

Oration,

DELIVERED AT

THE COLUMBIAN COLLEGE,

IN THE

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,

JULY 4, 1825.

By BARON STOW,

A MEMBER OF THE KNOSINIAN SOCIETY.

WASHINGTON CITY:

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1825.

MR. BARON STOW :

DEAR SIR,

By a vote of the Enosinian and Ciceronian Societies, the Committee of Arrangements are instructed to present to you their thanks for the eloquent Oration delivered yesterday,—and to request a copy for publication.

We are, Sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servants.

JOHN ARMSTRONG,
THOMAS HARNEY,
JOHN BOULWARE, } *Committee of the
Enosinian Society.*

WILLIAM COLLINS,
JOHN WALLER JAMES,
WILLIAM W. MICHIE, } *Committee of the
Ciceronian Society.*

COLLEGE HILL, July 5, 1825.

ORATION.

FELLOW CITIZENS :

THE hallowed day on which our fathers severed the ties of colonial dependence, by publishing to the world that grand production of unfettered intellect to which you have just listened, has once more returned. It now, for the first time, ushers in a year of jubilee; and, by a multitude of alluring considerations, has invited us hither, to welcome its appearance and mingle in its rational festivities. While, then, we assemble around the altar of Freedom, let no unholy foot approach to disturb our devotions, or interrupt the series of sacred delights which the place and the occasion abundantly promise. Neither let this be deemed an hour for rude and thoughtless mirth. If we are Americans in heart, solemn reflections will find admittance to our bosoms—they will unseal the fountains, and summon up a gush of tearful sorrow from the deep places of the soul. And it is fit they should; for, our fathers, where are they? Our patriots and sages, do they live for ever? Ah, no! They have mostly gone into their ultimate retirement. But while we bend in tears over their simple and ungarnished graves, and mourn the necessity of that law to which the good and the great as well as the vile and the contemptible must inevitably submit, one partial solace remains to mitigate the severity of our anguish. Their memory survives, and sheds a cheering lustre on those deeds of valorous fortitude and unbending virtue, which stand out in bold relief as models for our imitation. Their sun has indeed set; but the horizon is still beautified with its retreating beams.

“The glory remains, whilst the light fades away.”

The tears, therefore, which we this day shed over departed worth, are but the “luxury of grief”—the richest luxury to the wounded bosom of filial sensibility.

Nor is this a season for calm and frigid speculation, but for strong enthusiastic feeling; and while the “stirring memory” of two hundred years brings in rapid review before us a chain of interesting events, that American is unworthy of his name, who does not feel

the throb of grateful exultation. If, at such a time as this, when the hearts of millions of fellow-freemen burn with the kindling emotions of purest patriotism, any being, who has tasted the sweets of American liberty, can remain unaffected, my soul come not thou into his secret, nor hazard communion with his frozen spirit. This day constitutes an eminence in the journey of life, from which we may take a wide survey of the past, the present, and the future; and while we look back with high satisfaction on the progress which our country has already made, we may also acquire a vision of the shining race of glory, which "Alps on Alps" not yet ascended, present to our increasing ambition and accumulating energies.

For the purpose of contemplating the scene, of which, from this elevation, we are permitted to be the gratified spectators, have we this morning gathered in republican simplicity, on the very spot in this rural retreat, which has been worthily consecrated by my esteemed and eloquent predecessors. And in executing the honourable task which you have been pleased to assign me, I feel solicitous to limit your observations, as far as practicable, to the republic of which you are members.

To delineate the attractive features of this field—to give relief to its lovely prospects—to spread before you its richly varied and fascinating scenery, in their strong colours of beauty and originality, would require the hand of an accurate and experienced master. Happy, if at this time I may be so fortunate as to sketch, for your entertainment, even a few of its broader outlines.

It is a delightful service to those who have leisure and taste for the employment, to enter into the philosophy of our history—to trace the early operation of free principles in the formation of our national character—to follow the march of thought in the whole career of popular improvement—to observe by what methods knowledge has expanded itself, and branched out in the arts and sciences—to find admission into the bosom of early society, and become inmates in the families of successive generations—to estimate the characters of those men, who, at different periods, have given an impulse to our advancement; and, at the same time, to inquire how these and other causes contributed to our emancipation from foreign authority, and to our establishment as a free people, with that elevated reputation which we are now acknowledged to sustain.

