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AN ADDRESS
DELIVERED BEFORE THE
LITERARY SOCIETIES
OF
LAFAYETTE COLLEGE,
AT EASTON, PA.
JULY 4, 1833.

BY JOSEPH R. INGERSOLL.



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J. HARDING, PRINTER.

Ms. A. 2. 1. 11/10
Lafayette College, July 4th, 1833.

RESPECTED SIR:

As the organs of the Franklin and Washington Literary Societies, we return you their unanimous thanks for the very eloquent and able address delivered by you this morning; and also earnestly request a copy for publication.

R. J. TIMLOW, } Committee on be-
ISAAC HALL, } half of the Frank-
WILLIAM TAYLOR, } lin L. Society.

JAMES B. RAMSEY, } Committee on be-
CHAS. F. WORREL, } half of the Wash-
J. HALL M'ILVAINE, } ington L. Society.

To J. R. INGERSOLL, Esq.

Source unknown

ADDRESS, &c.

A WHOLE nation is at this moment celebrating the birth day of its independence. From the wide extremes of this extended land the din of arms announces, not the conflict of hostile legions, but the rejoicings of patriot freemen. The thunder of cannon is every where proclaiming a people's gratitude to those who first erected the temple of liberty, and first sacrificed upon her altars; and millions of swelling hearts beat in responsive unison. Let us withdraw for a moment from these animating scenes of joy and gratitude, and indulge in noiseless contemplation our no less fervent sensibility for the blessings we have inherited, and exchange our mutual pledges to cherish and preserve them.

These periodical revolutions of time are happily calculated to keep alive the recollection of past events. Feelings which are inspired even by the great occurrence of the 4th of July, 1776, would become languid if they were not occasionally renewed. Remarkable events are rooted in the memory only when it dwells upon them from time to time, and recalls the periods which gave them existence. They are thus, as it were, acted over again in fancy, with all their attrac-

tions, and none of their toils and dangers. They become known to us by a sort of communication more impressive than history and more vivid than mere tradition; and passing from generation to generation in frequent and familiar intercourse, their influence is at length stamped indelibly on the hearts and reflected from the conduct of those who thus at stated periods and at short intervals recur to them.

The American revolution cannot properly be estimated, independently of its consequences. Sublime as were the sacrifices which it called forth, it is not to be considered merely as a glorious display of devoted patriotism, untiring fortitude and determined valour—as a bright example of virtuous efforts conducted by a gracious providence to happy results—as a triumphant relief of suffering worth from proud oppression—or as the auspicious establishment of a mighty empire on the broadest basis of popular representation. These properties belong indeed to an event among the most remarkable in the story of mankind. Had it been no otherwise distinguished, history would have inscribed it upon her brightest page; philosophy would have pointed to it as confirming many of her favourite theories; and the shades of those who bled for its accomplishment would have continued to walk amid the conflicts and animate the exertions of struggling freedom until the end of time. It would have taught lessons profitable to the world at large. Its speculative results would have been the

property of mankind. But a long train of benefits and blessings was laid for the descendants of those who braved the storm, and who were themselves unconscious of the extent which they would one day reach. These benefits and blessings have continued to pass along the course of time, increasing in abundance and diffusing themselves in lavish bounty in their progress. They resemble a stream which, springing from a pure but unpretending source in the depths of the forest or on the summit of the mountain, gathers as it flows its tributary waters, and gliding through boundless plains which it fertilizes, swells at length into a mighty and majestic river, which reflects from its bright surface populous cities, and bears upon its buoyant waves the productions of a world.

The practical effects of the American revolution are peculiarly ours. National honour and individual prosperity; an attainment of all the comforts and conveniences of life; science adopted, learning cultivated, and knowledge every where diffused; a spirit of enterprise without a parallel; activity the most intense, and success in almost every undertaking within the reach of human strength—all are results, the deep foundations of which were laid on the day and by the deed, which we are now commemorating. But for that day and that deed, they would have been unknown, and this now united and powerful republic would have continued to be a collection of loosely

combined and dependent colonies. They would have languished in feeble existence, subject to the caprice of foreign power; the perpetual prey, and the bloody arena of a warfare not their own; starved perhaps by the neglect, or, what would have been scarcely better, fed by the condescending bounty of a distant master. Where are the colonies that have really assumed the dignity or enjoyed the advantages of a nation? Shall we turn to the West India Islands? Different governments of Europe have there tried the effect of their respective systems; and have left their dependencies almost motionless in moral and intellectual improvement, effectually moving only in a career of monied advantages, where it is difficult to say which is the more intolerable, the insecurity and perpetual alarm of the master, or the hopeless, yet un-subdued and reluctant submission of the slave. Spain had gone on adding to the load of oppression under which her American colonists had groaned, for ages, until at length the chains were broken which had become too galling to be borne. But what has the boasted colonial policy of Great Britain done to benefit its subjects? how little has it attempted except to enrich herself! Human sacrifices still kindle the fires which burn upon the funeral piles of Hindoo superstition. The idol Juggernaut still dyes his chariot wheels with human blood. These sad remains of native ignorance darken the sky of European supremacy, while the once splendid fabrics of Asiatic

