour for their own Lecture, and then diligently attend the Lectures without any disturbance by word or gesture: And if of any thing they doubt they shall inquire as of their fellows so in case of non-resolution modestly of their tutors.
11. None shall under any pretence whatsoever frequent the company and society of such men as lead an ungirt and dissolute life.

Neither shall any without the license of the Overseers of the College be of the Artillery or traine-Band.

Nor shall any without the license of the Overseers of the College, his tutor's leave, or in his absence the call of parents or guardians go out to another town.

12. No Scholar shall buy sell or exchange any thing to the value of six-pence without the allowance of his parents, guardians, or tutors. And whosoever is found to have sold or bought any such thing without acquainting their tutor or parents, shall forfeit the value of the commodity, or the restoring of it, according to the discretion of the President.
13. The Scholars shall never use their Mother-tongue except that in public exercises of oratory or such like, they be called to make them in English.
14. If any Scholar being in health shall be absent from prayer or Lectures, except in case of urgent necessity or by the leave of his tutor, he shall be liable to admonition (or such punishment as the President shall think meet) if he offend above once a week.
15. Every Scholar shall be called by his surname only till he be invested with his first degree; except he be fellow-commoner or a Knight's eldest son or of superior nobility.
16. No Scholars shall under any pretense of recreation or other cause whatever (unless foreshowed and allowed by the President or his tutor) be absent from his studies or appointed exercises above an hour at morning-bever, half an hour at afternoon-bever; an hour and an half at dinner and so long at supper.
17. If any Scholar shall transgress any of the Laws of God or the House out of perverseness or apparent negligence, after twice admonition he shall be liable if not adultus to correction, if adultus his name shall be given up to the Overseers of the College that he may be publicly dealt with after the desert of his fault but in grosser offenses such gradual proceeding shall not be expected.
18. Every Scholar that on proof is found able to read the original of the Old and New Testament into the Latin tongue, and to resolve them logically withal being of honest life and conversation and at any public act hath the approbation of the Overseers, and Master of the College may be invested with his first degree.
19. Every Scholar that gives up in writing a Synopsis or summa of Logic, Natural and Moral Philosophy, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Astronomy, and is ready to defend his theses or positions, withal skilled in the originals as aforesaid and still continues honest and studious, at any public act after trial he shall be capable of the second degree of Master of Arts.