The foundation of our whole system of free institutions was laid, when, in Europe, our pilgrim fathers formed themselves into a mutual compact for the maintenance of their injured rights. **INDEPENDENCE**, that fearful word, "quick and powerful" in the ear of despots, though first uttered aloud in 1776, was the watchword of that pious

and courageous little band, which, in 1620, took their voluntary and tearless departure from a land that afforded them no peaceful asylum. The fatigues and perils of a long disastrous voyage, admirably prepared them for the difficulties, which, in the Providence of God, they were destined to encounter. Thrown at last by winds and waves on the shores of the New World, they found themselves fitted for every hardship, and braced for adversity in every form. Hence no discouragement appalled their ardour—no suffering extorted a sigh for their return. They cherished freedom as the last, best boon of existence, and exhibited to heroes and conquerors a degree of calm fortitude which casts deep into the shade all the active courage and bold fearlessness of which they can boast. The dark forest, untravelled by the foot of civilized society, was before them. Behind, was that ocean whose threatening dangers they had just escaped, and whose wintry billows, now breaking at their feet, echoed the ineffectual murmurs of dissenting brethren who remained to inherit the unpitied sorrows which they had forsaken. The recollection of their past grievances was aggravated, and rendered indelible, by the perilous toils of their new undertaking. The nature of their pursuits gave them habits of industry, as well as hardihood of both body and mind, while the consciousness of freedom upbore them through every perplexing circumstance that opposed their progress. Their minds ranged as freely as the air they breathed, and partook of all the health and vigour which such unrestrained exercise is calculated to impart. With hook and line they procured their precarious and scanty sustenance, till, by the axe and fire, “the forest fell and faded,” and by the plough and spade the earth was made to “yield her increase.” Although exposed to the depredations of the infuriated and pitiless natives—to the rigours of inclement skies, and the pestilential vapours of the undrained marsh,—yet they esteemed a residence, where at every step were arrows and tomahawks thirsting for their blood,—or where, sinking in the deep snows, they might be left “to think o’er all the bitterness of death,” and at last perish,—or, where they would be obnoxious to the deathful exhalations of stagnant impurity,—in preference to a land of lords and tenants, tithes and informers, persecution and torture. They chose rather to labour by day and repose by night among the haunts of wild beasts and the wilder savage, than to dwell in the habitations of society, where sycophants, temporal and spiritual, of kingly power, prowled daily for their blood. The religion they professed, and whose righteous dictates they obeyed, was such as to elevate the mind above the fear of death, to soothe the sorrows of life, and to purify the heart. For the undisturbed

enjoyment of this religion they had crossed the ocean, and made this "home of the emigrant" the auspicious residence of that liberty which, in other lands, had winged her flight over the face of more than diluvial desolation, but found no place for the sole of her foot.*

The woful tale of their hardships and calamities was faithfully transmitted from one generation to another. The vestal flame of patriotic sentiment was thus kept constantly active, communicating from father to son, from mother to daughter, a settled abhorrence of all the qualities and modes of monarchical rule, and an unwavering attachment to the principles and spirit of consistent freedom.

It would be quite superfluous here to enumerate the multitude of those unamiable circumstances which led to a final separation of the colonies from the power that held them in oppressive subjection. The history of those gloomy and portentous days, is as familiar to you as the earliest lessons of childhood. Suffice it to say—the burdens imposed were too ponderous to be sustained. Filial remonstrances proved ineffectual, and threatened resistance was treated with haughty contempt. The elements of revolution gathered force, and soon arrived at an intensity of action which man could not—Heaven would not, confine. The people arose in their might—the God of battles favoured their arms—victory succeeded, and the United States took her merited position among the nations of the earth.