taste and elegance are mouldering into dust. What has the country, peopled with eighty-nine millions of inhabitants, gained by the exchange of rulers? Ignorance and a false religion, with its impure and impious rites, maintain their power; not even as formerly, at least the companions of national independence; but shorn of the consolations which the elevation and grandeur of self-government might have continued to inspire. Shall we compare the advancement of the Canadas, much favoured as they have been by their distant rulers, with that of their republican neighbours? A single illustration may suffice. The happiest invention of modern times for the diffusion of useful and universal information, in the cheapest form, the freshest in production, the most various in matter, and the most practical for the purposes of life, is the establishment of gazettes. The art of printing was imperfect without them. Books are the preceptors of the scholar and the philosopher, but the daily press is the friend and the companion of the man. No station is so exalted as to be out of the sphere of its influence, none so humble that it does not reach it. It is alike welcome in the populous city and the sequestered vale. It goes forth with the sun himself, and diffuses universal light. Political knowledge and individual instruction are alike disseminated by it. It penetrates the workshop and the counting room, the cottage and the cabin: it flies to the traveller, however remote, on wings as swift

almost as light, and overtakes and cheers him with the intelligence of his home. The chamber of the sick is relieved by its consolations; even the dungeon of the prisoner is rendered less dark by its sympathy. We are told by Sir James Mackintosh in his celebrated defence of Peltier for an alleged libel on Napoleon, that in the year of the Armada, Queen Elizabeth caused to be printed the first gazette that ever appeared in England. "This," he adds, "was one of the most sagacious experiments, one of the greatest discoveries of political genius, one of the most striking anticipations of future experience that we find in history." More than sixty gazettes are *daily* issued from the presses of these United States besides the numbers which less frequently appear. In England, too, they are multiplied and magnified to the best of purposes under the patronage of the successors of Elizabeth, their ministers and people. Yet the Canadas have, it seems, within the last few weeks, (if it has been done at all) made their very first attempt thus with every rising sun to enlighten the public mind—to penetrate like his beams the deepest caverns, and dispel the shades of ignorance—to establish a watchtower, which to a people boasting of freedom and meaning to maintain it, is indispensable—a lighthouse, which to a people desirous of general knowledge, is inestimable.

A debt of gratitude which can never be effectually cancelled, is due to the founders of our republic, from

al who enjoy the rich inheritance; an inheritance which their valour won and their wisdom has, we devoutly trust, secured. It may be partially repaid only by never ceasing efforts, to dishonour not the authors of our blood—"to attest that those whom we call fathers did beget us." The devout Mahometan in his daily prayers, is said to turn from every corner of the remotest lands towards the temple of Mecca. So should the grateful American fix his steady eye and constant heart upon the event which rendered this day the brightest of the political year; animated by the spirit, instructed by the precepts, led by the example and faithful to the principles which shone forth on that trying occasion, when the garb of patriotism was to all appearance of the same texture and the same hue with the robe of rebellion—when clouds and darkness hung upon the same narrow steep and thorny path which led to immortal fame or to an ignominious grave—to honour or the scaffold—to liberty or death. During the whole voyage of life, in all its varying latitudes from early infancy to extremest age, this same bright star should guide us, these same ennobling feelings should inspire and animate and purify us. Neither the young nor the old are exempt from the obligation. It calls alike for the exertions of all. While the active performers on the stage devote the best energies of manly maturity to enoble and exalt their country, they are cheered by the smiles and guided by the instructions of the

venerable fathers of the nation. Youth, too, has its no less appropriate office. The young Hannibal before the assembled wisdom of Carthage offered up his vow of unrelenting hatred to the Romans. Let the young American, in better spirit but with the same undoubting zeal, devote himself to the love and service of his native land. In the discharge of this his sacred vow, his earliest and his unceasing efforts must be directed to the promotion of science, without which even freedom itself would be an empty name. It is the best—under the sacred guardianship of heaven, it is the only safe protection of the dignity, the power, the glory, the happiness, the virtue, and even the existence of the republic. Without it, her institutions are erected on the sand; defenceless from the shocks of ignorance, caprice and passion; with it, they are grounded on the solid rock, and will defy the storms of foreign and domestic strife.