The Harvard Charter, 1650

Whereas through the good hand of God many well devoted persons have been and daily are moved and stirred up to give and bestow sundry gifts, legacies, lands, and revenues for the advancement of all good literature, arts and sciences in Harvard College in Cambridge in the County of Middlesex and to the maintenance of the President and Fellows and for all accommodations of buildings and all other necessary provisions that may conduce to the education of the English & Indian youth of this Country in knowledge: and godliness. It is therefore ordered and enacted by this Court and the authority thereof that for the furthering of so good a work and for the purposes aforesaid from henceforth that the said College in Cambridge in Middlesex in New England shall be a Corporation consisting of seven persons (to wit) a President, five Fellows, and a Treasurer or Bursar; and that Henry Dunster shall be the first President; Samuel Mather, Samuel Danford, Masters of Art; Jonathan Michell, Comfort Starre, and Samuel Eaton, Bachelors of Art; shall be the five Fellows and Thomas Danford to be present Treasurer, all of them being inhabitants in the Bay, and shall be the first seven persons of which the said Corporation shall consist. And that the said seven persons or the greater number of them procuring the presence of the Overseers of of [sic] the College and by their counsel and consent shall have power and are hereby authorized at any time or times to elect a new President, Fellows, or Treasurer so often and from time to time as any of the said person or persons shall die or be removed, which said President and Fellows for the time being shall for ever hereafter in name and fact be one body politic and corporate in Law to all intents and purposes, and shall have perpetual succession, and shall be called by the name of President and Fellows of Harvard College; and shall from time to time be eligible as aforesaid; and by that name they and their successors shall and may purchase and acquire to themselves or take and receive upon free gift and donation any lands, tenements or hereditaments within this jurisdiction of the Massachusetts not exceeding the value of five hundred pounds per anum and any goods and sums of money whatsoever to the use and behoof of the said President, Fellows, and Scholars of the said College and also may sue and plead or be sued and impleaded by the name aforesaid in all courts and places of judicature within the jurisdiction aforesaid; and that the said President with any three of the Fellows shall have power and are hereby authorized when they shall think fit to make and appoint a Common Seal for the use of the said Corporation. And the President & Fellows or the major part of them from time to time may meet and choose such Officers & Servants for the College and make such allowance to them and them also to remove and after death or removal to choose such others and to make from time to time such orders & bylaws for the better ordering & carrying on the work of the College as they shall think fit. Provided the said orders be allowed by the Overseers. And also that the President and Fellows or major part of them with the Treasurer shall have power to make conclusive bargains for lands & tenements to be purchased by the said Corporation for valuable consideration. And for the better ordering of the government of the said College and Corporation be it enacted by the authority aforesaid that the President and three more of the Fellows shall and may from time to time upon due warning or notice given by the President to the rest hold a meeting for the debating and concluding of affairs concerning the profits and revenues of any lands and disposing of their goods. Provided that all the said disposings be according to the will of the donors. And for direction in all emergent occasions execution of all orders and bylaws and for the procuring of a general meeting of all the Overseers & society in great & difficult cases, and in cases of nonagreement, in all which cases aforesaid the conclusion shall be made by the major part, the said President having a casting voice, the Overseers consenting thereunto. And that all the aforesaid transactions shall tend to & for the use and behoof of the President, Fellows, Scholars & Officers of the said College, and for all accommodations of buildings, books and all other necessary provisions & furnitures as may be for the advancement & education of youth in all manner of good literature, arts and sciences. And further be it ordered by this Court and the authority thereof that all the lands, tenements or hereditaments, houses or revenues within this jurisdiction to the aforesaid President or College appertaining, not exceeding the value of five hundred pounds per anum shall from henceforth be freed from all civil impositions, taxes & rates; all goods to the said corporation or to any Scholars thereof appertaining shall be exempt from all

manner of toll, customs & excise whatsoever. And that the said President, Fellows & Scholars, together with the servants & other necessary Officers to the said President or College appertaining not exceeding ten, viz. three to the President and seven to the College belonging, shall be exempted from all personal, civil offices, military exercises or services, watchings and wardings, and such of their estates not exceeding one hundred pounds a man shall be free from all Country taxes or rates whatsoever and none others. In witness whereof the Court has caused the Seal of the Colony to be hereunto affixed. Dated the one & thirtieth day of the third month called May, Anno 1650.

Thos. Dudley
Governor

penetrate the whole mass of the people. The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers and be capable of reading them. I am convinced that those societies (as the Indians) which live without government enjoy in their general mass an infinitely greater degree of happiness than those who live under European governments. Among the former, public opinion is in the place of law, and restrains morals as powerfully as laws ever did any where. Among the latter, under pretence of governing they have divided their nations into two classes, wolves and sheep. I do not exaggerate. This is a true picture of Europe. Cherish therefore the spirit of our people, and keep alive their attention. Do not be too severe upon their errors, but reclaim them by enlightening them. If once they become inattentive to the public affairs, you and I, and Congress, and Assemblies, judges and governors shall all become wolves. It seems to be the law of our general nature, in spite of individual exceptions; and experience declares that man is the only animal which devours his own kind, for I can apply no milder term to the governments of Europe, and to the general prey of the rich on the poor. . . . Liberty ought to encourage Freedom of Speech. The Defence of Liberty, is a noble and heavenly Office which can only be performed where Liberty is.

THOMAS JEFFERSON ON THE NATURAL ARISTOCRACY AMONG MEN
(1813) From letter to John Adams, October 28, 1813, as quoted in Albert E. Bergh, ed.,
The Writings of Thomas Jefferson (Washington, D.C., 1905), vol. XII, pp. 394-403.

MONTICELLO, October 28, 1813.

DEAR SIR,—According to the reservation between us, of taking up one of the subjects of our correspondence at a time, I turn to your letters of August the 16th and September the 2d.

