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AN ORATION

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ON THE

PLEASURES AND ADVANTAGES OF KNOWLEDGE,

AND THE

NECESSITY OF MORAL, AS WELL AS MENTAL CULTIVATION,

TO

INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE AND NATIONAL PROSPERITY;

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE LITERARY SOCIETIES

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA,

AUGUST 30, 1837,

BY

HENRY L. PINSKNEY,

OF

SOUTH CAROLINA,

A

MEMBER OF

THE

PHI KAPPA SOCIETY,

ATHENS:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE SOUTHERN WRIG,

1837.

PHI-KAPPA HALL, Aug. 3d, 1837.

On motion of William L. Mitchell, Esq.

Resolved, That the cordial thanks of this Society, be expressed to the Hon. Henry L. Pinckney, for the able, eloquent and interesting address just delivered; and that a Committee be appointed to request a copy of that address for publication in Pamphlet form.

Resolved, That 2000 Copies of the address be published at the expense of the Society.

PHI-KAPPA HALL, Aug. 3d, 1837.

SIR:

In pursuance of the former of the foregoing resolutions, the undersigned Committee of the Phi-Kappa Society, tender to you, the cordial thanks of that Body for your "able, eloquent, and interesting address" so well suited to us and to the times, delivered this day in the College Chapel, before the Demosthenian and Phi-Kappa Societies. The Society, in requesting the same for publication testifies her sense at once, of the merit of the production and of the worth of its author. The Committee in discharging their duty, cannot but echo back in the name of the Society, those kindly feelings expressed in your Oration towards our Associations as respects the temporal and immortal interests of their members.

Very respectfully yours,

B. M. PALMER,
M. E. BACON, } *Committee.*
W. R. GIGNILLIAT, }

HON. HENRY L. PINCKNEY.

ATHENS, GEO. August 4th, 1837.

GENTLEMEN—

I have had the honor to receive your communication, inclosing a Resolution of the Phi-Kappa Society, by which I am requested to furnish a copy of the Oration, delivered before the Literary Societies of the University of Georgia yesterday, for publication. In compliance with the desire of the Society, the Oration is herewith sent, and placed at its disposal; and I beg you to make my grateful acknowledgements to that Body, for the kindness they have shown me, and the honors they have been pleased to confer upon me, and to accept for yourselves my thanks for the very flattering manner in which you have communicated the wish of the Society, and the assurance of the respect, friendship, and esteem with which

I am, Gentlemen, yours truly,

H. L. PINCKNEY.

TO MESSRS. B. M. PALMER,
M. E. BACON,
W. R. GIGNILLIANT.

ORATION.

GENTLEMEN OF THE DEMOSTHENIAN AND PHI KAPPA SOCIETIES :

THE occasion, upon which we are assembled, is by no means one of idle curiosity or amusement. It was designed for a far more rational and exalted object, than to please the eye, or gratify the ear, by a vain exhibition of rhetorical skill. It was instituted to impart instruction to the youth attached to this venerable seat of learning, and particularly to impress upon those, who, at each recurrence of this anniversary, exchange academic for actual life, such sentiments and principles as may enable them to navigate successfully the untried and perilous ocean that lies before them. To those of you, then, who have arrived at this critical and important period, and to all connected with you by consanguinity or friendship, this is a season of profound and affecting interest. Standing as you do, upon a narrow isthmus, a mere point of time, you will soon have left this peaceful and secluded vale, to assume the duties, and mingle in the conflicts of the world. And what are the prospects that await you there? Will your revered preceptors be compensated, for their faithful and untiring efforts, by the enviable eminence and well earned honours of your future course, or will sad experience prove that their fruitless labours have been bestowed on sterile and ungrateful soil? Will your fond parents be rewarded for their devoted solicitude and unceasing care, by your brilliant fulfilment in manhood, of the fluttering promises of youth, or are they destined to mourn the disappointment of their most cherished hopes? These are problems it is true which time alone can determine; but their solution notwithstanding, and consequently the probable complexion of your whole career, may be affected measurably, by the exercises and impressions of the present hour. This reflection has solemnized my mind. It has given me a deep sense of the responsibility I have incurred, by consenting to occupy this station, not only to you, but to all who are interested in your welfare. As your own characters and fortunes will be necessarily identified with your conduct, so it is impossible to estimate the extent to which your influence and example may operate, for good or for evil, upon the best interests of society, and especially upon the great cause of virtue and religion. It is all important therefore, that you enter upon life, not only with correct conceptions of the theatre upon which you will be called to act, but with all those principles, engraven on your hearts, of which, as they lie at the foundation of individual excellence and social order, the observance is equally and indispensably necessary to the enjoyment of happiness, or the acquisition of renown. Under these circumstances, and in view of the grave consequences that may be connected with this ceremony, it is no affectation of humility to say, that the office, so kindly assigned to me, would have been better confided to one more competent than myself to communicate the lights of knowledge, and the admonitions of experience. As you have called

me, however, I appear before you ; not to proclaim new theories in politics or morals, but to lay before you the map of life, and to point out the paths, which every obligation of duty will require you to pursue ; not to entertain you with ingenious disquisitions, or discursive flights of fancy, but to exhibit the dangers and temptations, the honors and rewards that await you in society, and to assist you in forming the plans, and putting on the armour, which alone can qualify you to overcome the one, and to attain the other. In a word, I come before you, not as a teacher to instruct, but as a friend to counsel ; and as I claim no merit but sincerity, and aim at no higher object than to manifest my gratitude by a humble endeavor to be useful, so I ask no other favour than that you will do me the justice to believe, that however deficient in novelty or refinement of thought or language, this discourse may prove, it is dictated by an earnest desire to benefit those, in their dangerous passage through an untried world, to whose unmerited partiality I am indebted for the honour of addressing them.

But, whilst we are thus looking to the future, and discussing the duties it will impose, and the pleasures it may bring, it must be a source of painful emotion to every generous mind, that this celebration has occurred at a period of general and peculiar gloom. It is true, no desolating pestilence has swept away our people, nor are we involved in the privations and calamities of war : but in the midst of uninterrupted health, in a season of profound peace, and with all our national energies unimpaired, a funeral pall has overspread the land, and the voice of lamentation is heard within our borders. Yes! whilst you are treading upon fairy ground, and indulging dreams of fancied bliss, thousands of your countrymen are mourning their blighted prospects, and their ruined hopes. Whilst you are enjoying in imagination the golden harvests that will spring beneath your feet, or the laurelled trophies that will deck your brows, your country lies prostrated, as by the blast of a Sinoom, which has levelled at a blow the enterprize of the rich and the labour of the poor, involving in one common fate all classes and conditions of society. It is not my province, however, to examine the causes of this sad reverse. That office pertains more properly to the Legislature of the Union, and, as it has been summoned for the purpose, doubtless, as far as possible, the wound will be probed, and an appropriate remedy applied. But, whilst we hope that this dark portion of our history will soon be succeeded by a brighter day, and that the recuperative power of this great republic will enable it, like the sun emerging from a cloud, to overcome the difficulties that now surround it, and to move on again with energy and beauty in its high career, there is an important moral connected with the present aspect of affairs, which cannot be too deeply pondered, or too faithfully enforced, by every lover of his country. The very idea of a republic presupposes purity of morals, and simplicity of manners. However luxury and its concomitant vices may comport with monarchy, history and experience teach that in a popular government, they are synonymous with popular degeneracy, which invariably terminates in political enslavement. Now there can be no doubt, unfortunately, that the disasters we have suffered are mainly attributable to a general departure, by our people, from those plain habits and simple virtues, which constitute the essence of regulated freedom, and without the observance