The maxim has grown to be as familiar as it is true, that knowledge is power. The very terms are almost synonymous. Our language derives from the same root the words which imply the strength to execute and the intellect to perceive and learn. Glossarists trace the term *king*, now serving as the title of the possessor of the proudest human rank, to an origin which signifies *knowledge*, that being the first and surest fountain of authority. But the cause we advocate and are endeavouring to sustain, would deserve only half our homage were it the source or

the instrument of merely power. Mere power, unenlightened, unrefined, with the strength of angels, may be tainted with the wickedness of demons. Science is the companion and the parent of virtue—the antidote and foe of vice. Power, enlightened, purified, refined, is the attribute of God himself. It is in a state of ignorance, that the imagination of man's heart is desperately wicked. Religion and virtue find their way to it when the path is lighted by the lamp of knowledge.

The progress of science may be traced and its charms discerned in a gradual extinction of the evil dispositions, and a corresponding improvement in the finer feelings of our nature, as the understanding is enlightened and the manners are refined. Barbarous nations are without definite notions of property or solicitude for the acquisition of it, and they are thus strangers to a pregnant source of crimes among those which are civilized. Yet they are the victims of internal discord more savage and relentless than that of beasts of prey; and of external warfare, fierce, cruel and insatiable. The ancient Saxons and their neighbouring Danes were perpetually involved in ferocious and brutal conflicts. Scarcely less ferocity at one time mingled with the border wars of the English and the Scots. Yet the same blood which, unchecked in its tumultuous fury, became inflamed to more than madness among them, plunged in ignorance as they were, now flows in gentle currents through the

veins of their educated descendants. Conquests of a nobler nature are now the objects of ambition—the brilliant and bloodless conquests of mind over matter, and the corresponding triumphs of reason and philosophy over passion, ignorance and vice. Every student should be familiar with the delightful work of Professor Herschel, written not long since expressly to show the advantages of science. Astronomy, chemistry, magnetism, the use of steam, navigation—have all during the present age and at a recent period of it developed resources and been made productive of results which at any time heretofore would have been deemed impracticable or supernatural. Wisdom once employed itself in fruitless searches for the art of divination among conjunctions of the planets, or hoped to manufacture gold by the discovery of the philosopher's stone. That is the true astrology which opens the book of science, and foretels to the fearless mariner his safety on the trackless ocean; which bids him securely leave every landmark and trust to the unerring guardianship of an occasionally cloudless sky, and conducts him after months of absence precisely to his wished for home. That is the only alchemy which finds a philosopher's stone in the commonest productions of nature, and with known and simple elements forces matter into changes which Ovid never dreamt of and the fabled Proteus never underwent. What would the wisest of the philosophers of former times have said had he been told that

sawdust can be converted into wholesome digestible and nutritious food? that linen rags can produce more than their own weight of sugar? or that a bushel of coal properly consumed can be made to raise a weight of seventy millions of pounds?

Natural philosophy is the root of science. Most of the discoveries useful to mankind are drawn directly from it, and all may be regarded as more or less connected with it. The various departments of knowledge are more nearly allied to each other than a superficial observer would suppose. A very skilful and sagacious writer advises the youthful lawyer to prepare himself for the cross examination of witnesses by a careful study of the mathematics. Intellect is necessarily affected and perhaps controlled by the matter which surrounds it. Natural science therefore, which teaches the phenomena of all that the senses can perceive, and all that can be accurately known, leads to an acquaintance with the operations of the mind itself. How can we direct the human *will*, without a knowledge of the fibres of the body by which it acts, without analyzing the air which its possessor breathes, without penetrating into the earth he cultivates, and from which he draws his subsistence and his enjoyments; without ascertaining the opportunities which he has for the exercise and improvement of the faculties which we should for ever seek to direct to some useful and efficient end? Grecian learning, with all its brilliancy, wanted the basis

of precision and accuracy, because Grecian scholars were ignorant of the philosophy of nature. One wise man thought he had settled every thing in science; another believed that nothing could be settled. Both were wrong, and their mistake arose from the want of an unerring standard to suspend the premature conclusions of the one and resolve the discontented misgivings of the other. Modern times claim a superiority in discarding most of what is merely speculative, and holding fast to the useful and the true. No period of the world has been, and no portion of it can be more propitious than ours to the cultivation of what is thus peculiarly valuable and instructive. It suits the simplicity of our manners, and harmonizes with our tastes and favourite pursuits, and with the circumstances in which we are placed. You are especially in possession of these advantages, connected as you are with an institution which combines instruction in all that is lofty and sublime in theory, with all that is practically beneficial in the business of life—which is to secure to you the companionship and the elegance of Virgil among flocks and herds and implements of husbandry—which teaches you to soar with Newton among the stars, or to meditate with the patriarch Isaac at eventide—to unite the learning of the closet with the labours of the field.

