THOUGHTS

ON THE

SPIRIT OF IMPROVEMENT,

THE

SELECTION OF ITS OBJECTS, AND ITS PROPER DIRECTION;

BEING

AN ADDRESS

(DELIVERED APRIL 1st, 1835,)

TO THE

AGATHERIDAN AND EROSOPHIAN SOCIETIES

OF

NASHVILLE UNIVERSITY.

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ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN:

For the honorable part you have been pleased to assign me, in this *Festival of Letters*, you have a twofold claim on me; one for my thanks; the other for an earnest endeavour in me not to discredit the occasion, or disappoint the expectations your kind partiality may have led you to cherish. Respectfully tendering to you the full consideration, in acquittance of the former of these claims, I shall proceed, without further preface, to the discharge of the latter, with such resources as I can bring to the task. The subject on which it is my purpose to address you, is

The Spirit of Improvement, the Selection of its Objects, and its proper Direction.

Though not of an aspect altogether literary, yet, as far as it can be comprised within so limited a scope, this would seem to constitute no unsuitable theme for an academical discourse, especially under the existing circumstances of our country. So busy and productive in new schemes, projects, and inventions is the period we live in, that, from all quarters, and in forms innumerable, the note of improvement falls on the ear. The subject I have chosen, therefore, besides its relevancy to every pursuit and occupation of civilized man, is rich in matter to suit the tastes of the American people, at the same time that it is vitally important to their interests and welfare. Add to this, that it can hardly fail to claim hereafter the particular attention of some or most of you, if not your superintendence in an official capacity. Composed of such elements, it will not, I trust, be found altogether wanting in fitness for the occasion. From its extent and copiousness, it might well seem superfluous in me to say, that, instead of a full exposition of it, nothing more will be attempted, than a glance at a few of its leading topics. To trace it through its ramifications is left to yourselves; nor, might the speaker judge, would the time devo-

ted to it be unprofitably spent—Before engaging in the brief analysis of it which is contemplated, allow me to invite your attention to certain views and reflections of a more general character, which it naturally suggests.

When we take a survey of the different tribes and nations of the earth, or rather of the varieties of man that compose them, we find them not only actuated by different degrees of the Spirit of Improvement, but possessed of very different capacities to improve. This is a point in the natural history of the human family which has never received the consideration it deserves. That it is essentially connected with a very vexed and interesting question in the philosophy of man, cannot be doubted. The embers of that disputed ground, however, I may not disturb. Having been once instrumental in fanning them to flame, I know by experience the fierceness of the fire. But the blaze was like that of burning brimstone. Intensely keen and consuming, it shed around it no genuine light, to disclose objects in their true colours. No; it gave to every thing a lurid, false, and repulsive hue. I have no desire therefore to witness it again—much less to rekindle it.

In the Mongolian, Malayan, African, and North American Indian races, the Spirit of Improvement is comparatively feeble, and the capacity to improve correspondingly limited. Of some of the African varieties, especially the Caffres, Boschesemen, and Papuans, this is true to an extent that would not be credited, had it never been witnessed. Nothing but actual inspection could convince us, that any thing human could be so hopelessly degraded. Over the races of mankind just referred to, some of them numerous beyond calculation, century after century monotonously passes, and the latest period finds them as barbarous and savage as the earliest. On the face of the dark and slumbering waters of their nature no Spirit of light and Improvement has moved, nor has any quickening mandate gone forth, to awaken them to action, and amend their condition. Content with their loathsome and miserable mode of existence, and scarcely rising high enough in thought even to dream of a superior one, they continue shrouded in ignorance, steeped in uncleanliness, debased by brutal vices, slaves to ferocious and sanguinary passions,

strangers alike to social decency and moral observances, and, of all that characterizes humanity, possessing nothing valuable but the form—and that in many instances of the lowest order and most unsightly aspect. Account for this stationary condition of these races as we may, and singular as the phenomenon may be considered in anthropology, its existence is proved by the concurrent testimony of observation and history. The Æthiopians appear to be as uncultivated now, as they were three thousand years ago; and several other tribes of Africans, that were known as savages and barbarians at the commencement of the christian era, are in the same condition still. Nor would truth warrant me in sketching a more favorable picture of the Malays, Tartars, and North American Indians. Since the earliest intercourse held with them by civilized nations, their barbarism and savagism have sustained no abatement—I mean, where they have existed *as communities by themselves*, holding no intercourse with other communities already civilized. Hence, it does appear, that, when left exclusively to their own intellectual resources, and committed to the influence of their native propensities, neither the Mongolians, Africans, Malays, nor North American Indians have any disposition to improve their degraded state of being, and exchange it for that of a cultivated people. If they have ever manifested such a disposition, or made such an exchange, the event does not appear to have been recorded. As far as their history is known, no insulated community of them has ever become civilized. If any of them, emerging from the night of savagism or barbarism, have reached the first dawn of civilization (and few of them have done so much), there their progress has terminated. Nor, as already stated, have they shown themselves capable, in the circle of ages, of rising any higher in the scale of humanity. Or, if they have the capacity, they want the will; a defect which leads to the same result. In truth the moral want is the more debasing of the two; for, while it is reprehensible, a physical or intellectual disability would be only pitiable. The issue of the whole is, that savagism and barbarism, being the constant concomitants of Mongolians and Africans, Malays and Indians, veil in ignorance and taint with pollution, waste by rapine and cover with blood, every region those races

inhabit. I shall only add, that all attempts to christianize them have hitherto failed. Nor is the fact to be wondered at. The marvel would be, that it were otherwise. Christianity is the highest stage of civilization and morality. It is the high-wrought *capital* of the column of human improvement. But of that bright and glorious column, the beings alluded to have not yet reached the *basis*. I speak of them as a people, without regard to individual exceptions. To drop the figure. The foundation of christianity is laid in civilization and moral culture. Nor can it be provided elsewhere with a substantial resting-place. To render the work sound and durable, the progress of it must be, to *instruct*, *reform*, and lastly *christianize*. To attempt to teach men the doctrines, and infuse into them the spirit of christianity, before they are civilized and enlightened, is to begin the process at the wrong end. Nor will success ever crown the unnatural labour. As well may the manufacturer attempt to weave the raw material, before it is carded or spun, or the architect to build his house from the roof downward. Hence the failure of every effort to impart christianity, in its true spirit, and in a durable form, to the several races of which I have spoken. Nor let me forget to refer to their utter incompetency to the formation of systems of law, to secure to themselves the immunities of rational freedom, and shelter themselves under the banner of the social compact.

