

Eloquence and Liberty

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AN ORATION

BY

REV. E. L. MAGOON,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

LITERARY SOCIETIES

OF

WASHINGTON COLLEGE,

LEXINGTON, VA., JUNE 24, 1846.

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RICHMOND:

H. K. ELLYSON, 176, MAIN STREET.  
1846.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

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*Washington College, June 24th, 1846.*

REV. SIR:—

The undersigned, a committee of the two Literary Societies of Washington College, return to you, in the name of our Societies, our unfeigned thanks for your very instructive and eloquent Oration, and respectfully and earnestly request a copy of the same for publication.

Permit us, Sir, to add to the request of the Societies, our personal solicitations that you will comply with the above request, that others may have the privilege of reading that which has made such a lasting impression upon us, from hearing.

We remain, Sir,

Your obliged and ob't serv'ts,

W. T. PATTON,  
M. S. WATKINS,  
A. T. WARD,  
P. C. MASSIE,  
G. W. CUMINGS,  
H. M. BELL.

To REV. MR. MAGOON.

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*Richmond, July 10th, 1846.*

GENTLEMEN:—

After some hesitation with respect to your kind request for a copy of my recent Oration, I have concluded to submit it for your use. Wishing you and your enterprising associates the best prosperity, I remain,

Yours, very truly,

E. L. MAGOON.

To Messrs. Patton, Massie and others.

## ORATION.

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GENTLEMEN:—

In appearing before you on the occasion of this literary festivity, your speaker, in return for the great honor conferred by your invitation, would attempt the discussion of some theme calculated to stimulate mental industry, and inspire ennobling hopes. The subject selected, though it be not worthily handled in the present exercise, may suggest interesting trains of thought, and induce profitable research, to those who have more taste and leisure to linger in the bowers of lettered delight. Let us consider

### THE RELATION OF ELOQUENCE TO LIBERTY.

The term eloquence, throughout this discussion, will be used in a comprehensive sense, as signifying the soul of art and science, the inspiration of all mental exertions which relate to human well-being, the ethereal essence of expansive intellect, and the vital energy of irresistible thought and speech.

The most enlightened nations have ever been the most free. When great wrongs are crushed, great light diffused, and great aggressions made on the kingdoms of tyranny and ignorance, the glorious enterprise is always achieved by

“The lightning of the nations: Liberty.”

The relation of knowledge to personal aggrandizement every way, and, consequently, to liberty of the highest order and greatest extent, is immediate and inseparable. It is the

relation of cause to effect. The question, whether a people shall be soundly educated, is synonymous with that other question, shall they be free. As soon as the individual, or popular mind, possesses a sense of its own worth and destiny, through the luminous suggestions of education, however partial, it will demand increased freedom, more prolific resources of mental vigor, and an unobstructed path to run like a strong man the race of life. Mind once aroused and fed with the elements of inspiring thought, can never be lulled to sleep again. As soon as a rational being is so far enlightened as to feel the potency of native endowments, he will perceive his inalienable rights; he will understand the relation between mental capacities and the right of their unrestricted cultivation, and comprehend acutely, that by no just law is intellect murdered in order that the body may be ruled.

The relation which free thought and effective eloquence bear to political freedom, is a subject copiously illustrated by the history of national vicissitudes. The object of your present pursuit is knowledge; let us endeavor adequately to estimate the dignity of your toil, by tracing the influence of the mental power you would obtain.

Our source of illustration is literature; and this first assumed a well authenticated form in Greece. An alphabet derived from the Phœnicians, and the elementary principles of exact sciences and elegant arts from the Egyptians,—a few scattered hints and mutilated ideas,—were, on that prolific soil, perfected into magnificent literary productions and the sublimest monuments of art. The wonderful development of excellence in that renowned land, is a striking illustration of the alliance between eloquence and liberty, and a forcible demonstration of the fact, that great actions inspire great eloquence, as great eloquence inspires great actions. When liberty is the end desired, and righteous struggles against wrong are the means employed, there will always



be found those who, after the conflict, can elevate the dead above the living, the defeated patriot above the successful tyrant. They will clothe in beauty and glory the despoiled and unburied on the plains of Cheronea, as easily as they wreath fresh splendors around the trophies of Marathon.

The Greeks owed the remarkable peculiarity of their national character, to popular forms of government, which brought into action the natural and undisguised sentiments of the community at large. Their first and great lawgiver, Solon, legislated not to cripple the popular mind, but to guide it to wholesome freedom. He rendered popular education a necessity, and the liberal cultivation of the elevated society of Attica, an indispensable duty. The natural consequence followed: every department of mental excellence was rapidly and wonderfully enlarged. It achieved a perfection which has never since been attained. The didactic, lyric and tragic poets, stimulated the public curiosity and fed it with harmonious beauty. With the first dawn of national freedom, Homer appeared; Herodotus gave to all time the model of historic prose, and Demosthenes

"Wielded at will the fierce democracy,  
Shook the arsenal, and fulmin'd over Greece,  
From Macedon to Artaxerxes' throne."

But if we would estimate correctly the real strength of any nation, we must examine the condition of the intermediate classes. Boeckh's profound work on the public economy of the Athenians, will aid us materially in judging of their liberty, and the influence of their eloquence. Manufactures were liberally encouraged: strangers thronged to Attica to engage in business, and their industry furnished a large amount of exports. The commerce of the Athenians was extensive. Their ships would not have suffered from a comparison with our first-class packets. Demosthenes speaks of one, which carried three hundred men, besides

its cargo, slaves, and crew of sailors. They had no tariff, it is true; but they had commercial agents and consuls in foreign ports. Egina and Argos became jealous of the wealth of Athens, and the introduction of Attic manufactures was prohibited by law. Exchange cargoes were sometimes very profitable. Herodotus describes a Samnian ship, which made for its owners fifty-four thousand dollars in one voyage.

Classical authority assures us that the bakers of Athens carried their art to a high degree of perfection, and they could afford to, as, in the age of Solon, a bushel of wheat was worth only ten cents. Alcibiades boots and Iphicrates shoes were as celebrated as the Wellington boots of our own day. Fashion and fancy ruled then as now. A good, serviceable horse, was worth about forty-five dollars; but a handsome nag would readily command one hundred and eighty dollars. Bucephalus brought nearly twelve thousand dollars; and it is mentioned as one of the extravagant fooleries of Alcibiades, that he gave one thousand and fifty dollars for a dog. Every branch of trade and enterprise was free, was profitable and respected. The fisheries were good; the mines were worked; and the soil was highly cultivated. Those of the humble walks of life were not excluded from an honorable competition with the most exalted. Demosthenes was the son of a cutler, and Cleon, the tanner, was among the favored successors of Pericles. Those who devoted themselves to teaching were well supported. Protagoras, the Abderite, received fifteen hundred dollars tuition for a liberal course of education, and Isocrates one hundred and fifty dollars for a course of lectures on rhetoric. Education was universally diffused in the most splendid manner. In literary festivals, Athens surpassed the world. Historians read their annals in the public ear; poets produced their magnificent dramas to the popular gaze; artists decorated the arena and the stage with masterly productions; tragedy



was evoked with its splendid pall and recollections of the demi-gods: the most beautiful youths filled the choirs; music lent its thrilling attractions; and gorgeous processions, with impressive pageantry and instructive scenes, filled up frequent holidays, that might well attract and improve the best class of minds.