Constant activity and exertion of mind and body are necessary to the wholesome condition and successful employment of each. Man was not born to be

idle. Mark the bloated frame of the sluggard, his nerveless arm, his beamless eye. His decrepitude is less pitiable than his vicious appetites are loathsome, which he has still the passion without the power to indulge. Has sloth made less disastrous inroads upon his moral nature? No. Mental idleness is immeasurably more disastrous. The mind cannot be motionless or unproductive if it would. It is insusceptible of a *vacuum*. Vice and crime grow up in rich and rank luxuriance, if their place be not thickly sown with plants of better growth. All the lessons of nature, of philosophy, and of religion, are opposed to idleness, which according to Spencer, is the nurse of sin, the companion and the fellow slave of gluttony and lust, of envy, avarice and wrath. The earth is fitted to call forth the energies of fallen man. In his first estate he was "to dress it and keep it." But when he lost his innocence, nature herself was changed. The ground became reluctant, though not rebellious, and he was to till it with labour and moisten its productions with the sweat of his brow. Some of the plants of Paradise still here and there diffuse their fragrance over the bosom of nature, but they are happily no longer of spontaneous growth. Constituted as we are, toil sweetens the perfumes of the fairest flowers and adds flavour to the richest fruit. Sloth has not even present comfort and enjoyment to recommend it. It is as odious as it is pernicious; as burdensome and oppressive at the moment, as it is disastrous

in its results. Paradox as it may appear, idleness is the hardest work. Every hour of the indefatigable student flies on eagle's wings, while the leaden moments of the idler linger in reluctant and oppressive tediousness. Foreigners sometimes reproach us as incompetent to literary exertion for the want of leisure. There is neither philosophy nor truth in the assertion. We have men of leisure; but they are for the most part like the corresponding class abroad, neither disposed nor habituated to efforts either of literature or business. A literary lord is a rare production; and when he is to be found he often owes his title to his literature, and not his literature to his title. Lord Byron indeed, whose literature is not lofty enough to sanctify his bad feelings or bad morals, was unexpectedly a lord, and he laid the foundation for his literature before he became one. But the few noble writers of Great Britain, from Lord Bacon, who was unworthy only in his dignities, to Lord Brougham, who condescended to accept a title, wear a wreath fairer than princely crowns. On the other hand, Sir William Jones and Sir Humphrey Davy, and the most abundant and delightful writer of the age, Sir Walter Scott, were all men of business, and attentive in the midst of varied study to their professional and official pursuits. The discipline which the mind acquires in a course of industry qualifies it for the occupations of science, if it has the taste to enjoy them. All the leisure of a hermit will not have the effect, if it has

not. Cultivate then this taste which may be properly directed and chastened and elevated, where it is natural, and may even be acquired where it is not.

Youth is the season for acquirement—not merely for the acquisition of habits of taste, study, reflection, generosity of sentiment, energy in action, kindness of feeling, and all that is calculated to ennoble and purify the moral character; but of solid and beneficial knowledge. I do not mean to urge this position, because of the importance of fixing early habits of industry and application; or of the more numerous and conflicting duties of after life; or of the solemn truth that the hopes of the young like the disappointments of the old, are not exempt from the liability which awaits every thing human, of being terminated by the stroke of death. All these are inducements of unquestionable strength. But beyond them all as an argument from expediency is the fact, that the capacity for learning is the liveliest and the strongest and the most active among the young. Granting a superiority of *judgment* to the mind that is matured by experience and enriched with knowledge, that which is fresh in years is the best adapted to acquirement. I will not pause to consider whether it proceed solely from the vivacity of youth, its ardour in the pursuit and unmingled delight in the enjoyment of the objects of its choice; or whether these qualities are materially aided by the absence of other cares, and the means of giving a devotion without

restraint to what it would learn. But it is the flood-tide of opportunity which cannot without irreparable loss be permitted to pass away. The first word in the soldier's vocabulary is *attention*; and it should be inscribed on every page of the scholar's manual. It is the warrant of fidelity and exactitude in every pursuit. It is the surest aid to prompt as well as extensive acquisition, the secret spring of genius itself. It is at least the generous and steady contributor to the memory, if it be not another word for the memory itself, which according to Cicero, is a universal treasury.* Why do the old so frequently complain that they can remember events of distant occurrence while they readily forget those of recent date? Because the faculty for acquirement slumbers, because the vigour of attention has passed away. Why does technical assistance, or the recurrence at the moment of study to analogous objects, fix the particular matter more deeply in the mind? Because the attention is thus rivetted to it by a double effort. Early impressions, made when the senses are acute and unimpaired, and when curiosity is wide awake without a prompter, are not effaced by the lapse of years. They sink deep into the mind, and like letters carved on marble, last until the substance which receives them is destroyed. Late impressions, if such they can be called, which are made through the imperfect atten-

* "Quid dicam de thesauro rerum omnium, memoria?"
Cic. de Orat. lib. 1, 19.

tion of feeble and decaying faculties, are like marks upon the yielding sand which the succeeding wave washes away. Memory may remain to the last stage of life, but the agent that should thus minister to its supplies, having lost its energy, the treasure intended for preservation is consigned to instant and irremediable oblivion. Seize the propitious moment, which is always the present one. Procrastination is the thief of duty as well as time; and time, if not a friend, is the most unrelenting and inexorable foe. His rapid journey is delayed at no resting place; his eye never closes, his wing never droops, his arm never tires, his scythe is as insatiable as the grave—

For beauty, wit,
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating time.