of which, however we may retain the forms, it will be impossible to preserve the spirit of our republican institutions. If, therefore, the severe monition which this revulsion has afforded, shall be happily accompanied by a general and permanent return to republican simplicity, who will say that it will not deserve to be regarded, much less as a national calamity, than as a benevolent dispensation, wisely intended to arrest our downfall, and to whose harsh but salutary discipline, we should gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness for the preservation of our liberties! But whilst it reads this wholesome lesson to the great body of our people, it addresses itself with peculiar emphasis, to the rising generation. It speaks to you, my friends, and to all, who like you, are standing on the threshold of society, and will soon exercise an important influence over the destinies of your country. It tells you that the same causes, which produced the pecuniary distresses under which we labour, have also inflicted much deeper injury upon the great interests of religion and morality. It tells you that true patriotism cannot exist, where wealth has become the God of popular idolatry. It tells you that the decline of virtue necessarily involves the decline of freedom, and that, whilst the loss of property may be repaired, there is no Promethean heat that can reanimate the one, or relume the other. It shows you the dreadful instability of human grandeur, and the sudden vicissitudes to which all sublunary things are subject. It shows you that the clearest sky may in a moment be overcast with clouds, and the smoothest sea convulsed by storms. It points out the rocks, on which so many others have been wrecked, and exhibits a beacon by which you may be enabled to avoid them. What, indeed, can you expect of visionary schemes, but that they should vanish into air? or of wanton extravagance, but, that it should terminate in penury! or of an ocean of adventure, in which thousands have embarked, but that its shores should be strewed with the melancholy monuments of presumptuous ambition, and overweening avarice! Let me, then, earnestly entreat you, to listen to its warning voice! Let me urge you, as you love your country and yourselves, to learn to moderate your desires, to abhor cupidity, to avoid extravagance, to indulge no practice, however tempting, not strictly sanctioned by the precepts of religion, and to rely entirely upon honest industry, as the only path of peace, and the surest source of affluence. Be assured that such a course of conduct is not only important to the public weal, but will eminently adorn your own characters as citizens: and that, whilst it will contribute, materially, to the production of an elevated tone of public virtue, and consequently to a corresponding diffusion of the true spirit of republican government, it also constitutes the only basis upon which you can erect, individually, the solid and enduring edifice of your own happiness and honour.

"Through the wild waves, as they roar,
With watchful eye, and dauntless mien,
Your steady course of honour keep,
Nor fear the rocks, nor seek the shore."

Although we meet under circumstances of national depression, however, it is still a source of gratification to me, to have been invited to an office of which it is the natural and pleasing tendency to cement the ties that now so happily subsist between our respective States. Georgia and South Carolina were

originally one;* and though they have long been separated, in respect to territory, they are still one, in interests and institutions, and in every thing relating to their past history and future destinies, by which independent communities can be identified with each other. It is not only proper, therefore, but it really exhibits a kind of moral beauty, that, on occasions like the present, they should enter familiarly, as it were, into each others houses, and, by a kindly reciprocation of liberal sentiments and feelings, confirm and burnish this chain by which they are bound, as I trust they ever will be, in fraternal amity and peace

And, as very little more than a century has elapsed, since the erection of Georgia into a separate territory, it might have been curious had our time permitted, to have reviewed some of the prominent events that have transpired, within that period, upon the broad arena of the civilized world. I might have traced the progress of our own country, from its colonial condition to the adoption of the existing federal constitution, and sketched the history of that admirable instrument, through all those difficulties, foreign and domestic, which, by trying, have confirmed its strength. I might have shown the prodigious influence which the free principles of our republican institutions have exerted, in diffusing a knowledge of the rights of man, and enkindling a becoming disposition to assert them in other portions of the globe. I might have adverted to the appalling scenes of the French Revolution, which, born as it was of the spirit of liberty, consumed liberty itself—in its dreadful fires, and to those protracted and sanguinary wars, of which that memorable drama was the origin. I might have depicted the career of that extraordinary man, who disposed of crowns and kingdoms at his pleasure, but who, after having risen from obscurity to the throne of almost universal empire, died an exile, upon a solitary rock, the world of waters around which was strikingly emblematical of his former greatness and unbounded fame, whilst the peculiar loneliness of his prison-house, in the very midst of ocean, exemplified still more forcibly the utter desolation of his fortunes. I might have adverted, also, to another Revolution of a still more recent date, in France, by which the freedom of the Press was nobly established on the ruins of despotism, and republican principles engrafted on the monarchy of that beautiful, gallant, and regenerated land. I might have alluded to the persevering efforts, and final victory of Ireland, in the sacred cause of civil liberty and religious toleration, and to the remarkable advances made by England herself, the great enemy of Irish freedom, not only in the extension of the elective franchise, but in various other particulars essentially connected with popular rights. I might have directed your attention to the great mother country of republics—classic, unhappy, and degraded Greece—who rose, like a meteor, from the grave of ages, but who, after innumerable feats of unavailing valor, and the heroic endurance of unutterable woes, sunk again, like a Pleiad from the skies, never more to shine amongst

*Georgia was originally included in a patent granted to South Carolina: first as a proprietary government: in 1713 it became a royal one; and in 1732 a charter was granted to General Oglethorpe and others, for a separate and distinct province from Carolina, between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers, by the name of Georgia, which name was given it in honor of George II from whom the charter was obtained.—M'CALL'S HISTORY OF GEORGIA.

the nations of the earth, or to vindicate the glory of her ancient name. And I might have claimed your sympathy, too, for the wrongs and sufferings of devoted Poland, whose evanescent splendor, bursting through clouds, only dazzled for a moment to be lost forever in still deeper gloom, and whose struggles for freedom, like those of Greece, only riveted the galling chain she vainly attempted to remove. Or, turning from scenes like these, I might have paused to pay a well-deserved tribute to the heroes of San Jacinto, to contemplate the future fortunes of the infant republic of Texas, and to examine the prospect (never to be relinquished by Southerners, whilst hope remains) of its eventual incorporation into the great family of American States. And, above all, I might have dwelt upon the history of the Commonwealth of Georgia; showing its steady progress in wealth and population; the high intellect it has displayed, and the eminent men it has produced; its generous encouragement of learning, and particularly of the republican cause of popular education; its unswerving attachment to the principles of liberty, and the integrity of the Union; and the remarkable contrast it now exhibits, with all the resources and refinement of a powerful and enlightened State, to the little dependent colony, established by Oglethorpe, in the bosom of a wilderness, which, till then, had been in the undisturbed possession of its primeval inhabitants, but in which that illustrious individual planted those gems of liberty, literature and religion, of which we now admire and enjoy the precious and abundant fruits.