The whole system of the institutions of Greece aimed to cherish and perfect the most admirable eloquence. The orator, surrounded by a multitude of circumstances calculated to stimulate the attention of his hearers to the highest pitch, addressed them in that delightful tongue which Gibbon has justly characterized as "a musical and prolific language, that gives a soul to the objects of sense, and a body to the abstractions of philosophy."

The eloquence of the Greek philosophers was second only to that of the orators. Socrates and Plato taught extemporaneously, surrounded by admiring crowds of enthusiastic youths, under the canopy of magnificent porticoes, or in the free open air of olive groves. They loved the impulse and elevation of thought produced by spontaneous and animated discussion, rather than disquisitions which lose half their interest in the necessity of being read.

The mellow harmony and serene dignity of their national annals presented a style as oratorical as it is fascinating. Vossius, speaking of "the father of history," says, "his eloquence flattered the religion of his audience, it honored their dawning literature, it celebrated their enthusiastic attachment to liberty, which had broken, scattered and repulsed the armed array of the barbarians; the spirit of every Greek was elevated by the exhibition of his father's deeds, and he instinctively admired the historian, who first commended them to immortality."

This allusion to the struggles which Greece encountered in freeing herself from vassalage, reminds us of that love of freedom which was the inspiration of her greatness and the

creator of her glory. The highest excellence was attained in all the beautiful arts in the republican metropolis of Minerva;—

“Where on Ægean shore a city stands,  
Built nobly: pure the air, and light the soil;  
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts  
And eloquence.”

But this excellence declined immediately after the age of Alexander. The arts revived somewhat in imperial Rome, but it was with a splendor inferior to that of the Periclean age in their free home.

In the healthful excitement of a disenthralled people, national faculties are expanded and improved; new sensations are experienced, and in that fresh experience new powers are attained. Every idea generated at Athens was a mother-thought, whose progeny was illimitable, and every artistic creation was a model to all time, and the despair of all emulation. At this moment an universal revolution is shaking nations and changing the aspect of the whole earth, but the sublimest principles contended for by the most patriotic and enlightened in remote ages and climes, seem to have been anticipated by the prophetic intellects of Greece.

So long as primitive patriotism retained its dignity, and thought its freedom, so long did oratorical excellence retain her serene elevation; and she perished as soon as these were degraded. Had the Greeks been unsuccessful in the defence of their liberty against the Persians, and had their country been blended with the vast empire of Xerxes, the ennobling influence of their civilization would not have swept westward round the globe, nor would their eloquence have reverberated in deathless thunders. The spirit of man never reaches, without freedom, the sublime and splendid tone it attained on the seas and shores of Greece. There, in its most glorious era, mental excellence was fostered by neither regal nor imperial patronage. The greatest of orators, the



last great writer whose works were addressed to his nation, was born only one year later than the too successful conquerer of his country. Long after Alexander's triumph over Grecian independence, that polished people continued to be distinguished for literary excellence. In exile even, in Egypt, under the Ptolemies, and under remoter masters in Italy, they became more distinguished for abstract learning than in the days of their ancient glory: but their nationality was destroyed, and with their freedom their great depth of refined sentiment and piercing eloquence departed forever. In the history of Thucydides, the masterpiece of energetic narrative, may be perceived the causes of the decay and destruction, not of Athens only, but of universal Greece. Cheronea was the grave of Grecian eloquence, as of her liberties.

Cicero, in the fourth chapter of the first book of his work *De Oratoribus*, alludes to the extraordinary efficacy of the free institutions of Rome in producing rhetorical excellence. When the sway of the Republic comprehended the civilized world, and youthful ambition found less development in military service, they almost universally devoted themselves to the study of eloquence under Greek teachers. A free field of competition afforded an ample scope for the exercise of oratorical power, which became the key to all that was noble in mental aggrandizement, and splendid in wealth, influence and glory. In the flourishing days of republican institutions, the acquisition of superior eloquence was the object of the highest ambition; it was deemed a pursuit worthy of the sublimest genius and the most persevering study. Hence the allusion in the IX Book of *Paradise Lost*.—

“As when of old some orator renown’d  
In Athens or *free* Rome, where eloquence  
Flourish’d (since mute!) to some great cause address’d,  
Stood in himself collected; while each part,  
Motion, each act, won audience, ere the tongue.”

For a long period, during the most healthy era of Rome, eloquence exerted, over political events, an influence always powerful, not unfrequently imperative and conclusive. In the more troublesome times which produced and followed the Gracchi, the popular passion for eloquence was very great.

But Roman eloquence is differenced widely from that of Greece. Its characteristics are peculiar, and the most marked is the idea of imperial Rome itself:—of that Rome whose power was irresistible but material, whose martial excellence and civil crimes were equally gigantic, and whose frigid dignity and sovereign grandeur ruled the world. But how inferior was the metropolis of the Cæsars in versatility of talent, in originality, and in consummate genius! Around the seven hills where the rugged nurse fed Romulus with savage strength, power may have built her magnificent palaces; but the heroes whose triumphal cars thundered along the terraces of the capitol, and whose trophies from a hundred conquests were heaped at the shrines of Jupiter and Mars, were not of the potency and enduring charms which tempered and adorned the sublimer spirits who glorified the plains and summits of Attica. The drama of Rome enrolls no such names as Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. No lyric harp like Pindar's ever resounded in her festive halls. Her history never glowed with augmented splendor under the stylus of Herodotus or Thucydides. Her symmetrical porticoes and olive groves never echoed the living tones of the profound Aristotle and Plato. Her Campus Martius was her most attractive field, and even there Alcibiades, Phocion and Miltiades would have encountered no superiors, and the peerless master of the Forum confessed in magnanimous terms that Demosthenes can never be approached. Much of this difference is explained by the fact, that the Roman populace never possessed a patriotic poet of their own, as did the Athenians in Aristophanes. There



was a wide contrast in the measure of their freedom and the texture of their constitution. The progeny of a she-wolf, could never compete with the splendid race who rose from the dragon teeth sown by Cadmus.