After the termination of this exhausting struggle, a season of comparative quiet soon restored the wasted excitability of the system, and to its relaxed powers imparted tenfold vigour. The fiery trials through which, in its early stages, our Republic was called to pass, were the crucible, where, by a process more than chemical, the popular mixture was purified. A union of heterogeneous substances was thus formed, in a manner new and surprising, and a combination, surpassing in beauty and grandeur all which the sun in his journey

* Let it not be thought that we attribute such sentiments and deeds to none but the little colony at Plymouth. That colony, indeed, was the only one that consisted of persons who were driven by religious persecution from the land of their fathers, and consequently were compelled to endure sufferings of a peculiar kind; but other colonies might be named which were not behind any people upon earth in cherishing a love of liberty, and in the exhibition of a dignified patriotism. From the little band which, previous to the year 1620, settled at Jamestown, Virginia, have originated some of the noblest defenders and firmest supporters of American rights. The remarks, therefore, in this paragraph, may be considered as applicable to them and their fellow adventurers in other sections of the country, as well as to the pilgrim fathers of New-England. A description of the spirit, and labours, and progress of one colony, is, in its general features, a description of the whole.

of fifty-seven centuries had beheld, was the magnificent result. Ever since that interesting period, our advancement has been gradual, and sure, and rapid. Commerce has acquired a strong impulse—physical resources have been developed—the arts and sciences have been cherished—religious liberty has been protected—and general improvement extensively promoted. Immense sections of country have been redeemed from the wildness of nature, and where the sons of the forest but a few moons ago roamed reckless of the white man's encroachments, are now heard the axe of the woodman and the hum of industry. Where now you fabricate and deposite for future use the instruments of martial dismay and death, the painted warrior quietly carved his bow and war-club. Where now you construct the vessel that bears your flag and thunder to distant shores, the savage mariner

“Hollowed his boat of the birchen bark.”

The temples of Jehovah now stand where frantic priests then performed their wild incantations, or offered sacrifice to the winds; and where your Capitols and Senate houses now rise in architectural grandeur, the chiefs of the tribes once held the council of war, or smoked the pipe of peace. A population of 2,000,000 has multiplied to 10,000,000. Literary institutions have increased in number and respectability, and the advantages of education placed within the reach of the poor as well as the wealthy. Inland communication has been rendered feasible, and not a year passes over our heads but roads and canals make some progress in threading the plain, the valley, the mountain.

Could the spirits of those heroes who fell in fierce combat for our liberties, now be permitted to visit the field of their toils and glories, with what a glow of animation would they behold us so soon reaping an abundant harvest from the seed which they sowed in blood. Ah! and could the remorseless ghost of Lord North now look abroad on the scene of his oppressions, what merited rebukes would every glance strike home to that conscience which never quailed during years of tyrannous conduct! For “my thirteen little rebellious colonies,” he would find twenty-four large and flourishing States, besides territories of immense extent, constantly rolling towards the Pacific seas a mighty tide of population, and wealth, and power. What he wilfully denominated “a rope of sand,” and what Wordsworth ignorantly calls the “unknit Republic,” is no other than the aggregate of these states and territories, united firmly by the strongest attractions of interest and friendship. Possessing the natural and original elements of public wealth—a fertile and varied soil, cultivated by a moral and enterprising people, our

accumulations of national capital are rapid and certain. Our produce finds a ready market—industry is encouraged and rewarded—our merchant ships spread their canvass to every breeze, whiten the surges of every clime, and unlade their burdens in every port. With such, and a thousand other equally cheering facts before us, who, who will not hail our nation as the favoured of the Lord? What statesmen have long desired, and Christians long prayed that America might be, America is. She is more. She has outstripped the boldest flights of their most extended anticipations. And is it presumption to predict what she will be? Europeans do, indeed, ridicule it as a national foible, that, while they can boast of their *ancestry*, and of what they *have done*, we value ourselves upon our *posterity*, and upon what we *mean to do*. But they may as well spare their ridicule; for in making deductions from experience for future application, we only execute the legitimate office of reason. Facts and prospects, we are assured, will justify very bold predictions; and, while we leave others to make them, we are ready to vindicate their characters from reproach, and thank Heaven that, instead of auguring good, we are not compelled to shed the tears of hopelessness over gloomy desolations, like those with which the blasting siroc of European despotism has overspread the eastern hemisphere.

Let others glory in their ancestry, and flatter their pride in tracing an equivocal pedigree, along a succession of mortals

, “ Whose blood
Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood ;”

But we are content to be considered as *novi homines*. Hereditary honours we value not—we covet not. The only chaplet we will consent to wear, shall be the reward of personal merit.