But we have no time for retrospects of this description; and, therefore, as the cultivation of letters is the most decisive test of refinement, I will only observe, that, were all other evidences wanting, the establishment of this University would be sufficient of itself to prove the devotion of Georgia to the interests of learning, and to place her high, as a patroness of science, amongst the members of the Union. And this venerable Institution is your *Alma Mater!* It is here that you have been conducted through the circle of the sciences, and have received the benefits of a liberal education. Here you have been instructed in the mathematics, that exalted system of intellect and truth, by whose important aid the Geographer is guided in his march on earth, the Astronomer in his exploration of the Heavens, the Navigator on the trackless ocean, and the Miner in the bowels of the earth, and which, as it comprehends every thing relating to number, magnitude and proportion, is not less indispensable to the welfare of society, than it is preeminently distinguished by the sublimest efforts of the human mind. Here you have been taught the elements of Chemistry, which includes all nature in its universal grasp, examines all substances of whatever kind or character, analyzes their principles, explains their affinities, and the effects of their combinations, and which, from its endless variety and practical utility, not only furnishes constant and increasing sources of attraction, but displays its power in every useful art, and in all the occupations and pursuits of man. Here you have been made acquainted with those airs or gases, that exist in the atmosphere, and of which it is the province of Chemistry to unfold the properties, and thus to investigate the composition, and explain the modifications, of the atmosphere itself. Here you have learnt the nature and properties of earths and alkalies, and the composition and value

of minerals and fossils. Here, too, you have studied the principles of Electricity, and are familiar, doubtless, with the astonishing discovery, and prodigious effects of Galvanism, and with the no less wonderful influence of that magnetic power, whose mysterious agency has been applied with such immense advantage to navigation, and to other useful and important purposes. And you have been instructed in the knowledge of the Heavens and the Earth. Astronomy has enabled you to number the stars of the firmament, to fix the limits of the constellations, to reduce to order the erratic movements of the planets, to calculate their magnitudes and distances, their velocity and density, and to understand and admire that great law of nature, the principle of Gravitation, which preserves the harmony of the Solar system, and probably regulates and controls every other system in the universe. Geography has taught you the formation of the earth, the theory of the tides, and the latitude and longitude of places; and whilst that useful science has carried you from country to country, and from age to age, explaining the ancient and modern names and forms, limits and heights, of kingdoms and republics, seas and rivers, deserts and mountains, history has accompanied you in those interesting researches, exhibiting the origin and progress, the wars and revolutions, the polity, literature and religion, of the different nations of the earth. Your attention has also been directed to the delightful study of natural history. You have examined all the various connecting links, of which the great chain of animated nature is composed. You have traced them from man, raised above all terrestrial beings by the god-like faculty of reason, through all the gradations of inferior animals, until you arrive at an order so simple in its structure, and so deficient in vitality, that the animal becomes blended with the vegetable, or rather the former kind of existence disappears in the latter. But, whilst engaged in this curious investigation of the wonders of Zoology, you have not forgotten to explore the fields, and enjoy the beauties, of the vegetable kingdom, to classify the flowers that you culled, to ascertain the species and properties of plants, and to discover, in the decorated carpet of the earth, the same infinite wisdom and benevolence that lights up the sun, and spreads out the gorgeous curtains of the sky. Nor have you been inattentive to the important departments of intellectual and ethical philosophy. You have been taught to turn your eyes inwards upon yourselves, to explore the arcana of the human understanding, to ascertain the origin of ideas, to develop the operations of the mental faculties; and to comprehend the principles, and practice the art of logic. You have been taught the duties men owe to themselves, and the obligations they incur in relation to society; and *moral*, I presume, has been at least so far aided by THEOLOGICAL instruction, as to have shown you the grounds upon which Christianity rests its claims to a divine original, and to have satisfied you, not of its intimate connexion with civil liberty, as it exists in this happy land, but of its indispensable importance to your own present and eternal welfare. And you have been instructed in the science of politics. You are not only well acquainted with the principal governments of antiquity, and with the important differences by which those that now exist are distinguished from each other, but your studies in this department have inspired you with a detestation of despotism,

in whatever shape it may appear, and with a corresponding devotion to the popular principles, and regulated freedom, of the excellent institutions under which we live. Nor have you neglected the rich treasures of the Classics. You have drunk at the hallowed fountains of antiquity. Your tastes have been formed upon the purest models. You have studied the principles of Criticism, and the rules of Rhetoric, and, in a word, whilst it has been the main object of your education, to enlarge your minds with valuable knowledge, no effort has been spared so to commingle elegant literature with the severer sciences, and so to train you in the important art of eloquence, as to decorate your more solid acquisitions with all those attractive graces which are necessary to constitute the characters of accomplished orators and scholars.

Such is an imperfect outline of your collegiate course—having presented which, I now solicit your indulgence for some of the reflections suggested by it.

How delightful is the pursuit of knowledge! Who would not like to trace the progress of science, from its earliest dawn in Egypt or Chaldæa, to the full splendour of the present age, and the gradual advancement of society, from the origin of civil institutions, to the refinement and perfection that are now displayed in the civilized portions of the globe! Who would not wish to be conversant with the prominent events of history, and with all those occurrences, at every epoch, that produced important effects upon the fortunes of mankind, and to be so thoroughly imbued with classic lore, as to be competent to appreciate the beauties, and to judge the merits, of the ancients and the moderns! Who would not desire to be well-skilled in politics, to comprehend the advantages and defects of every form of government, and particularly the complex structure, and peculiar operation, of our own Constitution! Who would not desire to be acquainted with every system, and with every sect—to hold improving converse with the moralist, as he inculcates the lessons of wisdom, and the dignity of virtue—to listen to philosophy, as it explains the motions of the heavenly bodies, or the structure of the earth, and the various strata of which it is composed—or to walk humbly with religion, as it unfolds the relations between man and his Creator, and points out the only path which can lead through peace and pleasantness here, to unending felicity in a future life! Who would not like to travel with the traveller, accumulating information as he roams abroad, or to accompany the adventurous explorer, as he visits the remotest regions and the most inhospitable climes, cheerfully enduring hardships and encountering hazards, for the exalted purpose of enlarging the boundaries of science; and enrolling his name amongst the honored benefactors of his race! Who would not like to be familiar with the eminent men of every age and nation—to sympathize with patriots who have nobly suffered in their country's cause—to dwell upon the achievements of warriors, who have erected the standard of independence upon the ruins of a throne—to hang upon the lips of orators, rousing their countrymen to the assertion of their rights, and catch the inspiration of liberty from their burning words—or to revel in the charms of poetry, whether it moves with the majesty of the epic muse, or pours forth the plaintive softness of elegiac verse! Who would not desire, in short, that new light should be daily infused into his understanding, new accessions made