The discourses of the Appii and the Gracchi were extant in the time of Cicero. The Republic teemed with great men, before the decorative arts began to be much cultivated. According to Livy, Camillus stood prominent, when popular eloquence most prevailed at Rome. But how much belongs to the orator, and how much is due to the elegant description of the annalist, it is impossible to say. His record of Lucius Valerius, the tribune, is also an interesting portrait of an elegant pleader, especially when he contended so manfully for the abrogation of the Oppian law.

His antagonist on that occasion was a remarkable man, an exalted specimen of a patriot, a scholar and orator. It was Cato, better known as the Censor. Like almost all great men who glorify their age, he emerged from deep obscurity and won the most elevated positions by unrelenting toils. Agriculture was the employment of his youth, and the recreation of his old age. He drew his sustenance from his own soil, prepared his dinners without fire, and reposed at night in those sweet slumbers which are the product and reward of industry, integrity, and strict temperance. He was at the same time a warrior and a philosopher, a husbandman, and an orator, and was greatly distinguished in every department he explored. For many years he occupied the Forum in the gratuitous management of causes, in constant opposition to all extravagance, and in the defence of all the oppressed. He was thoroughly skilled in the knowledge of men, early mastered the literature and science of his own country, and in venerable old age sat down to the acquisition of the Greek. His contemporaries called him the Roman Demosthenes, and, that he deserved the appellation, is indicated by the fact that, during his life, he was nearly fifty



times impeached for misdemeanors by malignant foes, but, so eloquently did he defend himself, he was in every instance triumphantly acquitted.

But Cicero, according to the judgment of Seneca, was the only genius ever produced by the Roman nation, equal to the vastness of its empire. His career is a splendid commentary on the advantage of free institutions, under whose benign influence the aspirant can pursue his exalted aim with encouragement and hope. Though born in an obscure town in Italy, Cicero obtained the Consulship, which was refused to Cataline, to Cethegus, and to Leutulus, all of whom were connected with illustrious families in Rome.

Those writers who approximated nearest to perfection, cultivated their talents in the midst of furious struggles for liberty. Much of the republican spirit continued for some years after the reign of Augustus, the proofs of which are visible in all the best authors of what is called "the golden age" of Latin literature. Horace, Virgil, Tibullus, and Livy all died before their imperial master, who survived his distinguished literary cotemporaries a while, and at his death left nothing valuable behind him. The opening of the Augustan age, commonly receives the credit of having produced the brightest galaxy of genius, whereas the mighty spirits who glorified their monarch, were born under republican institutions and had breathed the air of freedom. The inferiority of those born under arbitrary rule, is seen in the effeminacy of Ovid, the fulsome meanness of Velleius, the artificial insipidity of Seneca, Pliny's affected dignity, and Lucan's contemptible eulogium on Nero's bloody reign. If Tacitus surpassed his cotemporaries, it was because he still cherished republican resentment; he openly denounced the illegality of the imperial government, and refused in any respect to be mentally enslaved. Although Cicero died under the reign of the triumvirate of Octavius, his genius was democratic, and his glory belongs entirely to the Re-

public. The letter which Brutus, "the noblest Roman of them all," addressed to the greatest orator of his land, to reproach him for flattering the young Octavius, has been pronounced by the best judges the finest composition ever written in Latin prose.

In the republic of Rome, the custom of honoring with a funeral oration those who fell in defence of their country, was altogether unknown. Under the empire, the custom obtained, as in the memorable example of Anthony's eulogium over Cæsar. But the language of patrician orators was frigid and formal; it had nothing of the inspiration which the noble Greeks drew from patriotism and liberty.

All the Roman games were only spectacles exhibited to the people, not ennobling festivals in which the populace took part. They had no drama of freedom, no high and glowing spirit of nationality in their literature. Pantommes or farces, the subjects of which were taken from Greece, and the principal parts performed by Greek slaves, were allowed, but nothing that bore the slightest relation to the characteristic manners of the Romans. Horace complains, that often, in the midst of a representation, the audience interrupted the performance by vociferations for the gladiators. For whatever merit the speculations of Lucretius, the satires of Juvenal, and the comedies of Plautus contain, these authors are indebted to the freedom which had preceded them, and of which their beauties are but the reflection. Suetonius, the historian of the emperors, could never be compared with the writers under the republic. The majority of scholars, enervated by inglorious ease, vilely prostituted their talents, and even lost the remembrance of those heroic virtues to which Rome was indebted for her grandeur. Horace unblushingly wrote himself down in his own verses a coward; Cicero complains to Atticus of unjust banishment; and Ovid desponds over his own servility, and in the same breath flatters his persecutor.



The great change which had taken place in the condition of the Romans, was the loss of liberty; and although their republican institutions were very imperfect, the difference in the state of the human mind under a free constitution and despotism is prodigious. The disadvantages of the republic were few and were overbalanced by inestimable rights; but the despotic rule to which the Romans finally submitted, speedily eradicated from their minds every respectable quality, and reduced them to the most degraded and disgusting condition.

The exact point of transition from republicanism to a military government, is clearly marked in every department of Roman, as in Grecian, thought. The study of philosophy, and the practice of oratory continued so long as they were available talents, and could minister to a liberal and patriotic ambition. But when these, the highest prizes, were withdrawn from the lottery of life, their potency expired as their uses became obsolete. Neither the power of Augustus, nor the patronage of Mæcenas, could permanently inspire genius, nor healthfully discipline the public taste. As soon as the free agency of the masses was extinguished, and the disastrous influences of imperial satellites were poured on the crippled energies of once unfettered Rome, the spirit of liberty indignantly recoiled from her desecrated altars, and the muse of eloquence led her beauteous sisters to the wilds of the north.

The examples which Italy furnishes of the relation of mental glory to civil freedom, are not limited to the duration of the Roman power. The masterpieces which constitute the principal attractions in every choice collection in Christendom, owe their origin to the republics of the intermediate age, which constitutes the second epoch of Italian glory. From the history of Venice and Florence, and of their contemporaries and rivals, lessons may be deduced, not less valuable, and scarcely less attractive, than those furnished by the annals of Greece and Rome.

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Between the end of the fifth century, when the western empire ceased, and the beginning of the tenth century, Venice laid the foundation of her greatness, and the southern parts of the peninsula boasted of the republics of Gaeta, Naples and Amalfi. At not remote intervals, subsequently, Bologna, Padua, Milan, Pisa, Brescia, Florence and Genoa became free cities. Florence, during the whole period of that distinguished republic, was decidedly democratic. It is to this renowned city that modern diplomacy, which has so long regulated the international relations of the civilized world, is to be ascribed. Indeed, the contests between neighboring republics elicited talents of every kind, and put into requisition abilities not less distinguished than were demanded by preceding and mightier States.

