

ADDRESS

ON BEHALF OF THE

DEINOLOGIAN SOCIETY

OF

~~THE~~ COLLEGE;

DELIVERED AT DANVILLE, KENTUCKY.

ON THE 7TH OF JULY, 1831.

BY HON GEORGE ROBERTSON,
Chief Justice of Kentucky

LEXINGTON, KY.

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CENTRE COLLEGE, JULY 4, 1834.

Dear Sir:—

Permit us in our own name, and that of the Society which we represent, to express the high satisfaction that we have enjoyed this day, in listening to your excellent Address, and earnestly to request that you will comply with the solicitation of the Society, contained in the following resolution: viz.

Resolved, That the thanks of this Society be presented to the Hon. George Robertson for his able and interesting address, delivered this day; and that he be solicited to grant us a copy for publication.

Very respectfully your friends,

ROBERT MPKEOWN, } Committee of the
WM. M. RIDDLE, } Deionologian So-
WILLIAM W. HILL, } ciety of C. C.

DANVILLE, JULY 4, 1834.

Gentlemen:—

Although, as you must know, the address, a copy of which you have requested for publication, was prepared in very great haste, and, as I assure you, without any expectation that it would ever have any other publicity than its delivery this day gave it; yet I cannot refuse a cheerful compliance with your request. With all its imperfections it is now yours—do as you please with it.

Respectfully your friend,

GEORGE ROBERTSON.

ADDRESS.

ANOTHER year is gone—and with it have gone forever many of our countrymen, neighbors and friends. A memorable and eventful year has it been—a portentous era in the affairs of men, and a season of peculiar trial to us and to our civil institutions. But in the allotments of an all-wise Providence, our beloved country is yet permitted to stand forth united and free, and we too have been preserved to hail the light of this hallowed day, and in health and in peace, once more upon earth, to make the accustomed offering of our thanksgiving.

This is no common day; it brings with it remembrances, and obligations, and prospects peculiarly interesting and impressive. The 4th of July, 1776, opened a bright and glorious scene in the great drama of human affairs. The declaration of North American Independence was the offspring of the purest patriotism and of the most enlightened reason; and already it has been the parent of events which must, in all time to come, have a great influence on the destiny of man. The time will never come when the balmy noon whose 58th anniversary we now commemorate, will not be remembered as one of the purest and brightest that ever beamed upon the moral world. Then it was that Franklin and Adams and Jefferson, and their compatriot representatives of the will and intelligence of the people of these states, then colonies, proclaimed to the world these fundamental truths—that all men are by nature entitled to be free, and to enjoy equal rights to life and liberty—to the acquisition and security of property, and to the pursuit after happiness, now and forever; that the free and deliberate will of the people is the only legitimate source of all human authority; that all just government is administered for the greatest good of the whole body politic; that man is not accountable to man for his conscience or his opinions, and should not be disturbed by any human means, in the free exercise of either the one or the other; and of course, that no freeman should forfeit any civil right or privilege in consequence of his actual enjoyment of perfect freedom of judgment, or of conscience. This was the first formal and authoritative announcement ever made by any people of the true elementary principles of free government or of social organization. It was the united

voice of sound philosophy and pure religion, asserting, for the first time, the natural rights of an intelligent, moral and christian people. But the simple creed thus announced, God-like and ennobling as all must feel it to be, when considered as a speculation of philanthropy, would nevertheless be deemed but the illusion of a golden age unless its principles, so just and so beautiful in the abstract, can be satisfactorily exemplified in the actual condition of society and the practical operations of government. The value and application of those principles to any people must depend altogether on the moral character and conduct of the majority. Their truth and value have been so far, happily illustrated in this land of promise; and the successful progress of the great American experiment is ascribable to the pervading intelligence and the predominant habits and virtues which have hitherto signalled the great body of the people of these states. Our Declaration of Independence was but the reflected image of the principles and sentiments of those by whom it was proclaimed, and by whom it was triumphantly maintained. The moral light which then dawned in the hearts of our countrymen, guided them successfully through the perils and sacrifices of a protracted and bloody struggle for independence, and having led them to still nobler achievement—the establishment of wisely constructed institutions for preserving liberty and equality—has already cast its cheering rays over distant lands, and unless extinguished, or eclipsed in this new world, will shine brighter and brighter, until, with the effulgence of perfect and universal day, it will enlighten and bless all mankind, of every color and every clime.

Let us then rejoice that our lots have been cast in this land of liberty and this age of light. And let us all endeavor to feel and to act as a moral people should feel and act on this our great day of national jubilee—a day ever to be remembered with pious gratitude, and worthy to be consecrated through all time, to the enjoyments and the duties of a reflecting patriotism and a comprehensive benevolence.

Generation after generation will pass away and be forgotten, but when, in the lapse of ages yet to come, the monumental columns and Pyramids of nations shall have mouldered to dust, and the names of tyrants and of demagogues shall have sunk into oblivion or contempt, the immortal principles of our Declaration of Independence and the virtues of the patriots who, to maintain them, pledged their *lives*, their *fortunes* and their sacred *honor*, will still shed a mild and mellow light which will never fade away as long as liberty has an altar, or God has a temple upon earth. But whether in after times, here or elsewhere,

those principles and those virtues shall prevail among men, or shall be remembered only as the historic glories of a meteor age, may depend much, very much, on the conduct of those of this generation, who, under Providence, have been made the recipients for themselves and the depositories for all mankind of one of the best boons ever vouchsafed by God to man.

This then is an occasion peculiarly proper for a dedication of our hearts to our country, and of our minds to sober contemplations on our duties to ourselves, to those who have gone before, and those who shall come after us, and to that *Being* who stood by our fathers in the great day of their fiery trial, and by whom we will be held accountable for the manner in which we shall discharge the sacred trust committed to our keeping.

Standing as we do, on an isthmus connecting the dead and the unborn—the fathers of our liberty who have gone before us, and the sons who are to come after us in joy or in sorrow, it is our duty this day—like the ancient Greeks during their Isthmian and other national commemorations—to observe an universal amnesty and glancing at the past, the present and the future, to banish all passion and prejudice, personal, partizan or national, and, as one family, unite in the noble resolution, that we will henceforth as long as we live, do all that we can to cherish the virtues, and to preserve, improve and hand down the moral and civil institutions, without which liberty is but licentiousness, and free government but an empty and delusive name.