It has been vainly said, that we are proud of England, as the home of our forefathers. Ah! had she been a home to them, whose memories we delight to honour, they had not encountered the perils of the deep, and of the wilderness, and of savage ferocity. But she was not. And besides, why should we feel solicitous to ascertain whether our extraction be Gallic or Hebrew, Sarmatian or Saxon? We know and feel that we are descendants of those who, at different points along our dark coast, first lighted up the fires of freedom;—but, beyond them, are not anxious to learn who were our progenitors. If Britain is proud of America as the abiding place of her sons; she may, undisputed, enjoy all the honours of the connexion—we shall prefer no claim to even a share of them.

True, we are a new people,—but of yesterday,—and we are descended from men whose burial places are yet to be seen;—nor

should we deem it matter for self-gratification, could we point to the sepulchres of those who contested the right to the soil with Roman, Dane, or Norman. We tread, however, upon the ashes of fellow men as brave, and perhaps as civilized, as they—the ashes of aborigines;—and, while the mounds that enclose their sacred relics may be distinguished from the everlasting hills, we shall cherish towards them the sentiments of solemn respect. All the heroes of Ossian can never to us possess that thrilling and mournful interest which we feel in the characters and deeds of a Logan, an Alkomok, a Pocahontas. Their fate, and the fate of the many tribes that fished in our rivers, and hunted in our forests, should excite the sympathy of every heart not dead to the feelings of humanity. Let the lovers of sentimental fiction melt into grief over the tales of border warfare—let them sigh at the fall of some bold chieftain on the crags of Scotland—or of the chivalrous crusader on the plains of Palestine;—but the American finds enough remains of the ancient possessors of the soil which he cultivates to kindle in his bosom emotions of a sublimer kind.

“Indulge, my native land, indulge the tear
Which steals impassioned o'er a nation's doom;
To me each twig from Adam's stock is dear,
And sorrows fall upon an Indian's tomb.”

This fervent attachment to country, and to every thing connected with it, is one of the most striking and amiable of our national peculiarities. Perhaps no people on earth, the Swiss excepted, possess it to as great an extent, or cherish it with equal pertinacity. It is no factitious sentiment; but is as natural as the action of the heart, and as inseparable from our existence as the most sensible functions of vitality. Tell an American when absent from his country and sighing for return, that in lands he may visit the air is balm, and that luxuriant flowers are every season springing from the green earth,—he will reply, that the sweetest, softest atmosphere to him, is that which floats over the place of his nativity,—that the healthful gales of American mountains are far more grateful to him than the voluptuous zephyrs of Campania,—that the sombre cliffs which overhang his dwelling, and around which the eddy winds of Heaven may roar—the very icicles clinging to his own eaves, and the snow beating against his own windows, would be far lovelier prospects than all the bloom and verdure, streams and shades, of a Turkish paradise.

The early education of our youth is in every respect fitted to promote and confirm this attachment. Not only do the first books

which are put into their hands teach the primary lessons of liberty ; but even in the nursery, the very songs employed to hush their cries, are the heart-felt effusions of some patriotic bard, who sings of "dauntless deeds" and feats of valour. Hence, some of the first emotions of our infant minds are an elevated opinion of the government under which we live, and a warm affection for the worthies who acted a conspicuous part in its establishment. And I apprehend, if we carefully inquire who nourished and pruned and watched over these early plants of patriotic feeling, as they sprang up in our bosoms, that we shall, whether we will acknowledge it or not, find ourselves chiefly indebted to the generous solicitude of the female heart, and the tender, assiduous culture of the female hand. How often has the affectionate mother, when the night storm raged and the rough tempest howled about her cottage, gathered her offspring around the cheerful fireside, and recounted the tragic tales of the revolution—the battles fought—the victories won—the wounds received, and the sufferings endured by a father, a brother, a husband, a son. And how often have the little listeners wept at the recital, and gradually huddled nearer and nearer to her side, as if for protection,—imagining that in every blast which shook their dwelling, or whistled through its crevices, they heard the tramp of British feet, or yell of the hireling savage. Is there one present who does not at this moment possess vivid recollection of scenes in days of childhood, which kindled up the ardour of youthful patriotism to the highest? When you have heard the silver-headed veterans, who fought our battles, describe their deeds of enterprise and noble daring, or seen them bare the bosom and expose the scars of honour,—when you have witnessed the simple but significant display, and the joyous festivities in the celebration of this anniversary,—have you not felt an elevation of spirit—an enlargement of every generous feeling, and resolved, in the strongest language of voluntary devotion, that in every hour of need you would imitate the inspiring example of those veterans, and nerve your arm in defence of the rights which they have committed to your trust? Have you ever visited without emotion our battle-fields, or wandered unmoved among the graves of those who there lie entombed? Do you not feel a glow of pious enthusiasm as you tread in solitary silence over the mouldering ramparts that sheltered them from the "leaden tempest?" How powerful are such recollections and such scenes to the American heart! They possess a music of mighty feeling, that sends its thrilling echoes through all the chambers of the soul, and arouses into action many noble energies which otherwise had slept for ever.