The Italian republics at the close of the thirteenth century, came to occupy the very front of European refinement. A regenerating spirit was abroad; the intellect of man was in a measure unshackled, and human weal was promoted. Dante appeared, and in him the spirit of ancient freedom was re-produced. Inspired by the genius of republicanism, and uniting in himself the energy of a warrior and the enthusiasm of a poet, he breathed the breath of life into the dead, and broke the mental lethargy that oppressed his land. This great man seems to have been well fitted for the important part he was to perform in defence of human rights. His sentiments and language were of a character to rouse and invigorate the popular mind. The first utterances of the noble and the free are more imbued with the soul of eloquence than the astute models of refined composition. Linus, Orpheus, and Homer, wrote long before the era of consummate prose. The Scandinavians, on the shores of the Baltic, in savage melody chant their Rhunic songs in praise of the free; and the stupid Caribians compose eloquent eulogia on their heroic dead. When freedom found

a voice again in Italy, it was through the powerful strains of Dante that she spake to the universal heart.

Another, and perhaps the most valiant and efficient advocate of Italian independence, was Petrarch. His love for Laura was quite subordinate to his patriotism. Liberty herself, the great patroness of every thing good and great, inspired and ennobled his intrepid soul. He perpetuated the cry for freedom which Dante had raised, and caused it to ring like a trumpet every where in sonnets, epics, thrilling epistles and impassioned orations.

When Petrarch received from the East a copy of Homer, he lamented that so rich a treasure should lie comparatively useless in his hands. He resorted to his co-laborer and successor, Boccaccio, for instruction. His friend taught him the beautiful vernacular of "the blind old man of Scio's rocky isle," and then they would exclaim together, "Oh, that these sublime strains might resound throughout Italy and redeem her from her thrall!" Other spirits caught the enthusiasm. The love of exalted freedom spread with reviving learning. Patriotism became a popular inspiration, imagination teemed with the types of all the beautiful arts, and, in emulating antique excellence, reason became sublimer than enthusiasm. Free cities arose over the whole peninsula, and the rapid revival and diffusion of classical learning and Grecian liberty from republic to republic, resembled the fiery signals commemorated by Æschylus, blazing in quick succession from the summit of Ida to the mountains of Mycenæ, to announce the victories of Agamemnon.

It was at this period, the fourteenth century, that the spirit of Liberty vouchsafed a transient inspiration to her last son and martyr, on the seven hills of her ancient metropolis. Nicholas Gabrini de Rienzi, excited by the ancient glory of Rome, attempted to rescue the great mass of the commonalty from aristocratic tyranny. "Amidst the indulgence of



enthusiasm and eloquence," says Gibbon, "Petrarch, Italy and Europe were astonished by a revolution, which realized for a moment his most splendid visions."

"Then turn we to her latest tribune's name,  
From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,  
Redeemer of dark centuries of shame,—  
The friend of Petrarch,—hope of Italy,  
Rienzi, last of Romans! While the tree  
Of freedom's withered trunk puts forth a leaf,  
Even for thy tomb a garland let it be,  
The forum's champion and the people's chief,—  
Her new-born Numa thou!"

Genius and liberty walk together. Their footsteps are never effaced from the universe. When oppressed in one region, they re-appear in another. As the light faded in the east, it began to shine brighter in western Italy. Petrarch, several of whose letters are yet extant, in which he exhorted Rienzi to persevere in his glorious undertaking, was busy in sowing the seed whose splendid harvest sprang up in prolific blessing from the Adriatic to the pillars of Hercules, and from the Pyrenées to the Alps.

In one of the letters alluded to above, he exclaims: "Who would not rather die a freeman than live a slave?" His general sentiments on this subject are expressed as follows, in his "Horta."

"In liberty is the tradesman's security, the soldier's honor, the agriculturist's profit. In this one good, the religious will find the permission of their rites and forms of worship, the students their learned leisure, the aged their repose, boys the rudiments of the several branches of their education, maidens their chaste nuptials, matrons their womanly honor and the dignity of their modesty, and fathers of families the dues of natural affection and the sacred privileges of their ancient home. To this one solicitude, therefore, let all other cares yield the priority."



With this epitome of human rights and duties constantly before him, how must the soul of Petrarch have yearned when he went up to the seat of the Cæsars to be crowned. The Roman Senate, roused for a moment by the eloquent bard to a renewal of its associations with all that is splendid in genius and bold in enterprise, aspired to lay a crown of laurels on his brow. The thronged avenues of the Forum rang with a resurrection voice. Reviving Rome congregated at the shrine of Capitolinus, not to suspend a battered shield or bloody lance, but to reward the nobler victories won on the pure field of intellectual warfare with ignorance and the ignominy of a barbarous age.

The republic of Florence offered him a chair in her new University; the Emperor Charles IV courted his favor; and Innocent XVI tendered him an exalted office; but he was too fond of his freedom to submit to any official confinement; he acted in a public capacity only as the pacificator of rival republics, and the promulgator of universal liberty. He arose at midnight, to pray and study, and devoted a long life to religion, literature, and the welfare of mankind.

Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio gave to the fourteenth century the character of high and profitable invention. They were the citizens of a free State, and the vigor they drew from the early contemplation and practice of virtue, elevated this triumvirate above all their cotemporaries, and has perpetuated their thoughts as the most deserving of modern attention.

The Italians have a literature, because they had liberty. At the time republics were formed, and the popular mind was aroused, the Arabs in Spain, and in almost every part of their territories, from Cordova to Samarcand, cultivated letters with more zeal and success than at any other time. But their language was not a dialect of the eloquent vernacular of ancient patriots, and they have left us no monuments of patriotism. Hume long ago demonstrated, that it

was not possible for those arts and sciences, which strengthen intellect and refine manners, to take their rise or attain a full development under any other than a free government. We have been describing a period when there was a generous emulation for letters, kindled throughout Italy. In Florence alone, according to Villani, at the middle of the fourteenth century, there were ten thousand children who received a liberal education.

Never did any one era commemorate greater and more prolific results; never did the unfolding and enraptured mind see nature revealing more secrets, philosophy more truths, and industry more products of inestimable value. The great men who arose, and the great truths which shone, in succeeding centuries in different nations, were indebted for the greater part of their glory, to the active and heroic spirits, whom Italy produced under the influence of liberty, previous to the domination of Leo the Tenth.

In the Italian republics, as in the nations of a higher antiquity, it is easy to perceive their weakness, and to trace their downfall. They were not connected together by a federal compact, either to fortify their own united strength, or repel foreign foes. This was a fundamental evil.

Another was, they lacked a general diffusion of knowledge. Their ruin hastened with the increase of ignorance. According to Sismondi, out of the eighteen millions who inhabited Italy in the fifteenth century, not more than eighteen thousand were admitted to a full enjoyment of political rights; and even the favored class in the several republics were, as in those of antiquity, the slaves of their respective States, and were obliged to console themselves for the absence of all protection against the government, by the reflection that they themselves participated in the sovereign power. Even this nominal freedom was rapidly restricted by the ambition of the Medici.