to his intellectual resources, and that he should grow in knowledge as he grows in years, constantly perfecting his nature and increasing his happiness, by multiplying his literary attainments, and expanding the capacities of his immortal mind! *And how valuable is knowledge to the fortunate possessor!* What a sphere of usefulness does it offer! What a fund of enjoyment, of which nothing can deprive him! What a source of influence and power, particularly in a country like ours, in which no distinctions are recognized but those that arise from superior intellect and virtue! Who then would be ignorant, rather than take the trouble to become enlightened! Or contented with obscurity, rather than strive for eminence! Or willingly forego a treasure, which no moth or rust can destroy, which will go with him wherever he goes, which confers pleasure at home and fame abroad, dignifies prosperity, and affords consolation in misfortune! *And how all important is knowledge to the welfare of society!* Who can tell the mischievous errors it has corrected, the false and dangerous theories it has exploded, the degrading superstitions it has banished, the ignorant fears it has dissipated, the cruelties it has repressed, the sufferings and labors it has mitigated or abolished, the comforts and luxuries it has introduced, the intelligence and happiness it has universally diffused! Who can estimate the advantages that have resulted, in reference to war and commerce, from the invention of gun-powder and the discovery of the mariner's compass, or the beneficent influence which the Reformation, aided by the art of Printing, has exerted in disseminating the blessings of religion, liberty and learning throughout the world! What indeed, would society be, without the light of knowledge! What is it that teaches us the properties of matter, and the laws of motion; the nature of light, and the laws of vision; the properties of air, and the nature and effects of heat and cold; the causes of earthquakes and volcanoes, of winds and clouds; and, in a word, that elucidates the phenomena, and enables us to control the elements of nature! What is it that gives to Geography its correctness, to navigation its security, to commerce its extension, to agriculture its productiveness, to architecture its strength and elegance, to machinery its diversified application, and unbounded power! What is it that has made us acquainted with the inhabitants of the air, the ocean, and the earth—with the nature and properties of every animal or vegetable that is fit for food, or that supplies an article of commerce—of every plant that contributes to our clothing, or alleviates disease—of every mineral or metal that is indispensable to comfort, or that enters essentially into the wealth of nations—of every insect, that is either useful in medicine, or that produces a delicacy for the taste, or a luxurious material for manufacture, or a beautiful color to adorn it! What is it that unfolds the structure of the human frame, showing indeed, how fearfully and wonderfully it is made—or has invested Surgery with the admirable precision and dexterity which it now exhibits—or that enables Medicine to conquer all the maladies to which mankind is subject, those plagues and pestilences alone excepted, which seemed destined by Providence to perform the office of special judgements, and to remain incurable scourges of the human race? What is it that disarms the lightning of its power—elevates valleys and represses hills—cleaves the ocean, and ascends

the sky! What is it that we behold in every elegant and useful art—in the diversified hues that attract the eye—in the dresses and decorations of our persons and our houses—in every implement of husbandry or war—in the subterraneous aqueduct, or the heaven kissing monument—in the animated canvass, or speaking marble! What are all these, but the varied triumphs of the human mind! And who can estimate their value! To say nothing of that absolute state of barbarism, “When wild in woods, the noble savage ran,” who can measure the difference between the splendid illumination of the nineteenth century, and that glimmering condition of society, when astrology assumed to regulate events, and alchemy to transmute all other metals into gold—when ignorance was affrighted by an ignis fatuus, and comets and meteors were regarded as the immediate precursors of the dissolution of the world—when science was considered synonymous with magic, and punished as the evidence of atrocious crime—when superstition occupied the seat of justice, and guilt or innocence was established by the righteous decisions of fire or water, or the infallible ordeal of military prowess! Science is, indeed, to the moral, what the great orb of day is to the natural world—and as the extinction of the latter would necessarily be followed by universal darkness and decay, so, were art and science lost, society would inevitably relapse into the savagism from which it is their proud boast to have elevated and redeemed it. But, advanced as knowledge is, it has by no means attained the ultimate height to which it may be carried! In medicine, for instance, the mastery still remains to be obtained over various diseases that deride its power, and the gratitude of mankind is yet reserved for him, who shall achieve the victory. Indeed, every department of knowledge, still affords room for improvement, and rewards for genius. The sun of science knows no meridian. In fact, scarcely is one improvement in the full tide of successful experiment, before it is superseded by another. Even now, whilst steam is riding, like a sea-god, in his ocean car, it is in contemplation to dethrone it, by the substitution, in its stead, of the novel power of electro magnetism. Such is the limitless nature, and aspiring tendency of genius. Every year will develop new principles, or the applications of known ones to purposes to which as yet they have never been directed; and thus, new inventions and new improvements, like newly discovered stars, will be constantly increasing the light of science, and adding to individual comfort and national wealth, by furnishing new instruments of power, and disclosing new sources of prosperity!

Seeing, then, that such is the inestimable value of knowledge, both to individuals and nations, it cannot be improper to inquire, do you take pleasure in pursuing it? Do you realize its importance to yourselves and to society? And do you really long to attain that laudable distinction amongst men which can only be derived from superior merit? If to these questions the responses are affirmative, your path is plain, your progress easy, and your victory sure. In relation to learning, it is only necessary to determine to obtain it. Elevated as it is above all other wealth, it is also the only kind of which the desire so surely produces the possession, that they may almost be regarded as convertible terms.

But though I can readily conceive that all of you are panting for the race, and eager for the prize (for indeed an American, destitute of ambition, is unworthy of the glorious heritage of freedom) there are still certain plain, wholesome, practical truths, that cannot be too deeply infix'd in the youthful mind, and to which, therefore, a conviction of propriety constrains me to solicit your attention. I would guard you against errors on the one hand, and incite you to the performance of duty on the other—point out the rocks on which you may be wrecked, and delineate the course which alone can conduct you to the haven of usefulness and honor.

There are faults of diffidence, and also of presumption. Some refuse exertion, despairing of success—others neglect it, relying entirely on their genius.

Both of these are fatal errors, which cannot be too carefully avoided or corrected.

Self-distrust is not modesty. An amiable virtue must not be confounded with a reprehensible weakness. The only ground upon which this weakness has ever been attempted to be justified, is, that there is a radical and incurable difference in the intellects of men. Admitting the truth of this assertion, and that some men are inferior to others in point of natural understanding, still there are none so dull whose minds may not be stored with knowledge, disciplined by study, and improved by practice. The greatest orator of antiquity is said to have been an unpromising youth, yet every scholar is familiar with his eminence, and knows the methods by which it was acquired. Thousands of similar illustrations might easily be given. No one, then, who has the means of education, should despair of knowledge. Perseverence will overcome all obstacles, and, though the ascent may be difficult, will place its votary on the hill of fame, whilst he, whatever may be his talent, who neglects the improvement of his mind, will be found grovelling in the ignoble obscurity of the vale below.