It is sometimes urged against the purity and sincerity of this

boasted national attachment, that the visible mementoes of it are few—that few are the monuments raised to the memory of those who purchased our liberties. But the voice of the nation is,—if their character and conduct possessed nothing to command so much of our memory as shall enshrine their merits in our hearts, and bid them live there for ever, let them be forgotten. Let every colour fade in the picture of their fame, and let the deep gloom of oblivion come over their deeds. It may not be amiss to signalize some of the most important events in our history, and perpetuate their recollection by appropriate monuments. But the grave of the patriot, like female loveliness,

—————“needs not the foreign aid of ornament ;
But is, when unadorned, adorned the most.”

Go, visit Vernon, and in the simple vault where sleeps “the man of universal fame,” you see a republican reposing in more affecting grandeur, than if his dust were pressed by a mountain of marble. The spot is told by no pyramid—no mausoleum ; but what American ever stood there, and imagined that the sublimity of the scenery could be heightened by any ingenuity of art ?

The power of popular opinion is another of our national peculiarities. It has its origin in the nature of our government, and in the structure of civil society. Every citizen is permitted to investigate and publicly discuss, without any external restraint, all the principles and measures of our rulers. The security which this freedom affords against corrupt management, is increased by the severe ordeal which men must pass before they can be introduced to any important office. No claim for distinction is for a moment allowed, which rests solely on wealth, or parentage, or distinguished services. Moral and intellectual worth must come into the estimate. Thus, while there is sufficient of that ingenuous distrust, which Epicharmus calls “a sinew of wisdom,” to preserve public men within their proper limits, the people rely with greater confidence on the rulers of their own choice, whose characters they have minutely canvassed, and whose claims they have accurately estimated.

There is in every part of our federal system the exquisite sensibility of the *gymnotus electricus*. The slightest approach of corruption or dangerous precedent is instantaneously perceived, and popular opinion returns a shock that completely paralyzes the rash adventurer, unfitting him for a repetition of the experiment, and causing him to mourn in agony over his unhallowed temerity. The whole body of the people seems thus to possess a peculiar faculty

of perception—a new sense in a body politic. Public men and measures cannot pass without close scrutiny. They cannot escape the eagle vision of a people ever jealous of its dear-bought rights, and constantly fostering that cautious and indignant spirit which disdains all submission to corrupt influence as well as arbitrary sway. If instances have occurred, where men of notoriety in public life have set the known will of their constituents at defiance, the invariable result has been, that by such false independence, they have committed most violent suicide upon their own reputations. Public opinion has written their epitaph—let posterity read.

Party distinctions have, at different times, perplexed our statesmen, and made them fearful lest the tree of liberty should be uprooted by the political storm. But, as the winds of Heaven that shake the oak of the mountains, continue to increase the tenacity of its roots, and bind them firmer in their rocky bed; so the violent shocks which our Constitution has occasionally received, have proved its vigour, entwined its radicles closer around the affections of the people, and scattered its seed abroad on the face of the earth. Our geographical dissensions and local jealousies have been kindly overruled by a wise Providence, to advance the best interests of the Union. They have excited an emulation that has given life and activity to all the wheels of action.

Amidst the turbulence and distraction of party zeal, which, at certain periods of our history, has disturbed the quiet of the Republic, one cheering circumstance has always attended the result. No sooner is a choice of rulers effected, than the voice of contention is hushed, and they are hailed as the elect of the people. The indiscriminate praise and unmeasured abuse which were before lavished upon them, are now no more heard. A few, indeed, after the contest is closed, may continue hurling their poisoned missiles of discontent. But these weapons immediately,

“ Like dew-drops from the lion’s mane,
Are shook to air.”