In the history of the old world the philosophic observer can find but few incidents gratifying to the philanthropic mind, and no satisfactory evidence of the capacity of the mass of mankind for the maintainance of a just and stable democracy. Greece, the cradle of letters, and the nursery of the arts—the land of Homer, of Solon, of Herodotus—the theatre of Thermopylæ, of Leuctra, and of Marathon—classic Greece, in the heyday of her glory, beguiles the scholar with her minstrelsey, her eloquence and her arms, and fires his genius with illustrious examples of devoted patriotism; but a calm survey of her history exposes lamentable scenes of disorder and injustice, the natural effects of the ignorance of the multitude. Under the spell of a momentary inspiration, the superficial inquirer may be deceived with the semblance of popular freedom, but the illusion will vanish when he beholds the army of demagogues and their triumphs: when he sees Pisistrates putting down Solon—a deluded mob subjecting Aristides to ostracism because he was called “the just”—and the same potent, but

inconstant engine, taking the life of Socrates because he ventured to intimate the immortality of the soul, and the existence of one, and only one God—when he beholds the insecurity of virtue, and the instability of justice, and the final degeneracy and desolation of the once fair famed Greece, he will feel that the populace, like its own fabled Polyphemus, was a *blind giant*, incapable of self direction, and as apt to destroy us to preserve.

Rome, once mistress of the world, was, in her best days, the great arena of contending factions. She too had her demagogues, and the "*Majesty of the Roman People*," was their watchword. And though she had her Fabricius, her Regulus, her Cato, her Cicero—she had also her Clodius, and her Sylla, and her Caesars, honored in their day as the friends of the people; and whether Marius or Sylla, Caesar or Pompey prevailed, the victory was in the name of liberty, the *Republic* was honored with a triumph, and a clamor of approbation echoed from the Forum to the Capitol. But even Augustus Caesar, absolute as he was, preserved the forms of a Republic, whilst, by the perversion of his vast patronage to his own aggrandisement, he made an obsequious and prostituted Senate the Registers of his will, and, in the name of liberty, fastened a heavy yoke forever on an *applauding* populace.

The fast anchored Isle—the natal land of our fathers and the mother of our common law, has done much for mankind. But she too has had her scenes of civil strife and of blood. Her Wakefield, her Smithfield and her Bosworthfield; she has had her Tudors, and her Stuarts, her Jeffreys, her Bonner and her Cromwell, as well as her Sidney, her Cranmer, and her Hampden; and after ages of reformation in Church and State, her aristocracy still governs, her Hierarchy still prevails, and the harp of Erin hangs tuneless and sad on the leafless bow of her blasted oak.

The French Revolution had its Dantons and its Robespiers—and after the bloody idol of licentious liberty had, like the car of Jugernaut, crushed its thousands and overturned the Temples of the true God, a Pretorian band of Grenadiers delivered over the "*Republic*" to the safekeeping of a Bonaparte.

After contemplating such scenes, well might the philanthropist doubt the capacity of man for self-government, and exclaim in the language of Madam Roland under the guillotine—"Oh liberty! what crimes have not been perpetrated in thy abused name!"—But when,

from the waste around him, he casts his eye on this green spot, he feels that there is yet hope for man upon earth.

The discouraging failure of the experiments which had been made of popular government among the most enlightened nations of ancient and modern Europe must be attributed, not to any invincible incapacity for such a government, but to the predominance of ignorance and its consequential vices. Universal liberty and universal light are inseparable. All mankind have capacities for the one as well as for the other, and were created for the enjoyment of both; and as sure as there is a wise and immutable Providence, man will ultimately be elevated to the full and undisturbed fruition on earth of those great ends of his moral being. Will that God, who preserved Christianity through the gloom and desolation of the middle ages, suffer liberty, its offspring, to perish? Both, we trust, have taken deep root in American soil. They were planted by our forefathers, under circumstances peculiarly propitious.

The mariner's compass, the printing press, the discovery of America, "the Reformation," and other subsidiary agencies having opened light on the black cloud of ignorance and superstition which hung over Europe for ages succeeding the overthrow of civilization by the barbarians of the north, man, long subjugated and degraded, began to understand and to assert his imprescriptable rights. But still borne down and oppressed, many of the most intelligent and most resolute sought an asylum in the solitude of this virgin land, and brought with them all that was most excellent of the improved habits and institutions—moral, social and civil—of the Transatlantic world which, with all its charities of home and of country, they exchanged forever for the hope of happiness in the new world. Here was then, for the first time, exhibited an infant community in the maturity of social organization—a people *at once*, intelligent and virtuous—nascent colonies of equals who, though still dependent on the King, Lords, and Commons of England, enjoyed the protection of the common law, worshipped their own God in their own way, and far surpassed the mother country in the actual enjoyment and prevalence of civil and religious liberty.

When, after the lapse of nearly two centuries, such a people, wonderfully improved by their intermediate trial and experience, determined to set up for themselves, they were able, in full manhood, to stand alone, and did stand up as one man, in the dignity and strength of their united moral energies: and they were not alone—God stood by them; because, *as they were qualified for freedom, THEIR cause was HIS.*

Thus panoplied, success was sure; and a common struggle ended in a common blessing.

The American Revolution, unlike any that preceded it, was altogether a work of intelligence and virtue. It was a sober and solemn appeal by a moral and christian people in behalf of the rights of all. The *people* began it—the *people* carried it on—and the *people* ended it, for *themselves* and posterity; and it was begun and carried on, and ended as became rational and just men, struggling, as equals, for all that was most dear to each.

National independence was not the only object, and was far from being the only effect of that great appeal; and, had nothing else or better been achieved, the revolution would have been unprofitable—perhaps pernicious. But the ends of the momentous contest were announced in the Declaration of Independence; and those ends were accomplished. Equal rights, security—justice—crowned the final triumph; and for these we are indebted less to the valor than to the virtue of our ancestors.