Mental precocity, in fact, may often be regarded as a dangerous gift. It begets overweening confidence, and an undue reliance on capacity, in contradistinction to acquirement. A genius is too apt to imagine that he can master subjects, of the very elements of which, perhaps, he is profoundly ignorant. Hence the most promising youths are often overtaken, and left far behind, by their industrious inferiors, in the race of life. Many, who have ~~shown~~ *shown* in College, with little or no effort, have been indebted to that very circumstance for their subsequent failure on the great theatre of the world. Eminence cannot be attained without learning, nor learning without unwearied application, and systematic discipline. The advice, therefore, that has been offered to the diffident, is equally applicable to the confident. The consciousness of talent, no more than its imaginary want, can dispense with the necessity of persevering study. Fame is the reward of toil; and he is indeed deceived, who expects to command resources without the trouble of acquiring them, or to rise to eminence upon a bed of roses, or to win that laurel-wreath, without an effort, which crowns none but those who earn it by their diligence.

"Love, fame, esteem, 'tis labor must acquire,

"The smiling off-spring of a rigid sire."

But, whilst some err through humility, and others through presumption; there are others again, who waste their lives in ignorance and indolence, either from an inherent aversion to study, or from a contempt of knowledge as unworthy the notice of a gentleman, or from an unfounded impression that many branches of education are of little or no value in the affairs of life. Hence the fashionable doctrines, that the ancient languages are dead and ought to be abandoned; that the mathematics are only serviceable to professional men; that metaphysics is an idle jargon, leading to no practical results, and fit only to amuse the ingenuity of schoolmen; and that he, whose fortune places him above the necessity of learning, needs no farther education than a general and superficial acquaintance with the current literature of the day. Against errors such as these it is vain to argue. A gentleman, surely, is not the less entitled to that appellation, who possesses a cultivated taste, and a well stored mind; nor does it derogate from the dignity of a planter to be conversant with the principles of agriculture and rural economy, or with the science of chemistry as applicable to them, or with all those mechanic arts which are indispensably connected with the pursuits of husbandry. But he who hates or despises knowledge, can never be taught to love or revere it, nor can ambition be implanted in a heart that is naturally destitute of that ennobling principle. As I trust, however, there are none before me to whom this remark applies, I proceed with confidence, in the firm conviction that I speak to those, who wish to do something whilst they live, for which they may deserve to be remembered when they die.

The present period is distinguished, above all that have preceded it, by what has been emphatically denominated the march of mind. This is abundantly manifest, not only in the extraordinary advancement of the sciences, but in all those revolutions and improvements, civil, political, and religious, of which the great objects are to enlighten, elevate, and reform mankind. He, therefore, who would attain to eminence, must keep pace fully with the progress of society. As the age moves onward, he must move on with it, or be left behind. But whilst ignorance, in a period of such general illumination, would indeed be a reproach to any man, let it also be remembered that unusual efforts are required of those who aspire to rise above mediocrity, or to shine with superior lustre in the literary firmament. They, and they only, can hope to be stars, in an age like this, of whom it may be truly said, as regards their preparatory course,

"See how the matchless youth their hours improve,
And in the glorious way to knowledge move;
Eager for fame, prevent the rising sun,
And watch the midnight labors of the moon."

But, whilst one poet thus stimulates your ambition to excel in learning, as the only sure groundwork of power and distinction, another urges impressively the important truth, that

"Not in mental, but in moral worth,
God excellence placed, and only to the good,
The virtuous, grants happiness below."

However desirable, therefore, it may be, to be distinguished, it is infinitely more important to be virtuous. As knowledge is power, so it is an instrument of great good or evil, as it may be applied to elevated or ignoble purposes. Learning, adorned by virtue, forms the perfection of the human character; but when employed to poison the minds, pervert the principles, and destroy the happiness of a community, it is a moral fiend, seeking whom it may devour, and justly deserves the abhorrence of every friend of man. Unprincipled talent, however, injurious as it is to society, is still more pernicious to its unfortunate possessor. Of what use, indeed, is it to *him*, but to render *his* debasement the more conspicuous and deplorable! Of what use to him, but to show that those who fall from the greatest height, generally fall to the lowest depth, and that he, of all others, is most justly execrated and contemned, who, with intellectual strength and elegance, condescends to the commission of an act of turpitude? The practice of virtue is recommended, then, not only by its intrinsic beauty, but by every motive of private interest, and public approbation. Do you desire to be happy? Be assured that felicity can only be found in a rigid adherence to the principles of rectitude! Do you covet the esteem and confidence of the community around you? Be assured they can only be obtained by the exhibition and maintenance of a high and unimpeachable character for honor and integrity! Do you wish to be beloved whilst living, and that garlands shall be strewn upon your graves when dead? You must learn the "luxury of doing good." He only lives in public gratitude and honour, who does those things that are of good report, and devotes his influence to the promotion of all those objects, literary, religious, and benevolent, which are laudably intended to diffuse the benefits of useful knowledge, to repress crime and alleviate misfortune, to dry up the sources of moral evil, and enlarge the fountains of happiness and virtue.

But, whilst I urge the necessity of a strict adherence to moral principles and duties, as alike important to your own welfare and that of society, it would be unpardonable to omit the imperative claims of Patriotism. At the head of these, is the great cardinal principle of *obedience to the laws*. This is not only a republican duty, but a most exalted and comprehensive virtue. We live under a government, bottomed upon the doctrine of popular sovereignty, and of which it is a fundamental principle, that the will of the majority, constitutionally expressed, is the law of the land. It is incumbent upon you, therefore, not only to obey the laws yourselves, but to resist every doctrine, however plausible, every movement, however specious, which tends to engender the pernicious spirit of mobocracy. It is immaterial whether this spirit be displayed in the infliction of popular vengeance upon obnoxious individuals, or in forcible resistance, by illegal combinations, to the regular execution of the laws. In either case it is the very principle of anarchy; substituting tumultuary violence for public justice, and trampling in the dust the rightful authority of government. Allow this spirit to prevail, and it is evident there can be no security for private rights, nor for the stability of our republican institutions. And, that your obedience to the laws may be cheerful and intelligent—the result of enlightened principle, not of abject fear—the voluntary homage of freemen