The passage you quote from Theognis, I think has an ethical rather than a political object. The whole piece is a moral *exhortation*, *παραίνεσις*, and this passage particularly seems to be a reproof to man, who, while with his domestic animals he is curious to improve the race, by employing always the finest male, pays no attention to the improvement of his own race, but intermarries with the vicious, the ugly, or the old, for considerations of wealth or ambition. It is in conformity with the principle adopted afterwards by the Pythagoreans, and expressed by Ocellus in another form; *περι δε τῆς ἐκ τῶν ἀλλήλων ἀνθρώπων γενεσεως* etc.—*οὐχ ἡδονῆς ἐνεκα μίξις*, which, as literally as intelligibility will admit, may be thus translated: “concerning the interprocreation of men, how, and of whom it shall be, in a perfect manner, and according to the laws of modesty and sanctity, conjointly, this is what I think right. First to lay it down that we do not commix for the sake of pleasure, but of the procreation of children. For the powers, the organs and desires for coition have not been given by God to man for the sake of pleasure, but for the procreation of the race. For as it were incongruous, for a mortal born to

partake of divine life, the immortality of the race being taken away, God fulfilled the purpose by making the generations uninterrupted and continuous. This, therefore, we are especially to lay down as a principle, that coition is not for the sake of pleasure." But nature, not trusting to this moral and abstract motive, seems to have provided more securely for the perpetuation of the species, by making it the effect of the *oestrum* implanted in the constitution of both sexes. And not only has the commerce of love been indulged on this unhallowed impulse, but made subservient also to wealth and ambition by marriage, without regard to the beauty, the healthiness, the understanding, or virtue of the subject from which we are to breed. The selecting the best male for a harem of well-chosen females also, which Theognis seems to recommend from the example of our sheep and asses, would doubtless improve the human, as it does the brute animal, and produce a race of veritable *αριστοι*. For experience proves, that the moral and physical qualities of man, whether good or evil, are transmissible in a certain degree from father to son. But I suspect that the equal rights of men will rise up against this privileged Solomon and his harem, and oblige us to continue acquiescence under the "*Αμαυροσις γενεος αστων*" which Theognis complains of, and to content ourselves with the accidental *aristoi* produced by the fortuitous concourse of breeders. For I agree with you that there is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents. Formerly, bodily powers gave place among the *aristoi*. But since the invention of gunpowder has armed the weak as well as the strong with missile death, bodily strength, like beauty, good humor, politeness and other accomplishments, has become but an auxiliary ground of distinction. There is also an artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents; for with these it would belong to the first class. The natural aristocracy I consider as the most precious gift of nature, for the instruction, the trusts, and government of society. And indeed, it would have been inconsistent in creation to have formed man for the social state, and not to have provided virtue and wisdom enough to manage the concerns of the society. May we not even say, that that form of government is the best, which provides the most effectually for a pure selection of these natural *aristoi* into the offices of government? The artificial aristocracy is a mischievous ingredient in government, and provision should be made to prevent its ascendancy. On the question, what is the best provision, you and I differ; but we differ as rational friends, using the free exercise of our own reason, and mutually indulging its errors. You think it best to put the pseudo-*aristoi* into a separate chamber of legislation, where they may be hindered from doing mischief by their co-ordinate branches, and where, also, they may be a protection to wealth against the agrarian and plundering enterprises of the majority of the people. I think that to give them power in order to prevent them from doing mischief, is arming them for it, and increasing instead of remedying the evil. For if the co-ordinate branches can arrest their action, so may they that of the co-ordinates. Mischief may be done negatively as well as positively. Of this, a cabal in the Senate of the United States has furnished many proofs. Nor do I believe them necessary to protect the wealthy; because enough of these will find their way into every branch of the legislation, to protect themselves. From fifteen to twenty legislatures of our own, in action for thirty years past, have proved that no fears of an equalization of property are to be apprehended from them. I think the best remedy is exactly that provided by all our constitutions, to leave to the citizens the free election and separation of the *aristoi* from the pseudo-*aristoi*, of the wheat from the chaff. In general they will elect the really good and wise. In some instances, wealth may corrupt, and birth blind them; but not in sufficient degree to endanger the society.