As respects the Caucasian variety of man, the case is as different as philanthropy can wish, or imagination conceive. In it the Spirit of Improvement is high-toned and active, and the capacity to improve almost without limits. These facts appear from its constant, rapid, and seemingly interminable progress in the arts of civilization. In this career so brilliant and fruitful, to such an extent does each succeeding generation spring in advance of that which had preceded it, as to present itself to the fancy, if not to the judgment, as composed of beings of a superior order. While the other races, as already mentioned, move slowly and clumsily in the course of improvement, like the sluggard on his path, or scarcely move at all, it is hardly extravagant to say of the Caucasians, that their movement, marked in an equal degree with grace and vigor, rivals in constancy the flight of time, and seems occasionally to surpass it in fleetness. Hence the gran-

deur, glory, and usefulness that belong to them, and their vast superiority over the other varieties. And this is true of them in ancient no less than in modern times. The Persians, Phenicians, Carthagenians, Greeks, and Romans, who swayed successively the world and its fortunes, were Caucasians. So were the Assyrians, who held dominion for ages in the East. So were the Jews, who in some points of human exaltation were unsurpassed by any other people. And so were the ancient Egyptians, who also ruled with unlimited power, and have left behind them, as miracles of their greatness, piles of architecture which are vying in duration with the ground that sustains them, and the granite mountains from which they were hewn.

As relates to modern nations foremost in intellect, power, and influence, the same is true. They are all descendants of the Caucasian stock. To that line belong the people of Europe and the United States, who set the brightest example to other nations, and control at present the destinies of man. So do those who rule in other parts of the American continent. Over no spot, to which the Caucasian has penetrated, can the Indian be said to have the positive mastery. Though he may occasionally triumph in battle, and spread, for the time, desolation around him, the print of the white man's foot is the seal of his overthrow.

To Caucasian origin may be traced the comforts and conveniencies, as well as the ornaments and elegancies of life. To this the exceptions, if any exist, are few and unimportant. The Caucasians alone are ambitious of distinction, splendour, and renown achieved by the instrumentality of the arts of peace. And they alone have attained them through that channel, while the other races neglect them entirely, or seek them only through the ravages of war. The reason is plain. Neither of the other races singly, nor all of them combined, possess the invention and enterprise, industry and perseverance, essential to such attainments by their own labors. For it should never be forgotten, that be the talents of individuals and nations of whatever order they may, true pre-eminence, whether in literature, science, or the arts, is the offspring of steady and long-continued labour, corporeal or mental, or of both united. . Though genius lays the foundation of superior greatness, patient and vigorous industry

alone can rear the superstructure. Nor do I hesitate to add, that the latter is the more effective of the two. Without it, the former is but a perishable flower, whose beauty and fragrance are as fruitless as they are pleasing. Whatever extraneous aid they may derive occasionally from genius, and the influence of time, place, and power, so intrinsically defective and faulty are *indolence* and *ease*, that they have never been the parents of any thing either distinguished or useful. All that is great and lasting in the productions of man, whether it be of mind or matter, intellect or morality, is rendered so by industry. The fabric that springs up easily and rapidly, is easily overthrown, and rapidly perishes. It wants the consolidating influence of time and labour. Familiar as these truths are, and homely as they may appear to be, they are practical lessons important to all men, but more especially in their bearing on youth. Let all who would attain to usefulness, or who covet distinction, retain and cherish them among their choicest remembrances, and cling to them inflexibly as rules of action. Under such a course faithfully adhered to, and perseveringly pursued, moderate indeed must be the talents of him, who cannot, in the term of an ordinary lifetime, do much good, and fill up a reasonable measure of reputation. And when numbers unite in the same enterprise, and vigorously prosecute it, the magnitude of the product not only baffles calculation, but often surpasses the creations of fancy. If colonies of marine worms, so humble in their nature, as scarcely to possess the animal character, can erect, by their joint labours, in the depth of the ocean, which sounding line has never fathomed, coral rocks and islands, to form perhaps the basis of future continents—if such is the issue of the unremitting toils of one of the lowliest orders of being, vain would be the effort of imagination to compass the vastness and importance of what the industry and perseverance of men, associated in multitudes, and harmonious in exertion, might ultimately achieve. Nor need I adduce any other evidence in proof of this, than is abundantly furnished by what the Caucasian race, actuated by the Spirit of Improvement, has already performed.