to the government of their choice, not the reluctant submission of subjects to the arbitrary edicts of a despot—patriotism calls upon you to *sustain the Constitution, from which they emanate*. As a Christian observes the requisitions of the Gospel, less on account of the penalties it denounces, than from an elevated sentiment of love to God, so every good citizen will cling to the great charter of our liberties, not so much from a sense of duty, as from a just appreciation of the inestimable blessings it confers. And he will cling to it, too, not only because it has made the American people incomparably the freest and happiest on earth, but because it is from the successful action of our political system, that other nations have derived whatever they possess of actual freedom, or of the disposition to obtain it. In every age, some one nation has always exercised a predominant influence over others. This position is now occupied, and this influence exercised, by the United States, and mainly from the circumstances that the free principles of our government are in exact accordance with the prevailing disposition of mankind. The American Constitution is, in fact, the political luminary of the world, and he who would extinguish its sacred light, is not only a traitor to American liberty, but justly deserves to be regarded as an enemy to the human race. Patriotism, therefore, requires you to *cultivate an ardent and abiding attachment to that Constitution as the bond of our political Union*. This is the Ark of our political salvation—the Citadel from which the light of liberty shines, and its inspiring banner waives—that sacred light, at which mourning humanity may relume its hopes—that banner which proudly proclaims that there is still one republic in the world, one land where man walks erect in all the dignity of his nature, and where the oppressed of other nations may happily exchange the miseries of despotism for the inestimable fruition of the rights of man! And who would overthrow it, if he could? Who is he that would rise on the ruins of his country, or that desires to see the American Capitol rocking on its base, and the proud emblem of freedom torn from its walls, and this glorious confederacy broken into fragments, and the sun of liberty extinguished in fraternal blood, and the whole world enveloped in the deep and interminable darkness of political death? If there be an American, so utterly unworthy of the name, let me tell him for his consolation that his parricidal aspiration never can be gratified. The American Confederacy can never be dissolved—never, whilst the people retain a recollection of their common sufferings and glories—or are actuated by the principles of the revolution—or desire the esteem and admiration of the world—or prefer tranquility to incessant wars—or are permitted to think and act for themselves—or are capable of distinguishing between good and evil—or whilst reason is left free to combat error, and popular education is promoted, and that great engine the press, remains untrammelled, and men dare to think, and speak, and act, like freemen. That you may do your duty to the Union, however, Patriotism requires you, again, to *love your country!* And who can do otherwise? Is she not our common mother? Is it not to her we are indebted for all that we are, and look for security in the enjoyment of our rights? Is not her glory reflected upon us? Is it not in her soil that the bones of our ancestors repose, and on her care that we depend for the welfare of posterity? Is there on earth

a prouder title than that of an American Citizen, or has that Utopian region yet been found, whose inhabitants enjoy higher civil and political privileges than those that constitute the birthright of the humblest citizen of this great republic? Who, then, would not love his country? Who does not feel that this is, indeed "HIS OWN, HIS NATIVE LAND?" Or where is the American, "with soul so dead," who cannot say, with the honest enthusiasm of a patriot heart,

"I love thee, next to heaven above,
Land of my Fathers—thee I love,
And rail thy slanderers as they will,
With all thy faults, I love thee still."

But, that you may love her as you ought, patriotism enjoins it upon you, *to discard all sectional prejudices, and contracted views*. Ignorant, indeed, is he who limits the domain of genius and virtue by a geographical line, or whose narrow vision can discern nothing good in this wide republic, save in the particular portion of it in which he happened to be born. Feelings of this kind are not only degrading in themselves, but utterly at war with the genius of our institutions, and the welfare of our country. This is not a land of suspicion and antipathy. There is no despotism here, by which aliens and enemies are held coercively in an unnatural conjunction, from which they are struggling to be free. On the contrary, our federative system is a voluntary compact between the States that formed it, and, as it originated in a sense of common danger and dependence, and was expressly established for the great purposes of common security and protection, so, emphatically, its spirit is peace, and its vital principle, fraternal love. He, therefore, who would overturn this beautiful "system of family institutions," by alienating its happy members from each other, is not less an enemy to the State of which he is a citizen, than to the Confederacy he would madly endeavor to dismember. Let me entreat you, then, not only to indulge no hostility to your countrymen, but to cherish towards them all those liberal sentiments which will teach you to respect their feelings and opinions, to appreciate their characters and virtues, and to promote their welfare. And are not all Americans your countrymen? Are they not all members of the same political household; governed by the same laws, living under the same institutions, having the same manners, customs, and religion, partaking one common lot, and looking forward to one common destiny! Yes! and that you may cultivate this American feeling, patriotism requires you, again *to restrain the excesses of party spirit*. Doubtless, in a country like ours, the existence of party is not only unavoidable, but, to a certain extent, proper and commendable. Parties, however, should be real, founded upon principle—not personal, or merely devoted to the interests of men. Where parties are real, their collisions are wholesome to the body politic. They elicit truth, and propagate light. They fan the flame of liberty, and prevent the occurrence of popular apathy, which is political death. They develop the true structure of the government, and thus promote the progress of republican principles—and in addition to all this, the vigilance of the minority protects its rights, by operating as a salutary restraint on the power of the majority. But,

where party spirit, abandoning the high ground of principle, descends to a servile contest about men, it degenerates into faction, the worst foe to freedom, and the very stepping stone to monarchy. It is all important, therefore, that you should act in political affairs upon your own convictions of public duty, having an enlarged relation, in all your conduct, to the true welfare of our common country, and disdaining to surrender your judgement, or to violate your consciences, either to subserve the purposes of party, or to promote the advancement of ambitious men. And, whilst you should be conscientious in adopting your principles, and firm and independent in maintaining them, patriotism requires you, also, *not only to tolerate, but to respect the opinions, of your political opponents.* As moderation is essential to the discovery of truth, so diversity of sentiment is the lot of man. The human intellect cannot be controlled, nor would any but a tyrant undertake to force conviction or make the absurd and vain attempt

“To bind

With iron chains, the free born mind.”

Whilst it becomes you, therefore, not to be blind followers of party leaders, it is also incumbent upon you, freely to concede to others the same right of independent judgement, which you claim for yourselves. And, that you may never hesitate to exercise this tolerance, it is only necessary to reflect that your opponents not only unquestionably possess the same right to think and act for themselves, that you do to regulate your own conduct in political affairs; but that in all probability they may be fully as honest and conscientious in the formations of their opinions as you are in the formation of yours, and that it is by no means impossible that their judgement may actually be correct as regards the subject—matter of dispute. And, in the last place, patriotism requires you *to sustain the great cause of popular education.* This is the very key-stone of the sacred edifice of freedom. It is true, that learning has often been carried to a considerable extent, in other countries, without producing freedom, or elevating the tone of public morals, or imparting happiness to the great body of the people. But every instance of this description will be found to have arisen principally from the deplorable want of moral culture. Men are *moral*, as well as intellectual beings, and their moral qualities, on account of their superior importance, should be even more assiduously cultivated than their mental.— Knowledge may indeed enlighten him, in the ordinary signification of the phrase, but, as no soil without “parental sun, and genial showers,” can yield “the harvest promised in the spring,” so no scheme of education, not essentially bottomed on the great principles of Christian morality, and looking directly to the moral improvement of the people, can ever make them lovers of virtue, or votaries of freedom. Another reason may be found in the wants of those peculiar political institutions, which learning alone can never wrest from tyranny, and without which a literary nation may grope on forever in all the darkness of political bondage. Fortunately for us, however, our form of government is admirably adapted to inspire all those virtuous and elevated sentiments and feelings that dignify and adorn humanity, and therefore it is our