REPUBLICANS

753

It is probable that our difference of opinion may, in some measure, be produced by a difference of character in those among whom we live. From what I have seen of Massachusetts and Connecticut myself, and still more from what I have heard, and the character given of the former by yourself, (volume I, page III,) who know them so much better, there seems to be in those two States a traditionary reverence for certain families, which has rendered the offices of the government nearly hereditary in those families. I presume that from an early period of your history, members of those families happening to possess virtue and talents, have honestly exercised them for the good of the people, and by their services have endeared their names to them. In coupling Connecticut with you, I mean it politically only, not morally. For having made the Bible the common law of their land, they seem to have modeled their morality on the story of Jacob and Laban. But although this hereditary succession to office with you, may, in some degree, be founded in real family merit, yet in a much higher degree, it has proceeded from your strict alliance of Church and State. These families are canonized in the eyes of the people on common principles, "you tickle me, and I will tickle you." In Virginia we have nothing of this. Our clergy, before the revolution, having been secured against rivalry by fixed salaries, did not give themselves the trouble of acquiring influence over the people. Of wealth, there were great accumulations in particular families, handed down from generation to generation, under the English law of entails. But the only object of ambition for the wealthy was a seat in the King's Council. All their court then was paid to the crown and its creatures; and they Philipized in all collisions between the King and the people. Hence they were unpopular; and that unpopularity continues attached to their names. A Randolph, a Carter, or a Burwell must have great personal superiority over a common competitor to be elected by the people even at this day. At the first session of legislature after the Declaration of Independence, we passed a law abolishing entails. And this was followed by one abolishing the privilege of primogeniture, and dividing the lands of intestates equally among all their children, or other representatives. These laws, drawn by myself, laid the axe to the foot of pseudo-aristocracy. And had another which I prepared been adopted by the legislature, our work would have been complete. It was a bill for the more general diffusion of learning. This proposed to divide every county into wards of five or six miles square, like your townships; to establish in each ward a free school for reading, writing and common arithmetic; to provide for the annual selection of the best subjects from these schools, who might receive, at the public expense, a higher degree of education at a district school; and from these district schools to select a certain number of the most promising subjects, to be completed at an university, where all the useful sciences should be taught. Worth and genius would thus have been sought out from every condition of life, and completely prepared by education for defeating the competition of wealth and birth for public trusts. My proposition had, for a further object, to impart to these wards those portions of self-government for which they are best qualified, by confiding to them the care of their poor, their roads, police, elections, the nomination of jurors, administration of justice in small cases, elementary exercises of militia; in short, to have made them little republics, with a warden at the head of each, for all those concerns which, being under their eye, they would better manage than the larger republics of the county or State. A general call of ward meetings by their wardens on the same day through the State, would at any time produce the genuine sense of the people on any required point, and would enable the State to act in mass, as your people have so often done, and with so much effect by their town meetings. The law for religious freedom, which made a part of this system, having put down the

aristocracy of the clergy, and restored to the citizen the freedom of the mind, and those of entails and descents nurturing an equality of condition among them, this on education would have raised the mass of the people to the high ground of moral respectability necessary to their own safety, and to orderly government; and would have completed the great object of qualifying them to select the veritable aristoi, for the trusts of government, to the exclusion of the pseudalists; and the same Theognis who has furnished the epigraphs of your two letters, assures us that "Ουδεμιαν πω, Κυρν', αγαθοι πολιν ωλεσαν ανδρες." [Not any state, Cymus, have good men yet destroyed.] Although this law has not yet been acted on but in a small and inefficient degree, it is still considered as before the legislature, with other bills of the revised code, not yet taken up, and I have great hope that some patriotic spirit will, at a favorable moment, call it up, and make it the keystone of the arch of our government.

With respect to aristocracy, we should further consider, that before the establishment of the American States, nothing was known to history but the man of the old world, crowded within limits either small or overcharged, and steeped in the vices which that situation generates. A government adapted to such men would be one thing; but a very different one, that for the man of these States. Here every one may have land to labor for himself, if he chooses; or, preferring the exercise of any other industry, may exact for it such compensation as not only to afford a comfortable subsistence, but wherewith to provide for a cessation from labor in old age. Every one, by his property, or by his satisfactory situation, is interested in the support of law and order. And such men may safely and advantageously reserve to themselves a wholesome control over their public affairs, and a degree of freedom, which, in the hands of the *canaille* of the cities of Europe, would be instantly perverted to the demolition and destruction of everything public and private. The history of the last twenty-five years of France, and of the last forty years in America, nay of its last two hundred years, proves the truth of both parts of this observation.