To say nothing of the enterprise, exertions, and intelligence of that race, in scanning the heavenly bodies, and developing the

science which embraces their magnitudes and movements, distances, relations and laws, the labors they have bestowed on the earth itself, and the mightiness of their effects, are beyond computation. Placed on it, naked, defenceless, and unprovided, when in the condition of an unknown, rude, and frightful wilderness, the abode of hostile animals powerful and openly ferocious, or lurking in ambush and armed with poison, some of its climates inhospitable, and not a few of its localities fruitful in the seeds of disease, its soil in many places stubborn and unproductive, and its islands and continents with their numerous sections divided from one another by oceans, seas, and lakes, rivers, morasses, and mountains, and other barriers scarcely more surmountable—cast on it, in a state thus wild and forbidding, difficult and full of peril, they have revolutionized it, and brought it to a condition in most respects the opposite of that it originally possessed. Extensively explored in all its quarters, its products and general character discovered, and its resources rendered accessible and greatly improved, it is converted by their labours into a cultivated world—a wide-spread scene of beauty and productiveness, instead of a sightless and unprofitable waste. Its broadest, deepest, and most rebellious waters, once deemed impracticable to human powers, are subdued and erected into highways of safe and pleasant passage; and thus are the continents and islands they separated rendered much more readily accessible to each other, than they would be, were solid earth interposed between them. Nor are the land-changes less striking and useful. In the conversion of forests and morasses into fields and meadows, gardens and pleasure grounds, nature has yielded her empire to man. Hence has the bramble been made to give place to the olive and the orange, the thistle to the vine and the palm tree, the thorn and the brier to the peach and the apple, the pear and the pomegranate, and whole families of noxious and offensive weeds to the rose, the lily, the jasmine and the myrtle, and other plants of higher value, that contribute to the sustenance and comfort, no less than to the gratification of our race. To render the conquest of nature complete, lakes and rivers have been brought into subjection, and made tributary to the business and pleasures of life, as barriers between nations mountains have been

annihilated by the construction of roads, and villas, towns, and cities have risen in splendour, where the wolf once haunted and the tiger crouched expectant of his prey. And the more easily and certainly to accomplish these ends, all the physical elements have been made to unite their forces, and act in subservience to the human will. So powerfully and yet peacefully, moreover, have those once refractory agents been compelled to work, that they now convey in safety, between distant places, multitudes of human beings, and countless tons of merchandise, at a rate of speed that approaches the annihilation of space and time. Nor, from projects meditated and already on foot, is it at all certain, that the air itself may not hereafter be so far brought under the control of man, as to be compelled to bear him on its bosom with the swiftness and security it now affords to the swan and the eagle. Does any one consider this sentiment chimerical, or extravagant? Let him take a calm retrospect of the last half century, and seriously reflect on the well-known power and action of gas, steam, and machinery, and the chimera and extravagance will both disappear. Stronger still; the event referred to will assume the aspect of high probability. Man who, within the period just specified, has learnt to form and decompose water at pleasure, to wrest from winds and currents the dominion they once held over navigation, to vie in speed with the swallow, under ponderous burdens, and over grounds once scarcely passable, without the aid of animal strength or fleetness, to inflame and consume like a taper the most refractory metal, and to make his bread out of the rugged forest-tree—the being who has already done this, must not be accounted altogether quixotic, because he believes it possible to achieve in safety a voyage through the air. When about twenty years ago a mechanician predicted, that the time would come, when a passage would be made between New York and Philadelphia, without horses, in *ten hours*, he was derided as a visionary, if not pitied as a madman. Yet the prediction is already more than fulfilled.

Such are a few of the changes that have been produced in the condition of our globe, and the control of some of the elements of nature that has been attained, through the instrumentality of the Spirit of Improvement. And of the entire work, ninety-

nine hundredths, and perhaps more, have been performed by the Caucasian race; though they constitute numerically but a small proportion of the human family. To dwell on this topic a moment longer, viewing it in its relation to what more nearly concerns ourselves, and lies immediately before us.

But forty years ago—far within the remembrance of many who hear me—what was the condition of the glorious Valley in which we reside? and what the aspect it presented to the emigrant? It was as rude and wild, and, to the minds of the timid, as repulsive and appalling, as it is now becoming cultivated, and inviting to every one. Replete with danger at all times, it was too often a scene of pillage and conflagration, merciless battle, and unsparing massacre. And wherefore was it so? Why did war and butchery riot so fearfully, and desolation brood so grimly over one of the choicest regions of the earth? The answer is easy. The land which had come so beauteous and magnificent from the hand of nature, was, and had been for centuries, the abode of an untamed and unimprovable variety of man, whose delight is in blood and the agonies of the stake; a variety that is proof against civilization and hostile to its arts; whose chosen and, I believe, appropriate dwelling is the forest and the prairie; and which, amidst all the efforts that may be made to perpetuate it, will cease to exist, when the wilds of nature shall have submitted to the axe and the ploughshare, and been changed from hunting grounds to cultivated fields. The region, I say, which had sprung from the bosom of nature so fresh and blooming, and lovely as the fair in her bridal attire, had become thus morally hideous and gloomy, because it was the home of a demoralized race, whose lives were but scenes of sullen idleness or brutal riot, war their employment, and havoc their pastime.

But the Caucasian came, with the Spirit of Improvement, as an element of his nature, and the day-spring of hope accompanied his footsteps. Indolence and low content gave place to restless industry and enterprise, the gloom of savagism receded, as the brightness of civilization advanced, the war-whoop was drowned in the tones of the anthem, and, in the language of the East divested of metaphor, the wilderness began to "bloom and blossom as the rose." Had the country passed under the wand of

the enchanter, scarcely could the metamorphosis have been more sudden and complete. And the issue is seen in the abundance of our harvests, the multiplication and excellence of our domestic animals, the number and magnificence of our full-freighted steamers, the comforts and tastefulness of our private dwellings, the spaciousness and splendour of our public edifices, the denseness of our still increasing population, and our growing weight in the destinies of our country. Nor must I neglect to add, that it is also most gratifyingly seen in the number and character of our seats of learning. And permit me to subjoin, not in flattery, but in the spirit of truth, that in no other institution is it more happily apparent, than in that whose pupils I have the honour to address.