bounden duty to take care that as it owes its existence to the spirit of liberty, its influence shall always be exerted to preserve that spirit. But this can never be done without general intelligence, and popular education. Knowledge, like every other kind of power, is dangerous to liberty, when possessed only by a few, and of all monopolies, this is perhaps the most abhorrent to the genius of democracy. Confine it to a few, and it becomes the engine of despotism, the parent of superstition, and the handmaid of oppression. Of this important truth, abundant evidence might easily be cited from the history of every country, in which learning has been restricted to a particular class, and kept, as a sealed book, beyond the prying curiosity, and audacious aspirations, of the people. But, as knowledge gives unlimited power, when confined to a few, so it scatters the blessings of freedom, when diffused amongst the many. Liberty and letters are the mutual guardians of each other. As there can be no liberty without public virtue, and no public virtue without popular enlightenment, so general education may justly be termed the life blood of a republic. No matter what may be the physical advantages of a nation, they cannot confer moral elevation, which can only be produced by moral causes. Do the Glaciers impart magnanimity to the mercenary inhabitants of Switzerland? Do the degraded descendants of Miltiades and Pausanias kindle at the recollection of Marathon and Plataea? Or does the dejected Tiber roll his stream, amongst the degenerate Italians of the present day, with the same conscious pride, as when Rome was the city of the Scipios, or the mistress of the world? But, to say nothing of Greece and Rome, which exhibit the same natural features now, in the depth of their political degradation, by which they were characterized in the height of their renown, no one can turn to South America, without being satisfied of the truth of this important doctrine. Where can we find a region, of which it may so truly be alleged, that "Every prospect pleases, and only *man* is vile?" Look at your own country, with its fraternal union, its free and happy institutions, its prodigious increase in all the elements of national prosperity, and the gigantic rapidity with which it diffuses far and wide the peaceful conquests of reason and religion—and compare it with the grinding despotism, the incessant intestine commotions, the wretched anarchy and misrule, of the South Americans, poor amidst mines of wealth, ignorant in an age of light, debased and servile amidst the most gorgeous magnificence of nature—and who can doubt, that, as the degraded condition of the latter arises entirely from the want of mental and particularly of moral culture, so the immense superiority of the former, in every thing that enters into the composition of national happiness and grandeur, is entirely attributable to the genius and virtue of our ancestors, who stamped their spirit and principles on the original institutions of our country, which, in their turn, have exerted the happiest influences upon the people, training and directing them in the way they should go, and have thus maintained, in all their pristine vigor, the pure and elevated principles in which they had their origin. Such is the inestimable value of *mental*, aided by the power of *moral*, cultivation: and, as it must excite your thirst for knowledge, to think of the immeasurable difference between a well

educated man, armed with all the powers and resources of extensive learning, and the poor ignorant Indian who "sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind," so let your ardour be excited, in the great cause of popular enlightenment, by reflecting that it is emphatically the source to which we are indebted for the moral grandeur of our country, and to which alone we can look for its continuance. Ominous, indeed, will be the day, when it shall be neglected or abandoned—for, in that event, there would be nothing to prevent public virtue from being swallowed up in corruption, or the scene of the Lupercal from being repeated in the Capitol, or the establishment of an Empire, perhaps upon the actual overthrow of the Constitution, or, at all events, with the mere nominal retention of useless forms, from which the spirit of freedom will have fled forever.

Thus have I sketched the course which appears most conducive to your temporal welfare. I have pointed out the pleasures and advantages of knowledge, and the indispensable necessity, to its attainment, of regular and systematic application. I have adverted to some of those errors that are most pernicious to literary growth, and endeavored to excite that generous emulation which is the great wellspring of virtuous sentiment and elevated conduct. I have shown you that industry, at all times necessary to distinction, is peculiarly so in reference to the prevailing illumination of the present age. I have also exhibited the importance of *moral*, as well as *mental* cultivation, to individual excellence and national prosperity, and have enforced the claims of your country to your allegiance and fidelity. In short, I have attempted to delineate the most essential duties and obligations, private and public, that will devolve upon you, and of which a faithful observance can scarcely fail to render you beloved "in the mild majesty of private life," or eminently distinguished, as members of society, in a department in which eloquence and learning are required.

But what is all this *without Religion*? Of what avail will it be, that you make the voyage of life with favouring currents and propitious gales, if it only bring you at last to an undone eternity? Of what avail will be all the honors and enjoyments of this transitory scene, if they are destined to terminate in that unending misery, which no eloquence can soothe, no learning alleviate, no applause divert! What then! Are you fond of roaming in the fair fields of literature, and can you not be persuaded to cultivate *the sacred*, as well as the profane! Is there no flowery height but Helicon, no golden stream but Hermus! Is there no virtue, but in the dreams of Plato—no immortality, but in the hopes of Socrates—no Heaven, but Elysium! Have you no desire to explore the exquisite beauties of Lebanon or Carmel, or to drink of the pure water of "Silvas' brook, that flows fast by the oracles of God!" Is there nothing in the Bible that can enlarge your understandings, elevate your imaginations, or refine your tastes! Has it no sublimity of conception, no richness of imagery, no power of description! Has it nothing useful in ethics, or valuable in philosophy—nothing instructive as a history, or interesting as a system of religion—nothing elevated in its poetry, or affecting in its incidents

or important in its moral! Have you determined to know no God, except he be found in the ancient mythology—no religion, unless it has been proven fabulous—no morality, unless it be notoriously defective as to the true springs of virtue, and the true principles of duty! Are you only solicitous for the esteem of men, and utterly regardless of the opinion of your Maker—anxious to obtain earthly fame and wisdom, but caring nothing for “that honor which cometh from on high,” or for that knowledge which alone can “make you wise unto salvation!” Can this be so, my friends? Was it for this, that you were educated here, and that you intend to prosecute the improvements of your minds! Is it, indeed, the only objects of your future lives, so to acquire every thing useful and beautiful, except religion, that you may be decorated, like victims for the sacrifice, and sink forever, like a richly freighted barque, to the fathomless abyss of eternal woe! Bear with me for a moment! Are you revelling in youthful vigor, and know you not that the domain of death is peopled with the young! Do you anticipate a long career of activity and usefulness, and know you not that there is nothing more uncertain than the frail tenure of human existence! Are you proud of your talents, glowing with the ardour of ambition, and longing for distinction in the race of life, and know you not that the most buoyant heart may soon be chilled by the icy touch of the destroyer, and the most eloquent tongue be hushed forever in the silent tomb! Whilst it is certainly proper, therefore, in relation to your temporal interests, that your mental powers should be cultivated to the highest possible extent, suffer me also to recommend an immediate and earnest attention to the momentous subject of religion. Be assured, that, however bright your characters may be, they will still be defective without that precious gem, and that as the title of Christian is the very highest style of man, so personal piety is the only source of true happiness here, and of everlasting felicity in the world to come. Procrastination, unwise and hazardous as to any matter of importance, is peculiarly dangerous in reference to the unspeakable value of the undying soul, and the consequent necessity of ensuring salvation, whilst it may yet be in your power to effect it. The Gospel makes no provision for delay. All its promises are restricted to an instant compliance with its offers. “Now,” and now only, “is the accepted time;” and, as the present is the only period that you can call your own, it may be also the only opportunity that will ever be afforded you of obtaining an interest in the *Great Atonement*.

“Begin, be bold, and venture to be wise,
 He who defers *this work* from day to day,
 Does on a rivers’ bank, expecting stay,
 Till the whole stream that stopped him, shall be gone,
 Which runs, and, as it runs, forever shall run on.”