Were it necessary for the present purpose, it could be demonstrated that youth is scarcely less qualified for bold exploits than for untiring study. Many are the examples from Alexander of Macedon to Napoleon Bonaparte of early greatness. There are not a few where it has been succeeded by comparative feebleness in middle life. But the instances are rare of capacity in age engrafted upon slothfulness and imbecility in earlier years.

In pursuing a course of honourable and useful instruction, a broad basis must be laid in attainments of universal value. The disposition and the talent for a

particular pursuit may not soon be developed, and until they are, a comprehensive system of elementary education is calculated to bring them out into obvious relief, and to afford opportunities for a wise selection with a prospect of honourable proficiency and ultimate success. Yet the time must come when the broad and beaten road of general knowledge diverges into various narrow paths. Among them a selection must be made of the one which is to lead to eminence. Happily all are honourable and meritorious. A choice is to be influenced less by the abstract nature of the duty which is to ensue, than by the temper and qualities of mind and body of him who is about to choose. Each has its responsibilities; and where can the lot of man be cast without them? Each has its enjoyments in possession or in prospect, and each has its troubles and its cares.

In a country where church and state are disconnected, nothing can be more free from every sordid and selfish consideration than the motives which lead the minister of the gospel to his holy calling. They are for the most part a pledge for the purity of his life and the fidelity of his exertions. Few and lowly are the earthly honours that invite his choice or reward his sacrifices. He needs no recorded vow of perpetual poverty. While a broad line separates him from power, political consequence, and worldly pleasure, an adequate supply for temporal wants is all that his profession *can* afford him; subsistence itself

is often earned by rigid self-denial, and sometimes his frugal meals are made upon the bread of tears. Sustained by the consciousness of doing good, and contented in the absence of all that glitters upon the mere surface of human existence, while others run the race of life for a corruptible crown, he literally seeks one that is incorruptible.

Scarcely less benevolent are the motives, although more productive of pecuniary benefit, are the exertions of the physician. A guardian angel of the sick, he is often able to pour the balm of consolation into the wounds of the afflicted. In his study and his practice nature unlocks to him her varied stores, and art becomes his willing tributary. All the best feelings of the mind and heart are called forth into active exercise. Is he a philosopher? there is no limit to the expanded field of speculation and discovery which is presented to him. Is he a philanthropist? there is no end to his power and opportunity of affording relief to suffering humanity. Crowns and mitres are of no value to the aching head. Swords and sceptres become impotent in the palsied hand. The minister of health removes from the brow the heaviest load of care, strengthens the arm of impotency, and makes

“The flinty and steel couch,
A thrice driven bed of down.”

If activity and enterprise are better suited to the temper than a life of study and comparative retirement, commerce presents her never ceasing charms.

No corner of the great globe is inaccessible to her visits. She gratifies the most ardent curiosity by an intercourse and immediate alliance with the remotest climes. To the enterprising she affords the widest scope for untiring activity; to the generous she furnishes the readiest and the most abundant means for the exercise of liberality. Stores of wealth are accumulated by the skill and industry of the merchant. But he feels himself to be rather the faithful steward who is to distribute them, than the avaricious master who is to hoard them during life, or to commit them in a course of unnatural primogeniture to the perils of profligacy and vicious expenditures, when he can no longer dispense or enjoy them. In a country like our own, where pomp has no parasites and riches alone cannot secure esteem, the virtues of the liberal merchant are especially conspicuous. Of what avail are boundless treasures to himself, if they cannot purchase for him a coronet or seat him in a palace? How inestimable is their value when they are devoted to the embellishment and honour of his country! The munificence of the De Medici towards the city of Florence, has been emulated in a course of generous rivalry among ourselves. In one city the acquisitions of commerce are directed during the life of their proprietor with judicious kindness to the cultivation of literature, or to open the eyes of the blind. In another they are poured forth in posthumous profusion in various channels, to embellish, to instruct, and

to improve. Where shall we look for a parallel to the prudence and care in the acquisition of wealth, or the disinterested liberality in the distribution of it, which have been exhibited in the recent instance of Stephen Girard? His laborious life of never changing fidelity, teaches a striking lesson how wealth the most extensive may be acquired. His devotion of more than six millions to the benefit of his fellow citizens, and of that a large portion directly to the purposes of education, furnishes a bright example how it should be bestowed.