All this, and much more, which a want of time forbids me to recite, have the Caucasians done, in less than half a century, for the Mississippi Valley. Within what time would the thousandth part of it have been effected, by the hordes of red-men, who prowled through its forests, and skulked in ambush in its glens and thickets? Never—No, never would an effort have been made toward its accomplishment, nor even a dream entertained in relation to it, by that defective and degraded race. What is the cause of this? For sundry reasons, as already mentioned, it would be inexpedient, on an occasion like the present, to agitate the question. I shall therefore only observe, that, be the cause what it may, it seems to be as deep-rooted and permanent as the nature of man. That being the case, though human efforts may somewhat modify it, to remove it belongs to a HIGHER POWER. The school-master may instruct, the Government protect and encourage, and the pious missionary exhort and admonish, but the stubborn Indian will be an Indian still. And, as already intimated, he will melt away under the influence of civilization, as the fragile frost-work in the solar beam. However melancholy and affecting this anticipation may be, and however contrary to the belief of many and the wishes of all, it is the only one that experience sanctions, or that reason, when calmly consulted, permits us to indulge.

Shall I be again told, as I often have been, that education is the only cause of the mental difference that exists between the

several varieties of man? that the Caucasian race is civilized and educated, while the others are not? and that hence alone arises its superiority?

That this hypothesis is unsustainable, appears satisfactorily from the following considerations. There must have been a time, when the Caucasians were as uneducated, and as destitute of all the resources of art, as the Africans or Mongolians. Whence then did they derive their education? and how did they become civilized, and possessed of their means of enjoyment and power? They had no teachers, until they themselves had formed them, no books until they had written them, no seats of learning until they had erected them, nor any scholars or lawgivers until they had produced them. Education and civilization, then, in all their branches and bearings, were their own creations. They did not receive them from the other races, who were themselves destitute of them; nor will it be contended that they were special boons from Heaven, conferred on them independently of their own exertions. I repeat, that they were exclusively the fruit of the proper employment of their own powers.

Wherefore, then, did not the other races, whose opportunities were the same, also educate and civilize themselves? Placed on the same soil, why did they not cultivate it? on the same rivers and lakes, seas and oceans, why did they not navigate them to the same extent, and with results as advantageous? shone on by the same heavenly bodies, why did they not study as profoundly and accurately their movements and laws? In the midst of the same miracles of sublimity and beauty, and of the same abundant manifestations of wisdom, why did they not awaken to poetry under the inspiration of the one, and avail themselves of the other to improve their condition? and, surrounded and acted on by the same practicable elements of nature, why did they not master them, and render them subservient to their own uses? To these questions but one rational answer can be framed. *They wanted the capacity.* Inferior to them in mind, they could not, like the Caucasians, read and interpret the Book of Nature, though equally open to them, and apply to their own improvement, comforts, and general purposes, the matter it contains. Content with a scanty and coarse subsistence, they collected, for the

maintenance of that, the bounties which uncultivated nature afforded them, and coveted no more. Provided they could become expert hunters, fishermen, and gatherers of insects and worms, and of the fruits and roots which the soil and climate spontaneously yielded, their ambition was satisfied. Nor, without a radical change in the constitution of their minds, is there any ground of hope, that their condition can ever be materially amended. Unable to avail themselves of the instructions of nature, all the knowledge that can be imparted to them from other sources will be insufficient to elevate them in the scale of humanity. When the materials are defective in quality, or wanting in amount, be the workmanship what it may, the product will be imperfect. And that such insufficiency attaches to the minds of the Mongolian, African, and Indian races, appears satisfactorily from all the testimony that bears on the subject.

Far different from this, and greatly superior are the mental constitution and character of the Caucasians. And to that difference and superiority are they indebted for their ampler means of power and enjoyment, and for being what they are. Nature, mute or mysterious to the other less gifted and inferior races, speaks audibly and intelligibly to them. In herself they meet with an able instructress, and a boundless and well-stored library in her works. To them she reveals herself in the fascinations of poetry, no less than in the soberer and more substantial matter of prose. Wherever they sojourn in her wide and varied domain, by sea or by land, on the mountain or the hill-top, in the plain or the valley, they no where fail to find

> "—— tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> "Sermons in stones, and good in every thing—"

In the words of another poet still more philosophical, though less imaginative, they

> "Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield;
> "Learn from the beasts the physic of the field;
> "The arts of building from the bee receive;
> "Learn of the mole to plough, the worm to weave;
> "Learn of the little Nautilus to sail;
> "Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale—
> "Here subterranean works and cities see;

"There towns aerial on the waving tree.
"Learn each small people's genius, policies,
"The Ants' republic, and the realm of bees—
"Mark what unvaried laws preserve each State,
"Laws wise as Nature, and as fixed as Fate."

Employing thus the varied and abundant capacity bestowed on them by nature, they derive knowledge from all things around them, and, through the Spirit of Improvement conferred by the same hand, apply it to the amelioration of their condition, and the increase of their power. Hence their uniform and great superiority over the other races, who, though equally favoured by opportunities and means, are denied an equal fitness to improve by them—But I must close my disquisition on the comparative standing of the different races of men, to which I fear I have devoted too much time already, and, confining my observations chiefly to our own country, endeavour to impart to them a more practical character.