The close of the war of independence opened new dangers. A government was to be established, and history, with all its lights, did not furnish a safe model. Thirteen independent states were either to be confederated or consolidated; and in the one form or the other, it was yet to be tried whether the many or the few—one man or all, should rule. But the same moral power which presided over the Revolution, still presided, and out of the chaos which ensued, brought forth a new creation, orderly, beautiful, and harmonious. All desired the greatest good of all. There was no Cæsar to seek a crown—no Cromwell to claim a protectorate—no Plebian envy—no Agrarian law—no religious fanaticism produced the Revolution, or armed with power an ambitious leader—WASHINGTON had led our armies to victory, and *his* highest ambition was to be a free and useful American citizen. The American people, now liberated from foreign dominion, were prepared for freedom. Feeling this, they were determined to enjoy the great boon themselves, and to establish it for us on a new and broad foundation of *equal rights, popular intelligence, and public virtue*. And have they not done so? The work of their hands, is it not good? It is as perfect as the capacities of the age could make it. It was the fruit of compromise, a compromise of diversified interests and opinions; and presents an illustrious example of that liberal and enlightened spirit of moderation and concession, without which the Federal Constitution could never have been established, and cannot be pre-

erved. That constitution was the first organized form of government (excepting some of our State Constitutions, and the articles of confederation) which any people in their primary assemblies ever originated and established. Doubtless it has defects; being the workmanship of man's hands, it could not be faultless. But, with such occasional alterations and repairs as experience shall recommend, and patriotism may adopt, it may do all that a form of government can do, and will last as long as public virtue shall prevail. It establishes the union of the States as the anchor of safety—it defines and distributes political power in such a manner, as to give to deliberate public opinion its just operation, and to secure justice against the passions of functionaries or factions; and it guarantees to every citizen the liberty of conscience, of opinion, and of speech. For nearly half a century it has been tried, and, so far, has been equal to the purposes for which it was framed, and to the expectations of those by whom it was adopted. Under its benign protection, not a drop of blood has been shed in civil war. Justice has been administered “*without sale, denial or delay.*” Our population has increased from four to thirteen millions, and our country has not only acquired great wealth and strength, but has established for itself among the nations of the earth, a bright and distinguished name. No title is more honorable, or, among sensible men, more honored, than that of “*Citizen of the United States.*”

And the Valley of the Mississippi—this Hesperian land of ours—is it not, with all its enchanting wonders, one of the fruits of that liberty and security which have been assured to us by our institutions? A wild wilderness when Independence was declared—it already blooms in all the beauty and maturity of the most civilized nation. Its population exceeding three millions, and increasing beyond example, in numbers, in wealth, and in moral power—its dwellings, its farms and its churches—its cities, its colleges, its Steam Boats and its Rail Roads—altogether exhibiting a landscape, now and in perspective, never surpassed, if ever equaled in physical beauty, and moral grandeur.

But this should be a day of candor and of truth. Our country's escutcheon, surpassing though it is, cannot appear altogether spotless. We have owed, and yet owe, with augmented, and continually increasing obligations, a sacred debt of justice and magnanimity, to the aboriginal Red Men, whose homes we occupy, and whose council fires we have extinguished. Helpless, hopeless, and forlorn, a miserable remnant only remains of the once powerful lords of this continent. And shall the last melancholy relics of those vast tribes also perish? The

honor of our country forbids it. The efforts hitherto, to meliorate their condition, though well intended, have not been always the most congenial, or appropriate, nor sufficiently earnest and persevering. They *can be yet* civilized—they *can yet* be reclaimed, and made useful and happy. Let it be done. America should do it—America can do it—and America, we trust and believe, will do it; and, if she shall accomplish it, though too long deferred, the tablet on which the achievement shall be recorded, will be one of the fairest in all her bright annals.

The philanthropist has still also to lament, that a curse imposed on our ancestors when in colonial subjection, still lingers among us. Domestic slavery cannot be suddenly abolished in all the States, consistently with the welfare of either the black man or the white. A premature effort of inconsiderate humanity, might be disastrous, and would certainly tend to defeat or retard the ultimate object of every good and wise man—universal emancipation. But we feel that public sentiment, public policy, and individual interest, are all conspiring to extirpate the great household evil, and will, in convenient time, and in some just and eligible mode, satisfactory to all, banish it forever from our land.

It must be admitted too, that, in the progress of our affairs, the effervescence of party has sometimes disturbed our tranquility, and that faction has, more than once, dared to raise its Cerberian head. But these evils will accompany liberty in its best estate. No unmixed good belongs to earth. Popular freedom cannot exist without the occasional agitations incident to the collision of different interests and opinions.

“Faction will freedom, like its shade, pursue,

“Yet, like the shadow, proves the substance true.”

In every free State, there must be conflicting opinions, and rival interests, which will produce parties fired with emulation, and, not infrequently, armed with passion and prejudice. And where there are such parties, there will be demagogues—light and protean newspaper politicians, hollow-hearted and deceitful—who, floating on the bubbling tide themselves have raised, excite every prejudice, persuade every suspicion, and address every passion, of the credulous, the ignorant, and the unprincipled. These eruptive disorders cannot be prevented without destroying the vitality which produces them. But as long as the heart of the body politic is sound, they will be but as pimples on the skin, and with the *animalculæ* which live in them and feed on them, will be carried off by the healthy circulation of the pure blood of life. Hitherto we have been saved by the ultimate rectitude and energy

of public opinion—a resource that will never fail whilst soundness abides with the body of our people. Popular virtue and intelligence, are the only firm foundations of popular liberty; and until these foundations have been sapped, the superstructure will never fall. Perhaps the most radical defect in our political organization, is the disproportionate power and patronage with which the national Executive is armed. And whenever our liberties shall fall, they will sink under the combined action of a perverted Executive and a licentious press. But should it ever be our lot to behold one of the most alarming trials to which our rights can be doomed—an unworthy Chief Magistrate, elevated and sustained by a selfish and ambitious party, perverting his great patronage, and abusing his power by rewarding his sycophants, proscribing all who dare to think honestly for themselves, and prostituting the public press—and a mercenary band of placemen and expectants, like the degenerate Romans in the days of the Cæsars, only because the supremacy of their master's will is indispensable to the attainment of their personal ends, vindicating those abuses and acting out the detestable doctrine of Hobbes, that the king cannot be guilty of perjury, as long as the people can be prevailed on to sanction or can be compelled to endure his usurpations—then, even then, if virtue and intelligence still abide with the great mass, though we shall lament the loathsome scenes, we need not tremble or despair; the rightful sovereign, will at last, assert their supremacy, and “come to the rescue” of their violated institutions;—they may come slowly—but come they will, and with power.