Who that can feel the charms of nature, or that knows the value and the bliss of domestic peace, is insensible to the invitations of a country life? There, the ruder passions are softened, and the more restless ones are tranquillized and subdued. Labour gives flavour to the frugal meal and secures repose to the toil worn limbs. If the sphere of action be more limited, that of contemplation is more extensive. If the opportunities for shining actions are not so frequent and various, the temptations to those of an opposite character are less abundant. Yet a life of retirement would be altogether uncongenial to him whose resources within himself are not a substitute for society. A mind disciplined by deep reflection, a body invigorated by toil, may qualify their possessor for the most difficult and responsible employments, and for stations the most dignified and exalted. The ancients would have peopled with spiritual instruc-

tors the shady grove. They would have imputed to an intercourse with its tutelary inhabitants the knowledge and wisdom which solitude and study are competent to confer. They would have sought a sovereign or a general at the door of his cottage, or at the tail of his plough; and they would have justified their choice in the wisdom of a Numa, and the valour of a Cincinnatus.

At every period of civil society when the smallest ingredient of freedom has entered into the composition of the government, the public interests have been closely united to the profession of the law. Judging by the numbers that throng the path, it is the most attractive to the young aspirant for fame. Little, however, do they who regard it at a distance, know the thorns with which its steep ascent abounds. Labour and responsibility attend its every footstep; and when at last its giddiest heights are gained, few and fortunate are the travellers who even there can find repose. Yet its labours are not inelegant, nor its duties barren in results grateful to the generous mind. Oppression may be burdensome in the extreme, and tyranny may be complicated beyond endurance, if the oppressed are left to seek relief by their own unassisted appeals to justice. Many are ignorant of their rights; more are unable to command the time and the means which are required to assert them. Poverty may be crushed by "the oppressor's wrongs"—suffering virtue may be unprotected from

“the proud man’s contumely”—innocence may sink under the rebuke and “the insolence of office.” To wipe the tear from the widow’s and the orphan’s eye; to shield the weak from the blow of proud oppression; and to vindicate from all abuse the majesty and the purity of justice, are the duty and the delight of the virtuous lawyer. And oh! how awful, how almost more than human are the powers committed to his charge, if he assume the office of a judge or a seat in the councils of his country. The issues of life and death depend upon his nod; a nation’s fate may hang upon his lips. If ignorance or indolence debase his mind, or caprice or passion sway his judgment, the magnitude of his power is equalled by the extremity of his crime.

To all these professions and pursuits a liberal education is valuable, to some of them it is indispensable. Besides these, other occupations are presented to the ambitious scholar for which the course of instruction here adopted will eminently qualify him. Every part of this great continent seems destined to become the theatre of improvements, which in many places are already far advanced in their progress, and at periods more or less remote, will embrace the whole. Agriculture is promoted among us to the rank of a science. Roads and canals are intersecting various portions of the land, connecting distant waters, and penetrating the bosoms or ascending the summits of the broadest mountains. The rapid and universal advancement of

an enlightened age requires that the prolific earth should be made to yield its rich resources, and that all the elements should be brought into contribution to facilitate and give effect to the labours of mankind. Already have stores been unlocked which preceding ages had not ventured to explore. Art has revoked the decrees of nature in annihilating distances which she had made extreme. In the furtherance of these gigantic objects, a large supply of talent and science will always be required throughout the land. But it is especially in this portion of it that the qualities referred to will find their home. A territory of more than twenty-seven millions of acres is to be compressed into the narrowest limits, as respects the ready interchange of productions and the mutual access and intercourse of its inhabitants; while its broad surface as to its productiveness under the effect of cultivation, and its capacious bosom as a rich, various and extensive repository, must be boundless as the firmament. Without detracting from the merits of her sister commonwealths, Pennsylvania claims to possess an unsurpassed combination of resources and advantages. Her noble rivers, luxuriant soil, unmeasured mines, and vigorous, hardy, practical and industrious population, may challenge as a whole the competition of the fairest of her sisterhood. Every material which is necessary to the moral greatness of man is found in abundance within her bowels. Gold and silver alone are rare. Nor will she lament their scarc-

ty or envy the possession of them in greater extent by her neighbours. When Cræsus, King of Lydia, had displayed to the Athenian lawgiver his shining horde of gold, and hoped that it had excited the admiration of the philosopher, he was himself astonished at the suggestion that all of it might become the ready prey of those who had iron to conquer it. That is truly the *precious metal*, whose use contributes most to human happiness and strength—the material of the plough share and the pruning hook, of the axe, the anvil, and the steam engine.