Throughout christendom, and, there is reason to believe, on a still broader scale, the present, as already mentioned, is an era of experiment and change, of which history affords no previous example. Nor are the people of the United States behind those of other nations, in their projects and exertions in the career of improvement. Far from it. From the freedom of their condition, their own mental resources in common with the great and increasing resources of the country, their bold and active spirit of enterprize, and the rivalry between the different sections of the Union—from these and perhaps other causes, there is ground to believe that they are fast assuming, or hold already, a decided ascendency, as well in matters of invention as amendment. With notices and advertisements of new or improved modes of education, newly erected academies and colleges, new turnpikes, rail-roads, and canals, new steamboats and forms of machinery for agricultural or manufacturing purposes, new arrangements for lighting cities and warming houses, new breeds of domestic animals, new Societies for special purposes, new States and Territories, and new Constitutions for old States—with annunciations of these and other changes in the economy of the country, our Newspapers and Magazines are filled as en-

couragingly as patriotism can desire. Throughout the land, therefore, the Spirit of Improvement is in a state of excitement sufficiently intense, and only requires to be judiciously directed, to produce very salutary and splendid effects. Hence the remainder of my discourse will consist chiefly of remarks and reflections on some of the leading objects, which that Spirit should be made to embrace.

Knowledge, (which is itself but a form of mental improvement) when controlled by liberal motives and correct dispositions, is the source of all other improvements. This being virtually a self-evident truth, may be assumed as such, and reasoned on as a principle. The first act in our scheme of improvement, then, should be to improve our own minds—not only intellectually, but also *morally* and *socially*. If we neglect the two latter branches, the former will avail us but little, and may turn to evil rather than good. Knowledge without virtue, is a dangerous weapon, as well to its possessor, as to his connexions. Employed for selfish purposes only, it injures, in the first instance, those on whom it acts, and ultimately recoils in mischief on the actor. A well-directed education again, complete in all that the expression implies, constitutes the true and only source of that degree of mental improvement, without which, under no form of government, but especially a representative one, is the prosperity of the individual or the community secure. This sentiment also being reduced to a maxim, may be used as a principle in an ethical discussion.

To diffuse throughout the nation, then, so that it may reach and penetrate the cabin and the cottage, no less than the more comfortable and costly dwelling, a system of sound and practical education should be the leading object of the American people. On such a measure depends all that is most desirable in life, whether as a possession for ourselves, a legacy to our descendants, or an example to the world. In no other way can we maintain our moral and intellectual standing, the freedom of our institutions, the purity of our government, our rank and power as a nation, or the integrity of the Union. That these blessings are ours at present, we owe to the wisdom, virtue, and heroism of the assertors of our independence, and the founders of the

Republic. For their continuance with us, we must depend on ourselves—I mean, on the proper employment of the ample resources we hold at our disposal. As an educated people, we shall possess them permanently, and they will increase in fruitfulness and utility, with the progress of time. But, without education suited to our condition, we shall forfeit and lose them; and their fatal opposites, corruption, disunion, and anarchy or despotism will usurp their places. This is as certain, as that the soil whose cultivation is neglected becomes barren in useful productions, and encumbered with those that are useless and noxious.

It has been already intimated, that to be full and effective, education must not be confined to the intellect alone. In a special manner it should be made to bear on the moral and social faculties of our nature, that while it imparts to them strength, it may render them habitually and instinctively active. Those faculties are the groundwork of virtue, and the preventives of crime. They furnish the motives that carry us out of the narrowness of self, awaken us progressively to the interests and happiness of our friends and neighbours, the prosperity and glory of our country, and the welfare of our race. They are the instinct which excites to action patriots, philanthropists, and reformers of mankind, while intellect only directs them in their course. But for the lights of the latter, such characters might at times act amiss; but for the former they would not act at all. It was an abundant possession of the moral and social faculties in high activity, that made a Curtius, a Germanicus, an Alfred and a Washington; while a want of them made a Cataline, a Robespiere, and an Arnold. In the formation of such characters the *affective* faculties are more operative, and constitute a more important element than the *intellectual*. Great as is the difference in intellect between savage and civilized nations, the difference in morality is still greater. It is moral destitution that gives to the savage his inexorable cruelty and his thirst for blood. At least high-toned moral faculties, did he possess them, would hold his sanguinary propensities in check. Nor is this all. It is our moral nature alone that completely distinguishes us from the inferior animals. That they possess a number of intellectual fac-

ulties in a degree that may be called eminent, and even some dawnings of reason, cannot be denied. But their moral destitution is complete. Our boasted reason, therefore, although the chief source of our power, is not the attribute that rears us highest in the scale of being. Our moral nature stands above it.

These are maxims in ethics, which few, I think, will contest. But do we adopt them and submit to them, as rules of practice? Do we, enlightened and virtuous as we deem ourselves, set on strict morality the high estimation to which it is entitled? Being, as it unquestionably is, the most exalted attribute we possess, do we faithfully bestow on it a corresponding cultivation, and hold all violations of it in the deep dishonour and abhorrence they deserve? To use plainer language still, are we the moral people in practice, we affect to be in sentiment? To these questions facts alone can satisfactorily reply. Let us collect a few, therefore, by a hasty reference to things we do, and things we countenance. If we have vices we ought to be made sensible of them, that we may perceive at once their deformity and their mischief. Self conviction of errors and faults is the first step toward the correction of the one and the abandonment of the other. And it is an indispensable step. Hence my earnest desire in the present case, to contribute, however feebly, toward its production.

First however permit me to observe, that the very definition of moral and social education demonstrates at once its high importance, as a measure of improvement, and the deeply defective attention it receives. It inculcates the doctrine of meting out, in every thing, the precise measure we wish to receive—in plainer terms, of doing to others what we are desirous that they should do to us. And when this doctrine is analyzed, it is found to contain elements, which, though indispensable to the harmony and well-being of society, are but little regarded even by those who deem themselves exemplary in their moral observances, and who are viewed by the world in a similar light. Some of these elements are, to be just in all things, taking no undue advantage of the feeble and unintelligent; to be useful as far as practicable, benevolent, sympathetic and accommodating, to adhere strictly to truth and sincerity in actions as well as words, to give in no

case unnecessary cause of offence, to avoid slander and all other forms of evil speech, to serve the public faithfully and from proper motives according to capacity and opportunities, and, above all, to bring selfishness into subordination to public good. This last duty is the more important, as the neglect of it leads too often to the violation of all the others. It is not to be questioned, that the predominance of selfish over social feeling is the chief cause of moral wrong, in whatever shape or character it may appear. All the animal passions are selfish; and when not held under due control, they are barriers to duty, and inlets to vice.