But these slight blemishes at which we have just glanced—what are *they* in the sublime prospect which this day opens to our view? They are but the spots on the sun: and though the microscopic vision of misanthropy may magnify them, they are lost in the great panorama which our country presents to the eye of an instructed and comprehensive patriotism. Could Boon and Harrod and Logan—when, in this once “*land of blood*,” they first trod in the tracks of the Indian and the Buffalo—have dreamed that what we now behold in this smiling West, would so soon have succeeded their adventurous footsteps, how would such a vision have cheered them amidst the solitude and perils which they encountered, in aiding to plant civilization in the wilderness! But oh! the pilgrim band of Plymouth Rock—the offcast germ of the once leafless, sapless, tree of light—what holy joy would theirs have been, had their last lingering glimpse of the green fields of their childhood been gilded with a hope, that the then house-

less solitude of their refuge would, so soon, or ever be transformed into a vast cultivated garden, the abode of that liberty, religion and law, for which they had abandoned forever the comforts and endearments of the homes of their birth?

Here let us pause, and contemplate our actual condition—its peculiar and pre-eminent blessedness, its hopes, its fears, its duties, and its responsibilities. All that our noble sires hoped for, and all that rational man could expect, is now ours. This fair country is ours; and that liberty, that religion, and that just and equal law, for which the hardy hunter and the pious pilgrim longed and suffered, are all ours—ours to enjoy—ours to uphold—ours to improve, and exalt and transmit. We are indeed the heirs of rich blessings—the price too of virtues, of blood, and of tears that greatly enhance their sacredness and their value. To prove ourselves worthy of these blessings, is a sacred duty we owe to those who secured them for us—to ourselves who hope to enjoy them, and to our children, who will have a right to claim them, as we received them, unimpaired, unjeoparded, and improved. Shall this threefold obligation be fulfilled? Let this solemn question never be forgotten; and may each of us be faithfully answering it by our conduct, as we should, as long as we live.

To enjoy and preserve—we must possess the principles and practice the virtues, which achieved and established our constitutional liberties; we must maintain, by just and proper means, the union and the harmony of the States; we must guard with all our vigilance, and defend with all our energies the Federal Constitution, and should never permit, or connive at any infraction of its provisions, or evasion of its principles under any pretence, or for any purpose whatsoever; we must never permit a Manlius to escape the sentence of public justice by pointing to the Capitol which he once saved—nor even a Scipio Africanus, when properly arraigned, whether guilty or innocent, to elude a fair and full trial by appealing to the battles he had won for his country; the public law must be inflexibly supported by all, because it is the only support or security of all; we should always give our suffrages to those who are most worthy and capable; we should never trust or sustain any functionary, high or low, who adopts any other rule of official conduct than **THE PUBLIC GOOD**; we should approve and encourage all efforts and institutions which tend to moral improvement, or to the establishment of useful principles, or habits; we should ever remember, and strive to imitate the virtues of our Revolutionary worthies—and whenever we feel doubt respecting

our civil duty, it would be well for us to consider what, under the same circumstances, Washington or Franklin would have done; and it should ever be a leading maxim of our lives, that, "ABOVE OURSELVES OUR COUNTRY SHOULD BE DEAR."

When experience shall expose any radical defect in the Constitution, let the proper remedy be applied, but with a prudent circumspection and foresight. Inconsiderate or hasty innovation should never be permitted, nor would it always be prudent to attempt to remedy slight defects. There is a sacredness in age. The Constitution as it was in the days of our fathers, will be endeared to us by many tender and interesting associations; and it is the veneration we feel for it, which gives to it its chief efficacy. Just as it is, it will preserve us if we preserve it; and if we transmit it pure and unchanged, we leave it improved—greatly improved by *trial* and by *age*.

But, unless the coming generation shall be properly prepared for constitutional liberty, its transmission to them will be a curse instead of a blessing; and the best hope for freedom the world ever had, will be blasted, and perhaps for ages. One of the greatest obligations, therefore, that rests upon us, is to our children—to qualify them for enjoying and preserving all the blessings of our free institutions, when we shall have gone "to the land where our fathers have gone."

The proposition that man is capable of self-government, presupposes, necessarily, that he is virtuous and intelligent. This truth, so self-evident, is exemplified by the history of every age.

Much has been written about the most effective social organization, and the best conservative principle of States. But all the wisdom of the most learned Philosophers, and all the artifices of the most experienced politicians, never did nor ever can project any expedient which can supply the want of a general diffusion of moral light. As a free moral agent, man in the social and civil state, must be regulated by moral principles: It is the dictate of reason as well as a law of nature that, among equals, the majority should govern; and, among equals, the majority will govern. But, unless the majority understand their rights, and their duties too, and possess the virtues essential to the maintainance of those rights, and the proper discharge of those duties, they will not long govern, and, whatever may be the form of government, they will, *in fact*, be governed. This is equally the dictate of reason and the law of nature. When the numerical plurality are incapable of just self-control, those who are *virtute majoris*, and not those who are *numero pluris*, constitute the actual and efficient majority, and

the only one that can govern wisely or safely. As "*Knowledge is power*," those who do not possess an equal degree of intelligence and virtue, should not, and cannot exercise an equal degree of moral influence. It is worse than mockery to declaim about "*liberty and equality*," when the great lever of moral power is held by a comparatively few members of society, who must govern as long as reason predominates; and when that does not prevail, passion, like a volcanic eruption, overruns every opposing barrier. And either dilemma—the one being oligarchy, and the other anarchy or mobocracy—is inconsistent with liberty and safety. The best organized government must be *practically* the one or the other, unless the great body of the people possess a *pervading* and *preponderating* moral power. The genius of the government should be adapted to that of the people; and the practical government will be the image of those by whom it is administered and controlled. It is political quackery to attempt to preserve republican institutions among a corrupt or ignorant people.