It is the pride and privilege of Pennsylvania that she can fasten the bonds of union which connect the different members of this great republic together, by pouring her inexhaustible resources into the lap of each, and by receiving in her turn the supplies of her adventurous and persevering fellow labourers of the north, and the generous products of the fertile south. In situation and in strength she will delight to continue the key stone of the vast political arch as long as it shall rest upon the foundations of freedom and virtue, and while each particular section remains true to its position and firm in its hold. And if, in an evil hour, the schemes of ill directed ambition shall prevail, and this fair frame of government shall be destroyed, she will rise in unassisted strength, and standing in reluctant though secure reliance upon her own resources, she will mourn over the glittering fragments that are scattered around her.

In a comprehensive scheme of education, every source of moral and intellectual culture must be resorted to. Were precept alone sufficient to regulate the conduct and inform the understanding, all would be good and wise. Writings under the influence of divine inspiration and human intelligence are full of lessons which, if carefully learned and faithfully applied to the actions of men, are sufficient to guard against error and preserve an adherence to wisdom, rectitude and truth. But precept is often colder than the heart, and is therefore uncongenial to its feelings.— It is less active than the temper, and therefore cannot keep pace with its movements. Even conscience herself, were she always well instructed and correct in her determinations, it is obvious from daily observation, may be lulled to sleep by interest, or if she speaks, her still small voice may be drowned by the tumults of pleasure or of business. The magic ring of the Arabian story which reminded the wearer of his duty as he was about to depart from it, became irksome and was thrown aside. If it were practicable to be attended at all times by some sagacious friend, whose influence could not be resisted, and who should arrest the erring purpose in the breast, it would destroy that moral responsibility, which is an ingredient of our nature. It would require besides, a guardian like the Mentor of Telemachus of more than human wisdom and spotless purity. Next in efficiency to such actual companionship is the example when it can be

vividly exhibited, of those whose lives and actions approaching the nearest to perfection, afford the safest model for study and imitation, and whose characters may be exhibited, purified from their bodily particles of human imperfection and infirmity. The Roman youth were urged always to conduct themselves as if the eye of Cato were upon them. Measuring their steps by his example they were sure not to stagnate into sloth, or run into vice.

The founders of this institution, influenced by similar considerations have wisely associated with it, some of the names, and thus created an obvious connexion with the characters, that have given especial renown to the nation.

The name of Lafayette is a pledge for the combination of many virtues. It has been said that no man's fame can be established till his death. So feeble is human nature in its best condition, that while this frail body remains united to its immortal companion, there is always danger that a single error may forfeit the reputation which it was the well directed object of a long and blameless life to acquire. But a rare union of estimable qualities, without the alloy of opposite and counteracting faults—intrepidity without rashness—generosity without extravagance—a desire to excel without dangerous or designing ambition—sincerity without sternness—kindness without effeminacy—and confidence without credulity—seem to afford a pledge that the straight and consistent course which has been here

tofore pursued by the good Lafayette may be continued to the end. There was an awful crisis in the struggle of these states for freedom. Exertion was almost exhausted. Disasters had been endured until patriotism tired of their repetition and no prospect opened of their end. All was gloom. Even hope itself was sinking rapidly into despondency. At such a moment unlooked for succour came. The moral principle was exemplified that no disease is hopeless but despair. The drooping cause of liberty required an influence more imposing than its own merits, and it was afforded in the arm and the countenance of a youthful nobleman. It needed an example of great pecuniary risk, and it was found in the disinterested liberality which set a princely fortune on the cast. The tide of adversity began at once to turn. The sympathies of the world encouraged another effort, and the result was the attainment of victory and the security of freedom. Through the varying fortunes of the French nation, which has breathed an atmosphere of intense excitement if not of absolute revolution for more than forty years, it is the glory of Lafayette that he has never departed from the line which his generous nature marked out for him from the beginning. In the chaos of anarchy he opposed the mad career of popular phrenzy. In the reign of despotism, he did not disguise his love of liberty. If the hope of contributing to the happiness of his country ever led him to unite in counsels which were ultimately disastrous, he had the magnanimity to with-

draw from them when the means became licentious or the end unjust. Always the same generous friend, the same gallant soldier, the same disinterested patriot. Tranquil and consistent in his purposes at the head of armies or under a load of chains—defending the cause of humanity in the senate house, or pouring forth his blood on the field of glory. May the laurel which surrounds his honoured brows long retain its verdure, and when his eyes shall close in death may it bloom in perpetual freshness on his grave.

The name of Lafayette is here associated with others long since hallowed by the sanctifying influence of the tomb. When the children of America shall have exhausted all their fund of gratitude, they will come far short of what they owe to Franklin for the benefits he has conferred upon them and upon mankind. In the city, where for the most part he resided and where his ashes rest, the eye can scarcely turn to a long established object of general good, that does not owe its origin largely to his public spirit and exertions. His example has sometimes been quoted as an argument against the necessity and value of polite learning. Nothing could be more erroneous. The founder of the earliest College in the country, now an extensive university; of that noble Library which scatters knowledge with a lavish hand; of that Philosophical Society, whose untiring efforts have continued to increase in ardour and usefulness—could no more be charged with failing in his love of

literature, than he could be suspected of wanting the qualities of the heart, while the Pennsylvania Hospital stands a proud and enduring monument of his philanthropy. His own native force of intellect, indeed enabled him to overcome the want of a systematic education in early life; yet it was in an enthusiastic devotion to the pages of the classic Xenophon, that he became enamoured of the character of Socrates and learned to adopt it for his model as a philosopher.