And, in connection with this subject, and as only inferior in interest to the vital topic of personal religion, permit me to commend to your most cordial support, that, noble system of moral machinery which has been so happily organised by the friends of the Redeemer with a view to the moral improvement and amelioration of mankind. Without alluding to other branches of this system, there are two which I feel constrained to press upon your notice. The Tem-

perance Reformation is emphatically the cause of American patriotism and Christian morals. It is not intended merely to arrest the progress of a hideous vice, which strikes at the root of regulated freedom, and even undermines the sacred institutions of the Gospel, but it is a great scheme of Christian morality, eminently calculated to lead men from vice to virtue, and from virtue to religion. Nor is the dissemination of the Bible, both at home and abroad, less entitled to your affection and esteem. As it is to the elevating influence of Christianity that our own country is indebted for all those elements of moral grandeur which have made her pre-eminently "a city on a hill," and a light amongst the nations, so it is from the want of those influences that a very large portion of the human family, still lies buried in all the darkness and degradation of pagan idolatry and Mohammedan superstition. He, who knows nothing of the actual condition of the Heathen, should be ashamed of his ignorance upon a subject which more than any other engages the attention of the Christian world; and he, who comprehending their character and condition, refuses to co-operate in diffusing amongst them the enlightening and purifying spirit of the Gospel, is unworthy of the high privileges it has conferred upon himself, and ungrateful to that Being who graciously kindled its light, and diffused its warmth, in our own chosen and distinguished land.

And now, Gentlemen, having discharged the office you assigned me, I hasten to bring these observations to a close. You are now preparing to put off youth, and to assume the dignity and responsibility of manhood. In a few hours more you will have left these pleasing solitudes and green retreats, to enter upon the cares and occupations of actual life. It was but natural therefore—nay it was highly proper and commendable—that, for occasions like the present, the ceremony should have been instituted of an annual address. You are about to leave those excellent men, from whom you imbibed the lessons of instruction, and to try your unfledged wings, in the wide expanse of an untried world. You are also about to separate, and perhaps forever, from those youthful companions with whom you have long enjoyed the sweet communion of friendship, and generously contended in the race of knowledge. It is but natural therefore, that you should desire to commingle, for the last time, that you may pour out your feelings with each others bosoms—that you may bid a respectful adieu to your kind instructors—that, you may meditate upon the change you are to undergo, and the course of conduct, it will become you to pursue—so that when you leave this sacred seat, you may go, not with fancies filled with visions, nor with hearts elated with delusive hopes, but with minds soberly impressed with practical truths, that thus you may be armed for the conflicts that await you, and be prepared to endure toil, to resist temptation, and to discharge every duty that may devolve upon you, with honor to yourselves, and advantage to society. In view of this important change, I trust, that it is needless to say that you carry with you my most cordial wishes for your welfare and prosperity. The youth of our country is her best, I had almost said her only hope. The present generation is fast passing away, and you and your contemporaries must soon occupy its place. Remember it is to you,

and such as you, the patriot looks to sustain the rights and interests, the character and institutions, of our beloved country. It is to you, and such as you, that the philanthropist looks to support the cause of enlarged benevolence, and the Christian, not only the sacred temples of religion, but the reforming influence of every scheme that conduces to the moral elevation of the human race. And you will not disappoint their expectations. You will not dishonor the education you have here received, by becoming recreant to knowledge or to virtue. You will not exchange the hope of usefulness for the paths of vice, nor the animating prospect of virtuous distinction for the poor and pitiful drugs of idleness and dissipation. Dangers and difficulties, it is true, may beset you in your journey, but there is no danger that may not be averted by prudence, no temptation that may not be resisted by piety, no difficulty that may not be surmounted by assiduity and discipline. Let these, then, be your ruling principles through life. Remember that if labor has its trials, it has also its rewards and that as an ancient philosopher says, "what is gained with labor is always retained the longest, every hard gained acquisition of science being, as it were, a kind of annealing on the mind." Preserve, at all times, and under all circumstances, a sacred regard for truth. Without a high character for veracity, talents and accomplishments will avail but little. Be assured, that, as no Deity is absent from the prudent man, so, where truth is wanting, no other virtue can be found. It is the great foundation of every moral quality; nor can any one expect public confidence or trust, of whom it cannot be said that he is incapable of falsehood, and that his integrity can neither be affected by the influence of interest, the wiles of corruption, or the hope of power. Cultivate, as "the immediate jewel of your souls," that principle of honor, which has been justly termed "the noble mind's distinguishing perfection." Disdain to do any thing mean or little. Abhor even the conception of an act of baseness, and cherish that sensibility of virtue, that nice chastity of sentiment, which will teach you to avoid dishonor as a moral plague, and to feel even the slightest stain as an intolerable wound. Cherish an ardent love of liberty, always remembering that whilst its vestal flame burns purely and brightly in the hearts of freemen, every thing is safe—but that "if liberty be lost, then every thing is lost." And permit me to guard you, particularly, against the pernicious influence of infidel doctrines and opinions. Reject that vile philosophy, (equally insulting to reason and Revelation) which would teach you that there is no wisdom in creation, no God in nature, no soul in man, no truth in salvation, no hope of existence in a future world; and be assured, that of all enemies of the human race, he is most accursed of God, who, by denying His word and rejecting His authority, takes away all restraint from vice, and all hope from virtue, degrades man to a level with the brutes, and leaves no principles of conduct but human laws and doctrines, and no hope, after the termination of this chequered life, but the melancholy prospect of the shroud, the mattock, and the grave. And now, Farewell. Happy would I be, could I think I had succeeded in kindling one generous impulse, or laudable emotion, in your bosoms. Happy, indeed, could I think I

had said any thing to confirm you in the love of knowledge, or to inspire you with the love of virtue—to excite the glow of elevated sentiment, or start the tear of generous emulation—to revive the ardor of the diffident, or direct the energies of the bold—or to cause you so to “look through nature, up to Nature’s God” as to determine you to dedicate to the service of your Maker the talents and treasures you have received from Him? Go then, Gentlemen, into the vast arena of the world. The evil and the good, the bane and the antidote, are both before you. If the sea that now looks so calmly, should be tossed by tempests, your voyage may still be successful, with prudence to direct, and virtue at the helm. If your prospects, now so brilliant and cheering, should become dark and overcast, there are no clouds which the Sun of Righteousness cannot dissipate, no gloom that may not be brightened by unswerving rectitude. Go then, Gentlemen—and may each of you fulfil the expectations of his warmest friends! In each “bright youth,” may we indeed realize the promise of a “shining man!” May you learn, and practice,

“What noblest minds approve,
The thoughts *they* cherish, and the arts *they* love,
Let *their* examples your young bosoms fire,
And bid your souls to boundless height aspire.”

May you imitate the conduct of the wise and good—placing before you a standard of perfection, and resolving to attain it. And may each, and all of you, be so guided and governed, in the acquisition of knowledge, the practice of virtue, and the cultivation of religion, that when you shall have finished a career of eminence and usefulness on earth, you may finally be admitted to dwell forever,

“in those bright realms
Where Seraphs gather immortality
From life’s fair tree.”



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