As might be expected, stern and manly eloquence disap-



pears. Servile imitation depressed all literature. Camoens would doubtless have unfolded his talents much more vigorously had he been free to think, and valiant enough to be original. Tasso, roused by the discomfiture of the Turks in the great marine battle of Lepanto, profited by the kindling enthusiasm for liberty which again revived for a moment the popular mind, and wrote the only epic of his age destined to live.

We do not forget that this was the age of Ariosto, Michael, Angelo, and Raphael, of Aldus and Vida. "The first harvests gathered under a bad system, generally spring from seed sown under a good one." The splendid artists and antiquarians under Leo X, like the literati of the Augustan age, were the fruit of anterior influences already extinguished.

But there arose at this critical period a hero greater than all his cotemporaries, and who labored for all generations to come. It was Machiavelli. He was more obnoxious to the splendid tyrants of his land, because his influence was stronger in behalf of popular rights. Mathematicians, natural philosophers, and artists, may be patronized by despots with impunity, for these pursuits have little influence on the intellect of common people; but before the eyes of those whose power is built on wrong, moral philosophy and the eloquence which defends political equality, would be repelled as the most formidable insurrection. The decorative arts absorb men in their sensations, and generate a kind of voluptuous indifference to present evils and prospective sufferings; but free discussion, by stimulating inquiry at the tribunal of reason, inspires heroic indignation against fetters though wreathed with flowers, and prompts the expenditure of ease and blood for the sake of securing to future generations free culture and ennobling peace.

Philosophical literature and the science of fervid logic, constitute the chief support and enduring pledge of liberty.



Painters, poets, and men of scholastic retirement and abstract speculation, offer but little terror to persecuting bigots and potent monarchs: but these scourges of humanity cannot endure the encouragement of liberal pursuits, nor the presence of sympathetic patriots. Let the educated become absorbed in abstract theories, or in unsubstantial speculations with respect to the future, and the tyrant sits easy on his throne; but let the wise and the good seek the peace of after ages by rectifying the wrongs of the present, let the audacity of the oppressor be intimidated by an elevated temperature of truth and increasing light around his scowling visage, and he will tremble like a fiend in torment.

The mightiest engine among men is manly eloquence; it can arraign before the tribunal of reason every abuse, and crush every perpetrator of wrongs. It is this which quickens into action the latent energies of others while it employs its own, and displays the best energies of the soul in denouncing those evils which oppress it most. The philosophy of eloquence affords the highest charm to studious thought, in analyzing its power, and the eloquence of philosophy gives the tenderest endearments to a country that is free, by training its inhabitants to homogeneous habits, exalted sentiments, and mutual respect.

Machiavelli produced results more profound and enduring than the dreams of idle enthusiasts. In heroism of purpose, depth and reach of reflection, in accuracy and clearness of expression, he is probably not excelled by any writer in Europe. He was a politician and a moralist, but his truest character was that of a patriot, and he put his life in peril that he might redeem his country from oppression. Having suffered torture, on account of a suspected conspiracy against the Medici, he at length perished in poverty and disgrace. But he died not without hailing the coming on of a brighter day. The popular mind became suddenly enriched, and its treasures were the more resplendent in contrast with prece-

ding darkness. Invention took a vast range, and eloquent thought found a rapid dissemination. The compass was practically applied, and India and America were given to the known world. The press was set at work, and every sheet that was thrown off sent new flashes of light among the benighted and oppressed. Liberty again summoned her sons to the field, and the greatest shock that bigots and tyrants had ever felt, immediately followed.

Succeeding the free and noble spirits of the fourteenth century in Italy, leading minds became servile to power, and the productions which were forced in the artificial atmosphere of a court, as might be expected, were imbecile and useless. The eloquence of a nation is a sure exponent of its political condition. For five years Italy groaned under foreign or domestic tyrants. Excluded from the invigorating walks of public action, her citizens, having relinquished free discussion and healthful enterprise, gave themselves ignominiously to impotent fancy and effeminate delights. An epicurean sensibility seized on the most learned, and their vapid tomes of verbal criticism and insipid commentaries exemplified the almost universal prostration of masculine and heroic thought. Only two minds retained vigor enough at the era of transition to be worthy links in the great chain of intellect which unites the ages,—Machiavelli and Guicciardini, and their thunders were obliged to sleep in manuscript until the close of the last century.

The sixteenth century forms the isthmus which connects the middle ages with modern times. During this period, the germs of great results were started. Treatises of "law and equity," of "the rights of war and peace," and even "of the power of kings," appeared at this period of twilight. Soto, confessor of Charles V, and philosophical lecturer at Salamanca, has the honor of being the first writer who condemned the slave trade. It is an era worthy of much study. "Though the middle age," says Sir James Mackintosh, "be



chiefly memorable as that in which the foundations were laid of a new order of society, uniting the stability of the oriental system, without its inflexibility, to the activity of the Hellenic civilization, without its disorder and inconstancy; yet it is not unworthy of notice, on account of the subterranean current which flows through it, from the speculations of ancient, to those of modern times. The dark stream must be uncovered, before the history of the European understanding can be thoroughly comprehended."

Before the period we are now surveying, the influence of liberty had been felt to the remotest shore of western Europe. Spain, roused into life and momentary impulse by the inspiring example of Italy, had gasped for free breath, and produced Lope de Vega, Calderon and Cervantes. But the dawning excellence of the Spanish school was eclipsed at once, when the political greatness of the country fell, leaving the departments of eloquence and moral philosophy almost vacant in the literature of the western Peninsula. When despotism had erected the Inquisition, every thing valuable in genius, art and enterprise, was immediately transferred from Madrid to Paris.

Viewed in another aspect, however, this period is most interesting. The influence of scholastic studies was mighty in laying the foundation of modern institutions of sound learning. "Never," says Roger Bacon, speaking of his own times, "never was there such a show of wisdom, such exercises in all branches, and in all kingdoms, as within these forty years. Teachers are everywhere dispersed, in cities, in castles, and in villages, taken particularly from the new monastic orders." Most of the universities and colleges of Europe are indebted to those men for their origin, and to the enlarged mental freedom of their souls is the world indebted for those magnificent Gothic structures and munificent endowments, which for centuries have moulded the popular taste and stimulated the love of elegant letters.