"What is a free State?
 "Men, high minded men,
 "Men who their duties know,
 "But (also) know their rights,
 "And, knowing, dare maintain--
 "THESE constitute a State."

The stability of a constitution depends not so much on its structure, as on public opinion. The principles of the people, however bad, will prevail over those of their constitution, however good. The constitution can afford no security, unless it be revered as inviolable, by those whose will must govern. Unless the mass of the people be enlightened, vigilant, and true, those who may be entrusted with power, may not be such as are worthy of the trust, and may do as they please and still be sustained by a misled majority, even in trampling down their constitutional bulwarks, and forging their own chains. No vassalage is so complete as that of the soul—no servitude so hopeless, or degrading, as that of the mind. That mind which is under the dominion of any other mind, is not free; it is a slave, though it may wear gilded chains. And a mind under the dominion of passion, ignorance, or vice, is not, whilst thus enslaved, a free agent, or fit to be free. A community of such minds cannot enjoy civil liberty.

When the people are *truly* enlightened, tumults and encroachments can do no permanent mischief—and, without such guardian intelligence, the best constitution, and the wisest laws cannot, in a popular government, secure either tranquility, or justice.

A stable democracy is the *natural* offspring of the maturity of

society, when the people are good and wise. In such a community, neither aristocracy nor monarchy—the *necessary* fruits of the immaturity of society—can be maintained. A striking illustration of this self-evident truth, may be seen in the Lilliputian Republic of *San Marino*; where all the citizens, being by a common discipline, as nearly equal as possible in moral power, maintain, in practice, as well as in speculation, equal and just institutions, and laws which have a moral force far more efficacious than physical and merely political power combined. There the law supports all, because it is supported by all; every infraction of any law is deemed an attack on the security of every citizen, because it is, by the integrity and inviolability of their laws, that their rights are secured, or felt to be secure. And thus they happily exemplify the maxim of Solon—“*Force* is the lot of some, *LAW* is the support of *all*.”

Though the perfectability of man in his probationary state, is but the vision of a vain and benevolent fancy, yet the infinite improvability of the human mind, and of the moral character, is as certain as it is ennobling. Dominion over the earth, was granted to man in the great charter of his being, which endowed him with a rational and immortal mind. This elemental spark is the *punctum saliens* of human power; nourished and expanded by proper culture, it can be made as resistless in its influence as it will be wonderful in its developments. Behold the disparity between the civilized and the savage man—between the Christian and the Pagan world. Remember ~~Athens in the days of her glory—the conquest of Mexico by Cortez,~~ and of the kingdom of the Sun, by Pizarro. Look at the mariner's Compass, the Telescope, the Printing Press, the Cotton Loom, the Steam Boat—observe the magic march of improvement in this wonderful age—the arts, the institutions, the laws of these our days; and behold a Newton measuring the sun—a Herschel scanning the stars, and viewing the mountains of the Moon—a Franklin drawing Lightning from Heaven—and then, even then, we have but a glimpse of the capacities of the human mind, or of the power of human knowledge. The power of knowledge is not only sure and comprehensive, but attractive and happy. It is the power of being good, and of doing good—it is the power of being happy, and of making happy—it is the power of being all that man should be, and of doing all that man should do for his own happiness and the welfare of his country. It is the chief source of true happiness. It purifies the heart, whilst it exalts the mind. It is incompatible with dissolute habits, sordid appe-

ties, and vulgar ambition. As it elevates and expands the intellectual and moral faculties, it affords resources for enjoyments, both rational and useful, and aids in preventing licentious habits, and in destroying the contagion of idleness and vice. An enlightened mind alone can enjoy "*the feast of reason and the flow of soul;*"—it communes with itself, and draws aliment from every thing it sees or hears—it finds

"Tongues in trees, and books in flowing brooks;
"Sermons in stones, and God in every thing."

The true patriot will strive to enlighten the popular mind, and will endeavor, by proper means, to propagate truth, dispel error, and eradicate vice. By such efforts he will help to meliorate the condition, exalt the character, and secure the rights of his fellow men. The citizen who will not thus act, is not the people's friend, or his country's friend; nor, whatever he may say or think, can he be, *at heart*, in favor of universal liberty and equality.

Does the philanthropist wish to promote the welfare of his race? Let him aid in the diffusion of knowledge. Does the American patriot hope that the liberty which he enjoys may become universal and indistructable? or do we, who are fathers, hope that our children may be free and happy, and be able to transmit those blessings, unmarred, to *their* children? Those hopes are vain and delusive, unless the light of true knowledge be properly and effectually diffused. We must instruct one another—we must educate our children—educate them in the habits and principles in which, as freemen, they should live, and in which, *to be* freemen, they *must* live.

One of the most comprehensive definitions of education, is that given by Agesilaus—"Children should be taught that which it will be proper for them to practice when they reach mature age." He, whose habits, principles, and taste, are not established when he reaches manhood, is in great danger of never having good or fixed habits, or principles, or taste. The stamina of intellectual and moral character, are formed in the plastic season of youth. Nothing is more ductile than the infant mind; it may be moulded into almost any shape. The lives of Herodotus, of Demosthenes, of Alexander, of Hannibal, of Franklin, and of many other illustrious men, exemplify this truth. It has been said by a wise man, that the reason why an old man, while he remembers scarcely any thing recent, retains a vivid recollection of the incidents of his boyhood, is, because the interesting scenes of his youth became *identified* with *his soul*. Hence the evident importance of early and proper instruction; and especially that which may be given on the mother's

lap, and under the paternal roof. Lessons and examples then imprinted, and principles thus implanted, will grow with the mind, and forever influence its tone and character. How ready a sacrifice is the parental charge? and how important is it, that parents should be wise and prudent and vigilant? A mother's charge—how sacred, and how eventful! She it is, who, more than any other human being, may create or destroy the germ of virtue. Remember the "*mother of the Gracchi*," and the mother of Washington. Parents remember these immortal mothers, and try to imitate their maternal examples.