Such are some of the points, on which moral education, suitably conducted, communicates instruction, and produces improvement. And the analysis, brief and imperfect as it is, contrasted with our own conduct, is but too well calculated to convince even the best of us, how far we fall short of the duties it inculcates. Yet, were we to receive as our sole rule of judgment, the encomiums passed on that form of discipline in all parts of our country, we should be compelled to believe, that it is held in high and universal esteem, that no efforts to promote it are wanting, and that all practices in opposition to it are visited by the abhorrence and reprobation of every one. But, when we look at things as they are, and admit, as testimony, facts instead of words, we are forcibly driven to a different conclusion. Nor can I, without pain and mortification, recount those facts, because they are all disgraceful to our country, and some of them a stain on our government, which nothing can wash away, but the purifying waters fresh from the fount of moral discipline. Gladly would I close my eye and seal my lips in relation to many of them, did not a sense of duty impel me to notice them.

To whatever section of our country we direct our attention, and take a deliberate survey of passing events, vice and corruption in various forms, both public and private, not only appear in thick array before us, but give us reason to believe that they are fearfully increasing. That the records of them are trebling in number cannot be doubted. Injustice, knavery, and violence between man and man are alarmingly common. Courts of Justice

and the Public Prints apprize us, that assassination, poisoning, house-burning, and another description of crime not to be named, are no longer rare occurrences in our land. Slander, in all its shapes and degrees, has become so familiar to us, that we have almost ceased to consider it a fault; while reputation withers under it unredressed, like the green leaf scathed by the breath of the Sirocco. And GAMBLING, which is but another name for *pocket-picking* and *robbery*, is in such favour and fashion, that splendid buildings are erected as public pandemoniums of it, fathers perpetrate it in their parlours in presence of their sons, and, more lamentable still, mothers in their drawing-rooms, in presence of their daughters!! Thus are the children schooled in a vice, which, if not abandoned, must lead to ruin—*perhaps to infamy!!*

But this is not all. On public occasions, beneath the eye of assembled multitudes, the same principles are deliberately adopted, and carried into action. What are our elections, the glorious fruit of our Charter of Freedom, and, when conducted in the spirit of uprightness and purity, the safe-guards of our lives, liberties, and possessions—what are they now, but scenes of intrigue, deception, and bribery, and sometimes of riot, conflagration, and blood! On other occasions conspiracies of lawless desperadoes, exploding in mobs, have also become appallingly frequent in our country. An example of this sort presented itself some months ago, in one of the eastern States, which surpassed in atrocity all things of the kind that America has witnessed. Scarcely is there recorded in the annals of unbridled licentiousness and crime, an act equal to it in unmanly brutality. In the dead of night, without provocation, or any other plea to take from the outrage a shadow of its guilt, a band of ruffians invaded, sacked, and demolished a sanctuary of religion, inhabited only by defenceless females, who had *resigned the world, and dedicated themselves to God and charitable deeds.* Rarely in modern times, has the gleaming torch or the blood-red hand of war done premeditated wrong to woman or the altar. Or if so, it has been only when some Attila, another "Scourge of God," in the print of whose horse's foot "the grass never grew," directed the havoc. Far from deliberately committing such acts of horror,

civilized and manly warriors would bleed to prevent them. Perhaps the most alarming truth connected with this transaction is yet untold. Several of the malefactors engaged in it, who have been recently brought to trial, and their guilt stript of every colouring of doubt, have been flagitiously sereened from the hand of justice. This event having occurred in one of the most enlightened portions of the Union, shows satisfactorily, that we are much more wanting in morality than knowledge. Let it not be imagined, however, that I mean to charge a want of moral rectitude, a desire to impede the course of justice, or the slightest approval of the atrocious act, on the whole community, where this violence was committed. Far from it. A more virtuous community does not exist in our country—nor, as I believe, in any country. This fact, however, but renders more alarming the commission of the crime, and the acquittals in violation of justice and law. It proves that even that society, upright and enlightened as it is, has within it a dangerous mass of depravity and guilt. Still does the serpent lurk and shed its venom in the bosom of Eden.

But my sketch of our disregard for morality, as a people, is not yet complete. In the highest councils of our country, where patriotism, wisdom, and integrity should preside, the proceedings are not always marked by moral observances. Even of Congress itself, whose duty it is to set an example of virtue, purity, and public spirit to the nation, this is on many occasions deplorably true.

It is neither presumptuous nor extravagant to say of that body, that it holds for the present, and is likely to do so for ages to come, the chief control of the destinies of Freedom. On that subject other nations will look to it for an example, and will be materially influenced by the principles that shall direct it, no less than by the questions it may agitate and the measures it may adopt. Self therefore of every description should be proscribed from its halls. Neither the Spirit of political party with its cabals and intrigues, an attachment to mere sectional interests to the neglect or injury of those that are general, a devotion to men instead of measures, the love of personal distinction and influence, nor the jealousies and intemperate animosities of individuals—

neither these, nor any other matters of private or local concern should be allowed to mingle in the public deliberations, or waste in angry and fruitless dispute the time that belongs exclusively to the nation. On no ground are members of Congress justifiable in the indulgence of private, partisan, or sectional feelings, nor in pursuit of the measures they lead to, unless those measures are subservient also to the interest of the Union. They are elected as members of the National Legislature, hold their sessions in the national Council-House, receive their pay from the national treasury, fill that treasury from the national resources, and appropriate and expend at pleasure the national funds. As public men, therefore, they are solemnly bound, not only by their oath of office, but by every obligation that justice can superadd, to feel, think, and legislate for the nation, not for States or any other subordinate sections. They should unite their counsels, draw on their joint wisdom as a common stock, and concentrate their exertions and influence for the good of the whole. Then only will they bestow on each individual portion of the Union the degree of attention and fostering care to which it is entitled. Thus does the sun give equal light to the planets around him according to their distances; and the heart duly nourishes and invigorates the whole body, by equably and impartially distributing the blood to every part of it. And the examples here presented should be followed by Congress, the political centre-light and heart of the Republic.