In what is called the dark ages, the human mind was neither dead nor inactive. The occupations in which it was employed were not of the most brilliant description, but they were the best adapted to secure ultimate and substantial improvement. Old and exhausted elements were amalgamated in new and vigorous shapes; the rugged north and the polished south were blended in a splendid race, equally fitted to scale feudal towers in armor of steel, or trim the classic lamp in cloister and mountain cave. As soon as the curtains of night rose from this seeming chaos, a beautiful creation appeared. As soon as the deluge of barbarism had passed, and men began again to reason and write, their productions show that the human intellect had made an immense progress during the transition state. Among its first fruits, Shakspeare, Bacon, Montaigne, and Galileo; arose almost simultaneously in remote lands.

But while learning is restricted to an educated class, and by them is made the instrument of bondage, as is usually the fact, its power is feeble and transient; on the contrary, when it becomes the instrument of reform, and the great masses partake of its expansive influence, then does the power of learning increase as it widens, and becomes almighty in proportion as it becomes universal. Under despots, the most talented among men, the real nobility of earth, are compelled to sell themselves to arbitrary power, or die of want. Without submission to degrading political servility, all stations of honor and profit are interdicted, and the splendidly endowed is forced to sleep on his genius as upon a mountain of gold, encrusted with granite and inaccessible to the famished. The obsequious and servile scholars of the middle ages, to use a simile, which Dr. Young applied to Ben. Jonson, "pulled down, like Samson, the temple of antiquity on their shoulders, and buried themselves under its ruins."

Beda stood almost alone at one period of mediæval dark-

ness, and so did his pupil, that other learned monk, Alcuin. There were three links in the chain which connected ancient literature with modern ;—another cloistered monk, Roger Bacon, was the third. And why was there no eloquence among the cotemporaries of these remarkable men? There was little or no popular education. Another monk steps upon the stage of Europe, and revolutionizes the world. Why? He appeals to the popular mind, and at the same time fructifies it with invigorating knowledge. He broke the yoke of the oppressor, and diffused the principles of rational freedom through all ranks. The worst tyranny is that which binds the intellectual and moral powers of a community. No fetters are so galling as those fastened on the mind. The lightnings of liberty must melt them all away, before intellect can run its race with ardor and success. The mind that is cut off from free communion with the great things and the good of nature, and God, pines away in imbecility, just as the body becomes feeble, when incarcerated from the fresh air and cheering light of heaven.

It is not enough that prominent men should be educated, and have collected around them the richest facilities for self-cultivation. But beyond the existence and adoption of the means, there must be motion; it must have material, its efficacy must stand intimate with results. The genius of discovery must have new and vast territories for its exercise; the genius of conquest must have legions at command; the genius of science must expatiate over unbounded space. What is a Columbus, a Newton, or a Napoleon, prone in a dungeon or isolated in the ocean? And what is a profound thinker in his closet, or a powerful speaker on the rostrum, with no license for free utterance, and no direct influence over the great masses? In proportion as the great majority of a nation becomes imbued with a patriotic spirit, feeling a general interest in national events and sharing alike in the national glory, their history becomes prolific and enduring.



On the contrary, the people most governed by the smallest number, is least worthy of admiration, and passes most rapidly to oblivion. Luther accomplished more than he probably designed; he disclosed to mankind that they had a right, and were under an obligation, to think for themselves and fearlessly utter their own opinions. Other well known causes conspired to disrobe philosophy of the cowl, and array it in the garb of common sense and practical utility. The popular mind was roused from its long slumbers to a full consciousness of its strength. A struggle for independence began which is not yet finished; it was fearful in the beginning, its greatest battles are perhaps yet to be fought, with a comprehensiveness and energy beyond description glorious.

Thrones, fetters, castes, must perish from earth before man will fully enjoy the blessings heaven designed. The wisdom of Confucius, one of the most pervading intellects that ever shone in the habitations of men, has for many centuries guided the opinions and conduct of millions of human beings in China, inspiring a vast literature and a profound adoration for its founder. But unilluminated by the sun of freedom, how stationary is science, how stagnant is thought, and how devoid of historical interest is that immense empire, including one-third of the entire race of mankind! The free air of liberty must energize the arterial blood of all enterprise, and vivify every limb of the body politic, or the noble impulses of increasing health will give place to those fruitless spasms which are the products and proofs of a certain, though protracted, decay.

But the tide of civilization and regeneration moves on. Its course is never entirely hid, though sometimes obscured. In the darker ages, the feudal system struck its roots deep, and the great baronial aristocracy ruled supreme in the rural districts of Germany, France, the Netherlands, the Baltic, and the British Isles; but in the great cities the spirit of

liberty exerted an ennobling influence from the beginning. Out of them grew the *commons*, that great depository of almost all conservative influence, the moral heroes who arose centuries ago to change the face of Europe.

The earliest manifestations of any thing like a regular modern literature, were developed in the south of France, and the neighboring parts of Spain and Italy, about the time of the Crusades. But all the *lays* that once resounded so merrily on the sunny banks of the Rhone, the Garonne and the Ebro, and were echoed by the Alps and the Pyrenees, have in substance passed away. The time had not yet come, when the material of thought was sufficiently valuable to be coined into substantial forms for general circulation. But the warm breath of the Reformation at length dissolved the icy fetters which had so long held the spirit of man in bondage, the genial currents of the soul were permitted to flow, and the popular heart was thrilled. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the free cities of Flanders were diffusing a redeeming influence every where. Ghent was the first focus of eloquent patriotism, and its type, Van Artevelde, at once a great captain and a mighty orator, dignified as the noblest who wore a coronet and simple as the humblest peasant, emancipated his country from the exactions of England and France, and kept alive the fires which were destined to enlighten the world. The sentiments of their descendants on a continent then not generally known, were anticipated by the patriots of Ghent in their response to the envoys of Louis de Mâle of France. "No," said they, "he is not our sovereign, but our tyrant. Resolved to dare all, and suffer all, we declare war against him unto death, and if he re-enters our city, it must be to reign over our ashes and dead bodies."

The English revolution of 1688 was one of the most important of modern times, both in its immediate results and in its remote effects. It established new principles of the



highest importance. Every preceding reign had acted upon presumed power; henceforth the royal prerogatives were limited. Henry the Eighth was openly a tyrant, yet the people offered not, dared not, to resist. The germs of great and salutary principles were springing. The malignant movements of Charles the Second,—that compound of the worst elements of Sardanapalas and Cæsar,—could not extirpate them. The sufferings of Stafford, and Sydney, and Vane, and the elder Argyle, were public exhibitions of royal perfidy and impious inhumanity, which invigorated patriotism and hastened the destruction of the infamous Stuarts. The civil wars of this era, besides the mighty minds that guided the public councils, produced the gigantic powers of Taylor, of Hobbes, and Barrow—the muse of Milton—the learning of Coke—and the ingenuity of Cowley. It was a period productive of great good, but the gold came forth purified from great heat. Cavaliers, round-heads, first-monarchy men, and agitators of all sorts, mingled together in the fiery controversy; but, like the three Hebrews, mind suffered no scathing, fetters only were consumed, and liberty won fresh energy in the flames.