That which is taught in primary schools and colleges, is called science, which is nothing but knowledge reduced to system, so as to be easily acquired, well retained, and promptly applied to its proper use in the business of life. All human science may be comprehended in a threefold generalization—1st. Mathematical, or the science of number and quantity; 2nd. Physical, or the science of external nature; and 3d. Moral, or the science which teaches the moral nature, and obligations of man in the natural, social, and civil state. In each of these classifications, many subordinate departments of knowledge are included. We will repeat some of the more elementary and essential only. Pure mathematics, comprehends arithmetic or the science of numeration, and geometry, or the science of mensuration. Physical science embraces mechanical philosophy, or the sensible motion and action of bodies—Chemistry, or the inherent qualities and laws of matter—Anatomy, or the animal structure—Physiology, or the functional economy of animal life—Zoology, or the nature of irrational animals—Botany, or the properties of the vegetable kingdom—Mineralogy, or the nature of the mineral kingdom, and Geology, or the structure and composition of the earth. Moral science includes Ethics, or the duties of man, as a rational and accountable being—Mental Philosophy, or the phenomena of mind—and Jurisprudence, or the principles of legislation. This is a very imperfect outline; but general and incomplete as it is, it may serve to show the vastness and beauty, and value of that intellectual domain, which it is the destiny of mind to achieve and enjoy. The higher branches of scholastic education are taught in colleges and universities. And it is the duty of all who feel an interest in the propagation of knowledge, to give their countenance to such institutions. It is the interest of the poor as well as the rich, of the weak as well as the strong, that his own country should provide suitable nurseries for invigorating and expanding the faculties of its own citizens, so as to acquire for itself, character and power, and, for

the humble and the obscure, protection and instruction. Such men as Socrates and Demosthenes and Cicero and Newton and Bacon and Burke and Adams and Jefferson and Hamilton and Madison—are, to the moral, what the luminaries of Heaven are to the natural world. The higher institutions of learning are almost indispensable to the production of such moral lights. And it should not be forgotten, that most of the patriarchs of the Revolution, men full of scientific, as well as practical wisdom, had been students in colleges or universities.

Colleges not only prepare the more active minds for usefulness and distinction, but they are efficient agents for the diffusion of correct elementary education. *Wrong education is worse than no education.* Primary schools have been woefully deficient in qualified teachers, and, not unfrequently, have been injuriously perverted by ignorant pedagogues. The colleges, if well patronized, might furnish for common schools, teachers of the proper qualifications; who, in the useful employment of moulding the human mind, might acquire, for themselves, honor, and for their country, glory. And thus too, might society be relieved of literary drones, who, by idleness and inactivity, too often propagate a pestilent contagion in the sphere in which they move. No vocation is more honorable or useful, than that of the elementary teacher; and no mind can be too exalted for such employment. When such men as Pythagoras and Adams and Crawford, were teachers of youth, who should be ashamed to be a good school-master? But elementary teaching will never be as general, or as useful as it should be, until well educated teachers can be easily obtained.

Common schools, properly conducted, are also useful auxiliaries to colleges, in affording convenient opportunities for cheap preparatory education. But were they adapted to no other purpose than that of educating those classes of society whose sphere will be that of the common mass, their utility could not be overrated. The value of elementary education has but seldom been rightly estimated by the enlightened and benevolent; and never has been justly appreciated by that portion of mankind, whose destiny forbids higher scholastic attainments. Every citizen should be acquainted with the rudiments of science—the elementary principles of the arts of civilized man—the organic laws of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms of nature—the fundamental principles of moral and political law, and his own duties and rights as a man and a citizen. It is the duty as well as the interest of every citizen to understand the principles of the Federal and State Constitutions; and, though the American statesman

cannot hope to see the municipal laws of his country taught, like those of Minos once were; as a part of common education, still he should desire to see every citizen instructed in the principles of his government. These, like the twelve tables of Roman law, should be taught as a *carmen necessarium* in every common school.

The great object of elementary education, is, to employ the youthful mind in such a manner as to establish proper habits of thought and of action—to prepare the pupil for the active business of life, and to enable him to understand his true destiny. And the body as well as the mind, requires attention. “*A sound mind in a sound body*” is essential to happiness, and to the utmost usefulness. Gymnastic, and other more scientific exercises of the body, are conducive to grace as well as to vigor and health; and are therefore useful, if not indispensable. We feel that we are in danger of degenerating;—*active, industrious, and moral habits are too much neglected.*

But the best interests of the commonwealth, no less than our own sacred duties, require that our daughters as well as our sons, shall be well educated—instructed practically in all the domestic duties, and instructed also in the elements of science. Woman’s influence on the destiny of man is unsurpassed. She will ever be his good or his evil genius. The object of his most tender relations—the first and most impressive instructress of his children—his confidant—his counsellor—the companion of his joys—the sharer of his woes—WIFE—MOTHER—surely *she* should, by proper culture, be well qualified, in every respect, to dignify and adorn the important station to which Providence has exalted her sex.

A well organized system of common schools, sustained by the public sentiment, is indispensable to the greatest happiness and the highest glory of the Republic. The poor as well as the rich, must be protected. *All* should be carefully instructed. Every child *in* the commonwealth is a child *of* the commonwealth, and should be equally the cherished object of her guardian care. *Here* lies her strength—*here* her liberty—*here* her true glory. Let her rally all her moral energies, and blend all her scattered rays; let not her neglect cause one intellectual flower to “blush unseen, *or waste its sweetness on the desert air*”—and *then*, and not till then, she will have equality—then *power*—and then an *unwritten law* in the hearts of her people, far more salutary and effectual than all the sanctions of *all her written codes.*

In our own blessed America, the importance of diffusing truth cannot be exaggerated. *Is man capable of self-government?* This

problem of ages is now, and perhaps for the first time, subjected to a fair test. Americans may solve it for themselves, and for the whole human race. All has been done for us that the mere structure of government could have done—all that the wisdom and example of our patriarchs could do. But our institutions are yet in a state of eventful trial. They are but the *anatomy* of liberty—*public sentiment* is the SOUL. The vitality as well as the longevity of the yet living idol, depends on the purity and intelligence of those who worship at her shrine. The virtue of our fathers imparted the Promethean spark, and the breath of their children must preserve, or extinguish the vestal flame which they kindled on their country's altar. The vital air of liberty is pure intelligence, as pervading as the sun. Without this vivifying element, the whole organic structure, beautiful as it is, must soon become a lifeless mass, and perish.