Upon the merits of particular men or measures, parties are often formed, accompanied by strong feeling and a fierce war of words. But these soon expend their violence—decline, and disappear. The enmity that exists among some of the Scottish clans is hereditary—descending from father to son, from mother to daughter. No circumstances ever diminish its intensity, or produce even a momentary reconciliation. But with us it is far otherwise. Here, old parties are constantly losing their identity, and new combinations are every day taking place, according as present interest or political sentiment may impel.

Great occasions and interesting emergencies frequently interpose to check the action of party-feeling, or give it a different direction. One such occasion, that has a powerful redeeming effect, is every *Fourth of July*. The day is hailed by millions with kindred emotions, and its tendency is generally to awaken their kindest affections. The partisan blushes at his folly; a feeling of brotherhood—a conviction of the dignity of his relationship, comes over his spirit, and he is ashamed of that inconsistency which cherishes discord among them whose fathers slept, perhaps, in the same tent, and bled by each other's side to purchase our Independence. To say nothing of the salutary tendency of those intellectual repasts which a thousand orators spread before the great family of our Republic, when we estimate the effects of celebrating this day, no ordinary influence must be attributed to the practice of reading the Declaration of Independence. That master-piece of a master-mind is the picture of a nation's thoughts—a nation's will; and at all times possesses a beauty and an elevation of expression. But when brought into the light which this day, with its associations and modes of feeling, never fails to furnish, we see the figures of the men of '76 shine out boldly from the canvass, in the true glow of life and animation. A Trumbull, a Peale, may be successful in portraying their bodily features, but here we get a distinct vision of the character and attitude of their minds. We feel that we are in their society—sembled in devout conclave—consulting for an oppressed, an agitated nation. We commune—we sympathize with the beings of a portentous age,—we enter into their hopes and despondencies,—we participate in their joys and sorrows,—we unlock the secrets of their bosoms, and read what is there inscribed—the motives and springs of action—their operations and issues. In this manner we gain strong conceptions of the glory of these worthies, and are involuntarily changed into the same image, from patriotism to patriotism,—from virtue to virtue,—from honour to honour,—from glory to glory.

Two recent occurrences here merit attention, on account of the extent to which their influence has been felt. As facts, simply, they are interesting, and history will take charge of them for the instruction and delight of future generations.

The cause of the suffering Greeks has been recently a subject of general and deep-felt interest. From the Morea the notes of unmerited distress broke on our shores, and instead of dying away in neglected murmurs, sent an electric thrill of sympathy from one extremity of our Union to the other. Their appeals were heard—their cause was pleaded, and supplies were sent to alleviate their woes and cheer them on to victory.

The present visit of the sage of La Grange to this country, is an

event to which philosophers, ages hence, may trace some of the most interesting phenomena of our political character. A strong national feeling has been excited, and bursts of applause have rent the air in every form which the ingenuity of gratitude could devise. His visit has, indeed, included one of those stormy scenes which, at certain periods of our republican cycle, usually lower upon our horizon;—yet it was a delightful spectacle to see the belligerents lay aside the habiliments of strife, that together they might honour the friend of freedom and of Washington.

Occurrences like these, are highly corrective of the health of the Republic. They cause to burn more intensely the fire of liberty, which melts down and amalgamates the discordant principles and feelings of the people, and propels them in the same direction. Partial attachments and interests are for a season suspended—our citizens recollect that they are brothers, and learn to cherish fraternal sentiments.

The deep interest we have in the purity and preservation of our free institutions, renders it fit that we should use every effort to guard them from violation, and to transmit them uncontaminated to posterity. For this reason it is most ungrateful to pursue any course which may have a tendency to derogate from their high character. Judicious as it may be to distrust power, in whatever hands it is placed, yet we have reason to fear that many err from an excess of sensitiveness. It is manifestly improper to suspect our rulers to be guilty of corruption, where there is not sufficient evidence to make their guilt apparent. There is likewise an impropriety in auguring evil to our liberties, when the only premises from which they derive the gloomy anticipation, are the abuses and derelictions from duty of a few unprincipled individuals. The people, it should not be forgotten, are the fountain of all authority—they confer and recal it at pleasure. If, then, our rulers abuse the trust reposed in them—make public demonstration of their iniquity, and the murmurs of 10,000,000 tongues will summon them to retrace their steps or yield the empire.