The overthrow of the Stuarts was almost entirely owing to the patriotic determination of the Puritans. They did more for the emancipation of England, than *Magna Charta*, because they taught the *people* to think, and not the barons. They were a stern race, as the times and the welfare of nations demanded. Their own lessons were learned with difficulty, and were dearly paid for, but they were such elements of valor and wisdom as have produced the British constitution and our own free government. Among them was Sir Henry Vane, the uncompromising defender of civil and religious liberty, the earnest supporter of the rights of conscience, eulogized by Milton as the possessor of exalted virtues, and as deserving universal esteem. When judicial murder was inflicted upon him, he died exclaiming, “ten

thousand deaths for me, ere I will stain the purity of my conscience." Sir Edward Coke resisted the tyranny of James I, and opened the fountain of justice equally to all. A youth educated by this great man, afterwards became the founder of Rhode Island, the first republic, based on the principles of true freedom, ever established on our globe. John Selden, of stupendous learning, in 1618 published his "History of 'Tithes," and, breasting the same rotten *head of the Church* who had complained of Coke, labored manfully for human weal. Sir Mathew Hale, too, resisted all oppression, even from Cromwell; and Somers, winning his way from an obscure origin to the office of Lord High Chancellor, sustained all patriots in the noble work, and openly aided the popular cause in the famous "Declaration of Rights."

Selden patronized Ben Jonson and Edward Hayward; and Somers caused the first folio edition of Milton to be published. The general features of the patriotic spirits of that day, are well sketched in the following portrait of Somers, by Horace Walpole. "He was one of those divine men, who, like a chapel in a palace, remain unprofaned, while all the rest is tyranny, corruption and folly. All the traditional accounts of him, the historians of the last age, and its best authors, represent him as the most incorrupt lawyer, and the honestest statesman; as a master orator, a genius of the finest taste, and a patriot of the noblest and most extensive views; as a man who dispensed blessings by his life, and planned them for posterity."

All these renowned patriots, like their great rival on this continent, Roger Williams, rose from the humbler walks of life. The founders of States, the avengers of the oppressed, the patrons of all sound enterprise, and the ablest defenders of religion, have usually risen from obscurity, called to their high vocation and sustained in it by the perpetual inspiration of profound and patriotic genius. They have substituted



daring benevolence for effeminate speculation, and blest their race by procuring for them space and freedom to develop their powers, and thus become a blessing to others.

It remains to speak more particularly of, perhaps, the greatest benefactor of that age. The greatest evils men endure, are those connected with moral and intellectual slavery. To emancipate mankind from this thralldom, was the aim and crowning glory of John Milton. It was that men might *think* for themselves, as well as tax themselves, that he fought equally against the monarch of evils, superstition, and the monarch of his country, Charles. It was for this that he joined the Independents, and in his sonnet to Cromwell, called on that abused patriot to break the secular chain, and save free conscience from the paw of the bigoted wolf. It was for this that he wrote with untiring and unequalled energy against the domineering bishops, braving every peril, and illuminating every obscure retreat, by the fulminations of the *Areopagitica* and *Iconoclast*, until, blinded with excess of light, he towered from lesser splendors to weave that brightest wreath, the *Paradise Lost*, which is, to borrow his own majestic language, "a seven-fold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies."

In May, 1774, the bill was introduced into the House of Lords for quartering soldiers in America. Chatham charged the Ministry with purposely irritating the colonists, and in his speech uttered the following prophecy: "My lords, I am an old man, and I would advise the noble lords in office, to adopt a more gentle mode of governing America; for the day is not far distant, when America may vie with these kingdoms, not only in arms, but in arts also." Such counsel was unheeded, and great results followed. Our fathers bore no enmity to the home of their ancestors, but they had tasted of liberty, felt their strength, and were resolved to defend their rights. It is this power which is swaying the earth, advancing steadily towards universal dominion. The

popular mind is rousing, and liberty responds to its desires. The affairs of nations are settling down on the basis by heaven<sup>d</sup> designed, in which the advance of knowledge becomes the increase of mental power, the means of social strength, and the guaranty of national preservation.

Scarcely had the United States of America won their freedom, than a new impulse was felt throughout Europe, and it extended to Poland as well as France. On the Seine, and on the Vistula, a new order of things was demanded. Success smiled on their efforts for a while, but a gloomy catastrophe soon followed. On the 10th of October, 1794, Kosciusko rallied his brave troops for the last time, and fell mortally wounded, exclaiming "FINIS POLONIE."

France succeeded better. Every village from the Pyrenees to the Rhine, from the ocean to the Alps, received and nourished the seeds of freedom. Eloquence then was gigantic like the revolution it defended. The popular mind was excited, as is always the case in eras of national progress. The statue of Liberty is cast in boiling metal. The heroes of independence in France, as elsewhere, were the intermediate classes. For two centuries preceding the outburst of popular revenge against regal oppression and priestly rule, from Luther to Mirabeau, it was the orators, the fire and the power of eloquence, which nerved the masses and crushed the Bastile. This universal panting for freedom extended even beyond the English channel. There was eloquence in London in those days. The kindled soul of the populace, half created the thunders she heard pealing from the lips of her great orators. Flashing eyes, knit brows, clenched hands, outstretched arms, voices trembling with deep emotion and sometimes majestic as headlong cataracts, told how rebellion against wrong could agitate such men as Pitt, and Burke, and Fox, and Sheridan, and Erskine. One of the patriots of that day, Dr. Parr, the particular friend of Fox and Sheridan, the profoundest and most varied scholar



in England since Milton and Johnstone, being at a public dinner, was pressed to drink the toast of parasites, "Church and King." He rose, says his biographer, and with deep toned energy of voice, remarked: "I am compelled to drink to the toast from the chair; but I shall do it with my own comment. Well, then, gentlemen, *Church and King*. Once it was the toast of Jacobites, now it is the yell of incendiaries. It means the church without the gospel, and a king above the law." This was spoken at the time of the Birmingham riots, and the destruction of Dr. Priesley's library and house.

Less than a century ago, Germany had no national literature. There was no popular enthusiasm to kindle genius. The language was a medley of foreign tongues, and literary excellence was unknown. In 1698, and in 1700, two acorns fell and took root full of the germs of uncounted majestic forests. Gottsched, a Saxon, and Bodmer, a Swiss, born in the years stated above, in their early manhood established two rival schools, the first at Leipsig, the other at Zurich. In the spirit of knighthood they buckled on their armor, and like magnanimous adversaries sounded to a protracted literary fight. A thirty years war preceded the establishment of civil and religious liberty in Germany; a thirty years mental conflict between these two men and their pupils, heralded the greatest mental awakening in the world. These martial and moral conflicts brought the German States into collision with foreign letters as well as foreign arms; and from the time of Frederick the Great we see how rapidly their literature grew flexile, comprehensive and profound. Before the stimulating events of the Reformation there was no powerful eloquence, because there was no common dialect and aspiring patriotism. Religious and military commotions roused the popular mind and developed extraordinary powers. As soon as the Gymnasia were opened to crowds of eager youth, hearts began to throb and eyes

to flash under rustic blouse and cap, and the more popular mode of instruction by lectures to great assemblies of the studious and aspiring, congregated from all quarters in the Universities, at once laid the foundation of the richest literature in modern times.