But mere philosophy, however sublimated or prevailing, is not the only, or the surest safeguard of human liberty. Reason, the most unerring, is still frail and flitting, and, unaided, is but the *Eutopia* of More, or the *Platonopolis* of Plotinus. This important truth is demonstrated by the history of the Pagan world. Social man needs a law *immutable*—some motive *beyond the grave*—a *pure and fixed religious principle*. This is his ANCHOR—*sure and steadfast*.

In its purity and simplicity—the Christian Religion is the friend and companion of civil liberty—its constant companion—its best friend. *It* taught man his true dignity, and his true and equal rights. *It* elevated woman to her just rank in the scale of being; and, even amid the perversions and prostitutions of a wild superstition, *it* rescued literature and civilization from the ruins of a dark and desolating age. It is not the metaphysical, or polemic theology of the schools, nor the infallible "*orthodoxy*" of sectarian bigotry, nor the false religion of persecution, nor the bloody religion of Smithfield, and of the Inquisition—of which we speak; but it is that mild and pure, and holy religion, which rebukes intolerance, and dispels ignorance, and subdues vice—that heavenly religion which beams in the pious mother's eye, and hallows the accents of the pious mother's lips—that religion which proclaims peace on earth, and good will to men, and inspires that love to God and love to man which purifies the heart and overcomes the world.

It is the prevalence of this last and brightest hope of man that will establish his liberty on the rock of ages. And this it was, pure and unconstrained, as it came from Heaven, that the father of his country, recommended to the people of these United States, when, in his valedictory address, he conjured them, by all they held dear, not only to regard religion as the firmest prop of their liberty and happiness, but to treat as a public enemy, him who should ever attempt to undermine, or to shake it.

Had not Washington, like Fabius, led our armies, and saved our country, and then, like Cincinnatus, retired to his farm—had not his influence—more than that of any other man, induced the adoption of the Federal Constitution—had not his rare virtues, and the weight of

his character preserved that Constitution in its infancy, and paralyzed the *Briarian* monster that threatened its destruction—the closing act of his public life—his farewell address, to his countrymen, would alone have entitled him to an imperishable monument. Let those countrymen always revere his principles, and follow his advice, and their liberties will last as long as their country shall be known as “*the country of Washington.*”

Young Gentlemen of Centre College, at whose request this address is attempted—may I now be permitted, respectfully, to invite your attention to your own peculiar duties and prospects? Having engaged in the pursuit of knowledge in its higher branches, much will devolve on you, and much will be expected of you, as conspicuous actors in the opening scenes of active life. Your efforts, and your examples, may have a peculiar influence. Shall it be salutary, or shall it be pernicious? Will you, by honoring science, bring honor on yourselves, upon this excellent institution, and upon your country?

He who desires to be practically wise, should be a close observer of men; and should be, not only industrious and persevering, but systematic and patient. It was chiefly by a judicious method, that Bacon achieved wonders. Although engaged actively in the Jurisprudence of his day, he wooed the muses with a success almost miraculous; and, whilst he was deciding two thousand chancery causes in a year, he found time, not only to display his Botanic taste in beautifying his garden, but to write his *Novum organum*. Had he, like Leibnitz, wasted his time in desultory, or miscellaneous studies, and vainly attempted universal conquest, he would, like that literary epicure, have achieved but comparatively little. He was also patient. He lived for mankind, and looked to posterity for his reward; so did Solon, and Newton, and Milton, and Franklin—whose names possess more moral influence than those of all the sciolists and chieftains the world ever saw.

Many a signal abortion has been the consequence of impatience, and premature ambition. Let the young student and the nestling politician, remember *Tiberius* and *Caius Gracchus*, and let him never forget the Dialogue between *Socrates* and *Glauco*. Let him remember that it is in the maturity of *right* knowledge, practical as well as speculative, that useful service is to be rendered, or unfading laurels to be plucked—that, if he wish to be distinguished as a Jurist, he must do as Coke, and Mansfield, and Marshall did—that, if he desire political fame, he must follow the example of Cicero, of Burke, of Chatham, and of Madison; and that, if he wish to adorn the sacred desk, he should look to Saurin, to Whitfield, and to Alexander.

Learn as Bacon, and Newton, and Franklin learned—by patient and rational induction. Banish all false idols which lure but to decoy; and especially abjure Bacon's *idola Tribus* and *idola Theatri*. A servile imitation of distinguished men—a proneness to theorise, and an eagerness for generalization, have ever been common stumbling-blocks in the way of science. Aristotelian abstractions, and Academ-

ic jargon reigned with a mystic and fatal spell over the intellectual world for two thousand years. Cartesian reveries then had their day of pernicious authority; and even Bacon the founder of the true system of philosophising by induction from facts well ascertained, did not live to behold the complete triumph of his great innovation, and was not himself, in all respects, an exemplar of his own rational principles.

In the succeeding age, the human mind, rendered presumptuous by its achievements, and still ignorant of the true principle of knowledge, or inattentive to it, became sceptical, and not unfrequently, Atheistical. And though the Atomic philosophy of Leucippus and Democritus, had been exploded, and Platonism and Stoicism, had been renounced, a new system of Epicurianism was erected on their ruins.

The physiological hypothesis of Locke being perverted, or misunderstood, encouraged Materialism. And the developments of the inductive process having inspired a delusive confidence in human reason, the Humes and Berkleys of the 17th century, dethroned common sense, unhinged the minds of men, and left nothing certain but the uncertainty of knowledge.

Atheism and Theophilanthropy were the fruits of these metaphysical sophisms of presumptuous reason and perverted ratiocination. And anarchy, vice and confusion followed.

But knowledge is certain; and true knowledge inspires humility, as well as confidence. It teaches the mind to move in its appropriate sphere—to forbear enterprises beyond its power—to trust to its own light as a safe guide *in its own domain*, and to follow that light wherever it leads, and, when *it goes out, to stand still*. Newton is the most perfect model of the true philosophy, and most happily illustrated its proper sphere and its great efficacy.