We have a class of political empirics, whose profession and constant practice it is to predict the overthrow of our political institutions. To them the hackneyed enthymeme,

“Ancient Republics have fallen,
Therefore, America must fall,”

comes very opportunely, and seldom fails to constitute the strength of their flimsy argument. But that must, indeed, be a new species of logic, which teaches them to consider these cases as parallel. In what does our civil, or military, or judicial, or moral organization, resemble those of any Republic that ever existed previous to ours?

We are acting on a new plan—following out the details of a system altogether peculiar. We must wait for phenomena to enable us to judge of its practicability and permanence. In the mean time, let us cherish the confidence that we have much to unlearn, and much to undo before our liberties can be essentially endangered. That darkness may return, the shadow of Freedom's sun must go back more than 200 years on the dial-plate of time. We have others, who incessantly make loud moans over the degeneracy of the times; and, aided by a kind of morbid sensibility which detects faults invisible to others, they sometimes impose themselves upon public credulity as statesmen acute and profound. The anticipated decline, and ultimate downfall of our Republic, is the topic around which their disordered imaginations throw every ominous circumstance, and which they then, with all the bluster of declamation, expose to public view in order to excite alarm. It is the text from which their disappointed ambition invariably preaches, and with wizard vision takes occasion to foretell those dreadful disasters which a low mind, chagrined and mortified, may wish to happen. Young, when disappointed of the favour which he sought at court, wrote some of the most melancholy dismal strains of his admired Night Thoughts. He could then weep in earnest over the vanity of human pursuits, and the futility of human hopes. So now, our managing aspirants, when bereft of unmerited honours, or compelled to relinquish hopes of promotion—without the genius of song inflict their dolorous vaticinations on the ears of an unsuspecting people. No sooner is a check laid upon their ambition, than they ring the knell of freedom, and sigh at the funereal sound. Doubt of their high claims, and you will soon see their scroll of terror flying far away on the winds, "written within and without, with mourning and lamentation and wo." Such a course of conduct, more surely than any other, generates the very evils that it professes to forebode. It diffuses around a kind of political azote, which extinguishes the flame of every generous feeling, and produces in all who come within the range of its influence, languor and fatuity and death. The people lose confidence in their government—unnecessary suspicions are created—cruel jealousies excited, and the calm of public tranquillity disturbed. It is likewise from the vociferous ululations of these splenetic and captious diviners, that Europeans learn to predict what they wish to see,—the total prostration of our political fabric. But the judicious patriot, the true friend of his country, will never clandestinely undermine the magnificent edifice that shelters him from the storms and floods, merely because he is not the master of the household. He will cherish the spirit of our fathers—yield personal inter-

est to public utility, and exercise a confident assurance that "the God we adore" will continue to avert all threatening calamities, and preserve our liberties secure from every rash hand that may offer to steady their trembling depository. If he discover that venality and corruption do actually exist in the system—he will not tell it in Gath, nor publish it in the streets of Askelon—but will enterprise a change—he will set about devising an immediate remedy, and, if he find it necessary, will preach repentance from one extremity of the realm to the other.

But while we boast of our liberties, and are tremblingly alive to every thing which may endanger their existence or sully their purity, in order to be consistent Republicans we should be solicitous to remove the least shade of odium which circumstances, even beyond our own control, may have fixed upon our national character. Slavery is unfortunately one such stain,—and though impressed by foreign hands, very properly occasions many a painful regret. An argument on the subject would be altogether gratuitous; for, although we consider as unavoidable the many sore evils that follow in its dark, desolating train, we all cherish but one sentiment in relation to the principle,—and while we deprecate its effects, we deplore the pravity of those who contributed to its introduction. Of the glaring inconsistency which it attaches to our political character, we are likewise most deeply sensible. A free people with millions of slaves! O that the jubilee of our freedom could consistently be the jubilee of every slave within the limits of our territory, and that he might hear the united voice of noble-hearted freemen proclaim his speedy return to the land whence he was most cruelly torn away! But, fellow-citizens, as a measure like this would, in present circumstances, be neither expedient nor possible, encourage the efforts now making for the gradual restoration to their homes of these innocent inheritors of their fathers' curse. Let the generous philanthropy of a Sharp, a Clarkson, a Rose, burn in our bosoms, and let us make them, outcast and degraded as they are, the objects of our compassionate regard. Liberia opens her arms to receive them.—Restore them to her embrace—to the embrace of their kindred; and anticipate the delightful period, however distant, when not a slave shall breathe our air. Spirit of Elias Boudinot Caldwell! Thou hast gone up triumphant in thy chariot of fire—tell us—how does the subject of African colonization appear to thy pure vision in the sight of Heaven? Does the Redeemer of men disapprove thy fervent prayers and assiduous labours for the redemption of the unfortunate African? Friends of humanity! Come, gather around the grave of this pious philanthropist, and shed a tear on his ashes, for,