But there is one whose name and example are happily blended with the hopes of this rising institution, who united all the manly consistency of Lafayette, and all the fervent patriotism of Franklin, with qualities which were peculiarly his own. The characters of men of a distant age, like those of the events in which they were engaged, may be obscured by time or misrepresented by tradition. Historians have pointed out in the long catalogue of names that have shone in the annals of nations, two that have been handed down spotless to posterity. These are Alfred of England and Marcus Aurelius, who wept when he became an Emperor. But they impute their freedom from all reproach to the imperfection of history itself, and consider their defects so necessarily incident to mankind, that they must have been buried with the recollections of their cotemporaries. Not so with Washington. The generation which came with him into life has indeed departed. That

too which succeeded and witnessed his exploits, is rapidly passing away, and soon, very soon, not a vestige of it will remain. But the country is yet full of those who form as it were links which are to connect the days of Washington with those of his posterity. It is for them to take care that the knowledge of his especial qualities does not partake of the fleeting properties of almost all things human, and like them melt away and be forgotten. Let then his cotemporaries, for such are all they that have attained the age of four and thirty years, with the knowledge which they possess, of all that envy may have distorted or disappointment feigned—let them with the influence of immediate contact, and without the advantages which distance of time may afford to a doubtful character—let them record his failings if they can.

Other heroes may have won more blood stained trophies. Other conquerors may have ruled over more populous empires. But the occasion and the individual never were so adapted to each other, conduct never was displayed so eminently fitted to produce its happy and glorious result, as in the instance of the American Revolution and the early history of these United States—and George Washington. More brilliant exploits might perhaps have been performed to dazzle the eye, but they might too have marred the work which was to be achieved by an unpretending heroism as novel as it was illustrious. The triumphs of the warrior might perhaps have been

more resplendent, but they would have endangered the safety of his country. The great man whose name you have assumed, was unlike many of the heroes of the ancient world, but in the essential properties of greatness, he surpassed them all. Home bred and home devoted he was the model for Americans. In war the undaunted soldier with the circumspection of a philosopher, in peace the sagacious statesmen with the nerve and vigour of a warrior.

With all the advantages and inducements that have been adverted to, what more could be desired to inflame the ardour of honourable ambition, or crown the efforts of successful zeal? The character and conquests of your ancestors, are sacred pledges confided to your hands. The cause of science is the cause of freedom, of virtue, and of happiness. The institutions of our country give value and importance to the services of all her citizens, and should stimulate the most diffident of them to put forth his utmost strength. The occupations and pursuits presented to them are full of moral and intellectual enjoyment. The great commonwealth of which we are the immediate inhabitants teems with resources, opportunities and rewards. The names of patriots and sages are assumed by you, as badges of adoption into the parent seminary, and of emulation among her sons. If worthily worn they are the emblems of honour; if abused or neglected they are the marks of shame. Thus excited to manly exertion, were your abode cast in the mournful cloister

and surrounded by the sands of the inhospitable desert, you could scarcely fail to rise to the rank of accomplished scholars and estimable men. But around you all nature speaks in glorious harmony with the feelings and desires, which every gilded recollection, which every buoyant hope is calculated to inspire.— The muse of history is yet young amongst us. Yet her records already show that yonder lofty hills crowned with luxuriant foliage, these copious rivers now loaded with their ample freights, those fertile plains now rich in abundant harvests, were bestowed by providence for wiser purposes than to nourish game for the savage, or afford indulgence to his barbarous sports. Their first rude master has departed.— His war-whoop at the murderous onset, no longer echoes in the valleys—his retiring footstep no longer marks the mountain path with blood. They are as little destined for the abode of the untutored and ignorant, who in the natural progress of events succeeded. They too have done their duty and have gone to subdue other forests and to prepare for the husbandmen other fields. A wilderness has given place to the cultivated plain, and smiling towns lift their spires where at no distant day the sturdy stroke of the pioneer alone resounded. Every thing is accomplished except the task of the scholar. That great work is reserved especially for you. Guided and conducted by the good and wise, patronized by the liberal, and encouraged by all, this rising institution

depends for its reputation and success on those who have enrolled themselves as its pupils and are to carry abroad in their own accomplishments its character and fame. Should you falter and fail in the great race that is running by all around you, how deep and lasting will be your reproach. But should you in untiring zeal, successfully strive with them for the mastery, immortal may be your glory, immeasurable your reward.



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