The regenerating influence of liberty reached the fair but fated fields of her ancient domain beyond the Alps, and produced results worthy of her pristine power. The world stood astonished to see a people long noted only for effeminacy, suddenly aspire to the martial fame of antiquity, and vindicate the honors of Gallic, Lombard, and Roman ancestors. Science, long neglected, was successfully cultivated again, and was extensively diffused by persons not unworthy of the national fame once acquired by Galileo and Torricelli. Spallanzani, Galvani and Volta have linked their names to immortal scientific productions, while in elegant letters, Metastasio, Maffei, Tiroboschi, and Alfieri, form a galaxy of transcendent splendor. Alfieri, last of the great literati of Italy, in the midst of universal Sybarite effeminacy arose with his austere genius, like the severe majesty of a Doric temple amid the airy forms of Palladian architecture. He studied Tacitus with diligence, made three entire translations of Sallust, imbued his soul with a burning indignation against all forms of tyranny, and diffused the love of liberty throughout the literary world.

The late struggles of the South American patriots under Bolivar; the persevering courage of the Suliotes of Greece in defending their native mountains against the power and treachery of Ali Pacha; and the terrific conflict of the persecuted Poles under the gigantic tyranny of the autocrat of Russia; show that whenever a people rebel against oppression, they are strong and their voice is mighty. The spirit of liberty is identical in every clime. Whether teaching in the garb of philosophy, or leading to the deadliest conflict on more sanguinary fields,—whether suffering in the dun-



geon, or dying on the scaffold,—its toils and triumphs are one and the same. Socrates, Galileo, Sydney and Hampden, Luther and Wickliffe, Jefferson, Washington and Kosciusko, belong to one heroic family, and in their main features bear the same impress.

All nations feel an increased sympathy for those who are struggling for freedom. The most absolute sovereigns of Europe are obliged to do homage to this prevailing sentiment by seeking, in redressing wrongs abroad, impunity for inflicting them at home. But let tyrants beware. The moral power of free opinions is advancing in the majesty of its strength, over the ruins of centuries and the graves of empires.

When the French had subjugated Germany, there arose, first in Prussia, a desire of emancipation from the galling yoke. The monarch promised the people if they would expel the invaders he would give them a constitution, and with this view some sagacious patriots, shortly after the peace of Tilsit, founded the famous Tugendbund, or “codification of virtue.” This was the beginning of the famous Gymnasia wherein the youth of the populace were trained physically and mentally in all the glorious lessons and exercises of liberty. The first generation thus disciplined swept the whole vast country of every oppressor. What followed? As soon as the ignoble nobility and perjured sovereign were re-instated in power, they suppressed those seminaries of liberal ideas, and are at this moment refusing to the popular demand the constitution long since promised. The emperor of Austria is enacting the same treacherous game. Alexander promised the Poles augmented liberties, and thus for a while conciliated their confidence and profited by their bravery. But knowing very well that the liberties of Poland were inconsistent with the abject submission of Russia, he hastened, at the first opportunity to rescind his pledge, and re-fasten his chains. Nicholas is consummating the accursed work. It

is the imperial treachery of these splendid wretches on continental thrones that aggravates our hate. They know very well that they cannot subsist long in the neighborhood of free institutions, and it is our consolation that the liberty they fear is approaching to undermine their thrones with irresistible power. The movements of Ronge and others, and the popular acclamations with which these reformers are hailed, indicate that soon along the Neckar and the Rhine, the Elbe and the Danube, the tide of intelligence and freedom shall flow with an energy and fruitfulness hitherto unknown. Nations are beginning to think for themselves, and to rebel against hereditary dynasties and venerable oppression. Concessions to the will of the populace only invigorate the spirit of resistance, and each advance on the narrowed domain of regal prerogative, is a prophecy of the speedy and perfect triumph of free institutions. The popular mind has almost every where tasted of liberty's cup, and, like Homer's giant draining the goblets of Ulysses, startles despots every where with the cry,—“More! give me more!”

Gentlemen,—I have led you a long journey through diversified, but, I trust, not uninteresting scenes. These literary ramblings, snatched at intervals from crushing professional cares, have made me almost envy those who, like yourselves, may spend more time in the tranquil shades of classical pursuits. The slightest contact with the noble is ennobling; a transient, and even an imaginary visit to the scenes where humanity has been exalted in the defence of its heaven-descended rights, is inspiring. The heirs of hereditary power will there emulate a higher possession, and, under the influence of associations connected with the victories won by the free, will speak in unwonted strains of eloquence. Witness Childe Harold—a sort of poetical journal of the thoughts and feelings of a great but perverted intellect. Byron never wrote with power, till he threw off artificial and aristocratic restraints; till he tracked the genius of



liberty in her career, and blended the name of Washington with his honest and impassioned eloquence,—O, then he recorded a tide of emotions which will perish only with the language of man!

The object of this oration has been to impress deeply on your minds the fact illustrated by all history, that the union of genius with thralldom is unnatural and suicidal of all eminent success. Remember, that the perfection of liberty, virtue and knowledge, is found in the harmonious blending and most exalted cultivation of them all. Education of the most liberal character, and eloquence of the most unrestricted power, are the natural bonds by which republics are held together and perpetuated. No power can drive men together with such speed as eloquence will draw them; nothing can change customs and conquer prejudices like conviction. To be the subject of this influence and to be able to wield it, the mind must be free. Resist, with all the faculties you possess, the invasion of all kinds of tyranny designed to restrict man's endowments and destroy his rights. Seek wisdom at the highest sources, and arm yourselves with a panoply divine.

“He is a freeman whom the truth makes free,  
And all are slaves beside.”

The Scythians of old at their feasts used to strike the cords of their bows, to remind themselves of danger. Be equally vigilant for your own persons, your country and your God. Early in life, nerve your soul for heroic service. The advocate of liberal principles must expect to encounter the persecution by which tyrannical bigotry would subdue the firm hearts and eloquent tongues that refuse to do homage to its idol; but the duty of the nobly endowed is clear as the sun; they must go forth to battle against principalities and powers, armed with irresistible enthusiasm which shrinks from no peril, is awed by no power, and cheerfully submits to every sacrifice in the defence of justice and truth.