with his whole soul, he was devoted to the worthy cause in which you are successfully toiling.

Our country presents a wide, a rich, and inviting field for moral and intellectual effort. If we would promote the security and permanence of our precious rights, let us be assured that devout confidence in God will secure in our favour those energies which no power can withstand. He was our deliverer—He will be our defence. He has constantly preserved us from those dire calamities which frequently spread desolation over other regions of the globe—has munificently bestowed on us his richest bounties; and, with paternal kindness, is now leading us up the steep acclivity of national glory. It is then fit that we should be humbly grateful to Him, and labour for the universal diffusion of his name and grace. But while, in the true spirit of our fathers, we rely on the protection of a kind Providence, we should learn to be active, and to devote our intellectual and corporeal powers to the highest interests of the nation. Our country is rich in resources which are yet to be developed and appropriated. Extensive plans for improvement are yet to be devised and carried into execution. The soil we cultivate possesses an exuberance of fertility—promising the richest abundance to him who will “put the hand to the plough;” something more than granite is embosomed in our mountains; and our forests, fields, and floods, are stored with copious materials, requiring the exercise of mind and muscle in disclosing their value, and applying them to national purposes. Are not the duties of American citizens here written in characters which require no interpreter?

And, my beloved fellow students, on us are resting obligations of momentous import. We are permitted for a season to occupy an eminence under the meridian of the New World, whence we have a wide range of observation, and every facility for discovering what an immense field is spread out before us for the employment of intellect. Let each individual this day resolve to cultivate some portion of this field, and ere the sun of life go down, to add something to a nation's wealth—a nation's honour.

Is there a philanthropist among you? Behold in our country the only position where the moral Archimedes may rest his foot and move a world. Gird yourself for the enterprise of love, and go forth to every evangelical effort for diminishing the aggregate of human misery—for instructing the ignorant—rectifying the perverse—elevating the degraded, and diffusing the light of truth in the dark places of the earth.

To you, and others who enjoy the rich benefits of her literary institutions, America looks for her leaders in the glorious march of improvement. And let this consideration ever cheer you onward

that you have not here to contend with strong-handed opposition—
to bear down upon an organized multitude of prejudices—nor to
face bigotry in a thousand antiquated shapes. The fervent prayer
and co-operating hand of millions will attend your patriotic efforts,
and all the obstacles which may threaten to check your success-
ful progress will melt away, like snow in summer, before the
zeal of persevering diligence.

Let, then, *magna magnum decent* be your as well as the nation's
motto, and employ all your collected and disciplined energies in pro-
moting the sublime interests of freedom, science, pure religion.
And these things do, not merely for the sake of a single nation—
but for the sake of the Universe. Our inspiring example is ope-
rating in every section of the globe,

“Change wide and deep and silently performed;”

and the days are at hand, when

“Earth's universal frame shall feel the effect,
Even till the smallest habitable rock,
Beaten by lonely billows, hear the songs
Of humanized society, and bloom
With civil arts, and send their fragrance forth,
A grateful tribute to all-ruling Heaven.”

Engage, then, in a cause which aims at the civil and moral re-
demption of a world; and cease not, till the banner of enlightened
freedom wave over the demolished battlements of despotism.
Cease not, till the science of human rights shall be every where
known—till all the dungeons of superstition shall be opened to the
cheering light of day—till education communicate its healthful
blessings to every mind—till there be not an absolute sovereign nor
a privileged order on the face of the earth. Cease not, till the
Bible be distributed in every language—till the Gospel of peace be
proclaimed in the ear of all people, and the voice be heard in Hea-
ven announcing that the millennial reign of the Saviour has com-
menced.