Such is the sentiment of sound morality; and the dictate of reason coincides with it. Is it faithfully conformed to within the walls of our Capitol? Would to Heaven! there were any ground to answer affirmatively. But there is none, short of a violation of truth. For a long series of years, the Halls of Congress have been a hot-bed of political barter and intrigue. The struggle between the Outs and the Ins has been unremitting, and, on many occasions, repulsively intemperate and indecent; and that it has been infinitely more selfish than patriotic—the product of the love of place and power, rather than of the love of country and virtue—no honest and competent observer will deny. It has been from the beginning, is now, and is likely long to continue, *Democrat* against *Federalist*, and *Whig* against *To-*

ry, and the reverse; not one band of great and virtuous statesmen and patriots conscientiously vying with another for the benefit of the commonwealth. The East moreover has been struggling to gain or retain some advantage, in exclusion of the West, and the North in like exclusion of the South; and conversely; while, in the intensity of self-feeling, each party has been regardless of the interests and rights of the other, and, faultier still, of those of the nation. The worst is to come. On such occasions, no regard is paid to the character of the means resorted to, except as respects their fitness to insure success. The end in view consecrates all measures that can be devised for its attainment. Hence, right and wrong, truth and falsehood are regarded with equal favour; and, provided it can be made more available in the contest, cunning is preferred to wisdom, intrigue to talent, and artful jugglery to able statesmanship. Nor is the whole yet told. Measures obviously useful to the country originating with one party are too often opposed by the other, lest the party proposing them might acquire influence by their wisdom and salutary effects. Thus, from selfish motives, the public welfare is disregarded, and the miserable and degrading scuffle for power, place, and their profits goes on.

Another legislative stratagem equally reprehensible, which is often practised, is the barter of local interests. The Representatives from two or three sections of the country, unite their influence, under a secret compact to aid and support each other, in a struggle for certain subordinate interests, which they are anxious to promote, distinct from the interests of other sections, and of the nation at large, and perhaps in opposition to them. In such cases, the Members from one section barter their votes, in a *spirit of corruption*, for the votes of their *fellow-conspirators* from other sections; and thus prostitute to local and often petty purposes, the privileges conferred on them for national and important ones. In connecting with this traffic the terms "corruption" and "conspirator," I employ them in their full meaning; and, were I to add to them *bribery* and *treachery*, the addition could be sustained. A member of Congress who votes from any motive but a wish to promote the *welfare of the Union*, is unfit for his station; but one who *barters* his vote is *venal* and

unworthy to be trusted in any capacity where temptation may assail him. Such chaffering in the Supreme Council of the nation is political cozenage, deeply disgraceful to those who practise it, as well as immoral. Nor does its commonness, which is alleged in favour of it, detract in the least from its culpability. Were murder committed every day, and arson every right, they would be murder and arson still, their atrocity unmitigated. To say that legislation cannot be efficiently conducted without this practice, evinces the more conclusively our lamentable want of improvement in morals. Were it not that selfishness prevails over patriotism, and private over public considerations, local interests would never be preferred to general ones, and the political traffic referred to would have no existence. I shall only add, that what is true of Congress, in this matter, is equally so of the legislative bodies of the several States. The practice is corrupt and dishonest, wherever it may prevail; and it prevails more or less in every Legislature in the Union.

Another corps of intriguers more unprincipled than any of the foregoing, consists of office-hunters. And, considering their character, and the means they employ for the attainment of their ends, their number is fearful—one hundred-fold greater than it was at the commencement of the present century! Nor is their increase in number the most alarming feature of the evil. The principles that actuate them, and their improvement in every form of artifice and deception that may subserve their purposes, render them formidable to the morals and manners of the community. They are a foul incorporation of selfishness and knavery. Their object is the attainment of subsistence or wealth, without the aid of productive industry, or any adequate return in usefulness—to batten in some way on public resources, regardless of the performance of public services. And, to gratify their wishes, no stratagem is left untried. One of their modes of operation is to defame and overreach each other; so that they have not even the mutual attachment and *esprit du corps* of honorable highwaymen. Hence, I say, the dishonest and demoralizing lessons which their example imparts. They teach the art of living by expedients instead of useful occupa-

tion, descend to all the meannessess of dependency, and exchange the bold spirit and inflexible uprightness of the freeman, for the heartless cunning and sycophancy of the courtier. Of all fawning, cringing retainers, a thorough-bred office-hunter is the most unmanly and contemptible. That honorable exceptions to this picture may exist, is not denied. But that it is a living likeness of an immense majority of the class referred to is certain.