But even in Europe a change has sensibly taken place in the mind of man. Science had liberated the ideas of those who read and reflect, and the American example had kindled feelings of right in the people. An insurrection has consequently begun, of science, talents, and courage, against rank and birth, which have fallen into contempt. It has failed in its first effort, because the mobs of the cities, the instrument used for its accomplishment, debased by ignorance, poverty, and vice, could not be restrained to rational action. But the world will recover from the panic of this first catastrophe. Science is progressive, and talents and enterprise on the alert. Resort may be had to the people of the country, a more governable power from their principles and subordination; and rank, and birth, and tinsel-aristocracy will finally shrink into insignificance, even there. This, however, we have no right to meddle with. It suffices for us, if the moral and physical condition of our own citizens qualifies them to select the able and good for the direction of their government, with a recurrence of elections at such short periods as will enable them to displace an unfaithful servant, before the mischief he meditates may be irremediable.

I have thus stated my opinion on a point on which we differ, not with a view to controversy, for we are both too old to change opinions which are the result of a long life of inquiry and reflection; but on the suggestions of a former letter of yours, that we ought not to die before we have explained ourselves to each other. We acted in perfect harmony, through a long and perilous contest for our liberty and independence. A constitution has been acquired, which, though neither of us thinks perfect, yet both consider as competent to render our fellow citizens the happiest

REPUBLICANS

755

and the securest on whom the sun has ever shone. If we do not think exactly alike as to its imperfections, it matters little to our country, which, after devoting to it long lives of disinterested labor, we have delivered over to our successors in life, who will be able to take care of it and of themselves.

Of the pamphlet on aristocracy which has been sent to you, or who may be its author, I have heard nothing but through your letter. If the person you suspect, it may be known from the quaint, mystical, and hyperbolic ideas, involved in affected, new-fangled and pedantic terms which stamp his writings. Whatever it be, I hope your quiet is not to be affected at this day by the rudeness or intemperance of scribblers; but that you may continue in tranquillity to live and to rejoice in the prosperity of our country, until it shall be your own wish to take your seat among the aristoi who have gone before you. Ever and affectionately yours.

BENJAMIN RUSH PROPOSES A SYSTEM OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR PENNSYLVANIA (1786) From Benjamin Rush, *Essays, Literary, Moral, and Philosophical* (Philadelphia, 1806), pp. 1-8.

Before I proceed to the subject of this essay, I shall point out, in a few words, the influence and advantages of learning upon mankind.

I. It is friendly to religion, inasmuch as it assists in removing prejudice, superstition and enthusiasm, in promoting just notions of the Deity, and in enlarging our knowledge of his works.

II. It is favourable to liberty. Freedom can exist only in the society of knowledge. Without learning, men are incapable of knowing their rights, and where learning is confined to a few people, liberty can be neither equal nor universal.

III. It promotes just ideas of laws and government. "When the clouds of ignorance are dispelled (says the Marquis of Beccaria) by the radiance of knowledge, power trembles, but the authority of laws remains immovable."

IV. It is friendly to manners. Learning in all countries, promotes civilization, and the pleasures of society and conversation.

V. It promotes agriculture, the great basis of national wealth and happiness. Agriculture is as much a science as hydraulics, or optics, and has been equally indebted to the experiments and researches of learned men. The highly cultivated state, and the immense profits of the farms in England, are derived wholly from the patronage which agriculture has received, in that country, from learned men and learned societies.

VI. Manufactures of all kinds owe their perfection chiefly to learning—hence the nations of Europe advance in manufactures, knowledge, and commerce, only in proportion as they cultivate the arts and sciences.

For the purpose of diffusing knowledge through every part of the state, I beg leave to propose the following simple plan.

I. Let there be one university in the state, and let this be established in the capital. Let law, physic, divinity, the law of nature and nations, economy, &c. be taught in it by public lectures in the winter season; after the manner of the