Knowledge—thorough and right knowledge, is opposed to bigotry, selfishness, and cynicism—it wages an incessant war with idleness and vice—it is benevolent, and its benevolence is active—it aspires to positive usefulness, and is afraid to do nothing but that which is wrong—it will not follow a multitude to do evil—it knows that “the fear of man bringeth a snare”—it knows that popularity is not an infallible evidence of merit, and is as evanescent and uncertain as the wind—it knows that to do good, and not to *seem* good, is the duty of man—and well it knows, that honorable fame is the reward only of honorable conduct; that to despise such fame, is but to despise the virtues which alone can earn it, and that the Amaranthyne wreath can adorn none but the good and the wise, who climb the lofty cliff, on whose brow it blooms.

The enlightened mind has resources for adversity, which no vicissitude of fortune can destroy, and the want of which no wealth or power can supply. When harrassed by care, assailed with obloquy, or bereaved of friends, the man of true philosophy has still a fund on which he can draw with confidence, and of which no earthly power can ever deprive him, as long as his reason is left unimpaired. The sanctuary of a pure and cultivated mind will afford him peace and com-

fort when darkness and desolation are around him. Remember Cicero. He had seen his country's glory blasted by upstart demagogues—he had been exiled, and his house had been demolished by the mock patriot Clodius—death had borne from his arms his lovely *Tullia*, the only remaining prop of his declining years—but then, even then, when, to the mere animal man, nothing remained but gloom and despair, he enjoyed in his retirement, the society of the illustrious dead and the consolations of philosophy, and thus soared above destiny and robbed fate of its victim. To his friend Sulpicius, he wrote thus—“My daughter remained to me—that was a constant support—one to which I always had recourse—the charm of her society made me almost forget my troubles; but the frightful wound I have received in losing her, uncloses again all those I had thought healed. I am driven from my house and the Forum.” But, to Varro he wrote thus—“I have reconciled myself with my books—they invite me to a renewal of our ancient intercourse—they tell me that you have been wiser than I in never having forsaken them—I seek my repose with true satisfaction in my beloved studies.”

Do you desire that fame which shines like the twinkling star, and whose temple stands immovable on the mountain's summit? Knowledge—true knowledge, is the beaten and toilsome way, and all other paths bewilder and mislead. Who would not prefer the fame of Socrates to that of Cleon—that of Cicero to that of Clodius, or Anthony, or Lepidus, or Cæsar?—the fame of virtue to the blazonry of titles or of arms?—Knowledge is the only passport to a virtuous immortality; and its personal exemplifications shed a happy moral influence. Sappho, you know, was canonized as the 10th muse; and old Cato was called the 13th table of the Roman law. And the classical reader remembers that, when almost all the Greeks captured with Nicias at Syracuse, had died in dungeons, a remnant of the survivors saved themselves by the recitation of beautiful extracts from Euripides. How potent was the shadowed genius of the immortal Athenian when *it* alone melted the icy hearts that nothing else could touch, and broke the captive's chains which justice, and prayers, and tears, had in vain tried to unloose? And hence “the glory of Euripides had all Greece for a monument.” He too was elevated by the light of other minds. It is said that he acquired a sublime inspiration whenever he read Homer—whose *Iliad* and whose *Odyssey*—the one exhibiting the fatality of strife among leading men—the other portraying the efficacy of perseverance—have stamped his name on the roll of fame in letters of sunshine, that will never fade away. No memorial tells where Troy once stood—Delphi is now mute—the thunder of Olympus is hushed, and Apollo's lyre no longer echoes along the banks of the Peneus—but the fame of Homer still travels with the stars.

But my young friends, knowledge to be useful must be active. If you wish to be most useful, do not, like *Atticus*, shrink from the responsibilities of public life, nor always agree—right or wrong—with the dominant party;—but, rather like Cicero, actively and honestly devote all your talents to the service of your country, and in vindica-

of the maintenance of its liberties. With Epaminondas, neither seek a decline on account of their *imputed* dignity, places of public trust; and always remind of his maxim, that, it is not the station, but the manner in which it is filled which gives dignity and honor. Always insisting, you, the benefactors of your race—may help to exalt your country and consolidate its liberties, and at last may earn for yourselves enduring monuments.

Fellow Citizens—all who hear—of every age and condition—we all have our allotted places and our allotted duties. Shall we fill those places, and discharge those duties as free men ought? Whatever may be our station, our influence will be felt. Then, act well your part, directed to the same end.

Like the golden leaves of Autumn, our patriarchs are dropping around us: a few only remain to watch over the work of their hands, and clothe it with glory. La Fayette—the last surviving general of our Revolution—friend of our country, and benefactor of mankind—has just taken his flight from the troubled scenes of earth, and is, we hope, more and forever, united with Washington and Adams and Franklin. And soon—so soon for us—not one of the patriarchal band will be left behind to guide and to instruct the new generation that succeeds them. And when—appointed by Heaven—the last survivor shall close the long line in its march to the skies, shall he tell that the great work of their lives was in vain—that their sons have proved recreant and dishonored their trust?—or shall he bear the glad tidings that all is yet safe? Let us be true to ourselves and faithful to the memory of our illustrious dead, and all will be safe—safe to us, and safe to those whom we shall leave behind us. All depends on ourselves and our fellow-countrymen. Shall this Union be dissolved, and the fame and the ashes of our fathers divided? Will we bequeath to our children happiness or woe—degradation or glory?

Our work is not hard. Honesty, and vigilance, and true public spirit among ourselves, and proper examples and precepts to our children, will finish all that remains for us. Let us improve our country, and preserve and strengthen the fabric of liberty reared by our predecessors; and let us, by the proper means, prepare our successors for its continued preservation and enjoyment. The age of glory is past or is fast passing away. Let this be the age of improvement—improvement here as well as elsewhere—improvement in virtue and intelligence—in government and in laws.

And then—after we too, shall have joined our friends and the friends of our country above; should our departed spirits be permitted to revisit the scenes of our pilgrimage here below, a century hence, we may see the Star-spangled Banner—unsoiled and unrifled—proudly waving over an hundred million of our posterity, free and happy, and grateful to those who completed the great work our fathers began. And then too—with Washington and Adams and Jefferson and La Fayette—may we behold, in the temple of concord and union, the altar of liberty, the altar of justice, and the altar of God; standing side by side—firm, broad, and resplendant; and consecrated forever to Earth and to Heaven.