But, abundant and abominable as are the foregoing sources of mischief, they are far less offensive and pernicious, than one which yet remains to be mentioned. The most nefarious and revolting spectacle of depravity that disgraces our country, is our PUBLIC PRINTS —those of them, I mean, that are enlisted in the storm and have imbibed the spirit of our party warfare. To speak of them as they deserve, would compel me to resort to language, which I must not address to cultivated ears. It would be sufficiently injurious and detestable, did the evil of those scandalous publications consist in nothing else than the deformity of their issues, the insult they offer to public decency, and the stain they affix on our reputation in foreign countries. But the case is far otherwise. By its operation through another channel, its effects are much more fatal. I allude to its contagiousness, which, as respects both time and space, threatens to render its mischief interminable. The presses, from which the productions alluded to emanate, are so many fountains of pestilence, sending forth their poisons to pollute the moral atmosphere of our country. They threaten us with a mental epidemic (and have in part already produced it) more fearful in its aspect (*because* it is mental,) and likely to prove more disastrous in its consequences, than that which recently assailed our persons, sending terror before it, and leaving desolation and mourning behind. So deadly is the moral plague of leprosy, with which the SPIRIT OF PARTY has infected us! Deep and dismal as are the malignity and turpitude of that Spirit, well might it be made to exclaim, with the Veiled Prophet,

> "Not Hell itself with all its power to damn,
> "Can add one curse to the vile thing I am."

Nor is it political party alone that breathes its rancour through

the country. Religion itself (or rather something which fallaciously bears the name) is not without its embittered temper and uncharitable strife. In defence of certain sectarian doctrines, or given modifications of Church government, some of the theological papers of the day, whose object should be harmony, and their spirit mildness and peace, not only fire the torch of Discord, but eagerly fan the spreading conflagration. Scarcely could Ate herself show more vindictiveness, or slip the dogs of war with a grimmer delight.

In less figurative terms. Our party prints, both political and theological, are, as I confidently believe, the most malignant and abusive, polluted and polluting, that now degrade the annals of literature. Assuredly nothing to equal them, in these respects, has ever met my eye in foreign Journals. True; the prints of Great Britain and France are disgraced by *occasional* effusions of virulence and scurrility; but some of our own pour them out in never ending streams. Their daily occupation is, to concoct and issue to their patrons the very essence of falsehood, defamation and abuse. The effect of such matter on a large portion of the community cannot be doubted. The temper is inflamed by it, the taste vitiated, the sentiments demoralized, and the passions maddened, as naturally and certainly, as damaged provisions injure health, or intoxicating drink deranges the brain. An epidemic moral inebriety is the issue. No wonder then that murders are numerous, that our cities are disgraced by mobs and riots, that the Union is tottering under political dissentions, and that foreigners speak of us in terms of reproach. That these crimes and abuses are attributable in part to the influence of our Newspapers, can hardly be questioned by any one who observes accurately, and judges correctly of cause and effect. The daily perusal of some of those prints amounts, with the unthinking, to a regular training of the passions to violence. Like every other school of intemperance, therefore, it withdraws the mind from sober reflection, habituates it to feelings of resentment and vindictiveness, and thus prepares it for deeds of outrage. But the hand only ministers to a higher power. Let the mind dictate, and it is always ready to obey. Yet, strange and unnatural as it may appear, parents, professing themselves friends of morality

and religion, and advocates of order, purity and peace, receive into their families those repositories of abomination and instruments of mischief, read them themselves, and permit their children to read them. Did they make their houses the residence of the asp, or the den of the cockatrice, the act would hardly be more criminal. By the latter practice they *might* poison the bodies of their families; by the former they *inevitably* poison their minds. In a word; the press makes a nearer approach to earthly omnipotence than any other human engine. Neither the sword, the sceptre, nor the crosier can resist it. It erects and overthrows thrones and dynasties. Reading nations receive from it not a little of their entire character. They bend to its influence, like the ozier to the breeze; and, in time, that bent becomes habitual. But the inhabitants of the United States are by far the most reading people on earth. And, if I mistake not, we surpass, in the number of our Newspapers, all the rest of christendom. From these facts, which will not be questioned, connected with the inflammatory and reprehensible tone, and ferocious spirit of many of our public prints, the inference that they prompt to deeds of disorder and violence appears irresistible.

Such are a few of the evils that threaten our peace and prosperity as a people, and whose malign influence we already feel. And they testify to our *want of moral discipline.* It is not true that they are the fruit of ignorance. I know the general cry on this subject is, "inform the people correctly, and they will do what is right." This is a mistake. The people act from feeling much more than from knowledge. Merely to communicate sound information to them will not put them right, unless they receive at the same time sentiments of sound practical morality. Our intelligence is far ahead of our virtue. Neither is the politician ignorant of the viciousness of his intrigues, the gazetteer of his falsehoods and defamations, nor the bitter sectarist of the denunciations he utters. Nor are we, as a people, ignorant of the culpableness of our *political immorality.* These vices are practised, not *in defect* of light and knowledge, but *in defiance* of them. *Conscience* alone is wanting to their prevention.

I am aware that these are serious charges. But I also know

them to be true. And I further know that hundreds of thousands concur with me in opinion, and speak *privately* to the same effect, but have not the frankness and firmness to make their sentiments publicly known. *No; they dread the loss of their popularity should they do so.* Hence the stream of evil pours on, deepening and widening, and desolating in its course, unchecked even by the voice of reprehension or warning. In preferring the foregoing charges, therefore, I feel no apprehension of being put in the wrong. In evidence of their truth, while we are, *as a nation*, the most enlighted people on earth, we are also the most deeply involved in political *intrigue*, not to call it *venality* and *corruption*. And, as already mentioned, we are becoming more so. In other countries, where other forms of government prevail, the *few* intrigue, and the *multitude* pursue in tranquility their settled occupations. But in the United States, the million intrigue—every one for himself, his party, or his friend. The chief scene of action is our elections; and they crowd so closely on the heels of each other, that before the ferment of one has subsided, that of another has commenced. Our electioneering campaigns, therefore, with their concomitant jugglery, calumnies, and machinations, are virtually perpetual. Add to these the stratagems and manœuvres of our numerous public bodies, political, theological, scientific, and literary—for so contagious is the spirit of intrigue that nothing in our country escapes it—sum up the whole, and the aggregate will greatly surpass in amount what any other nation in existence can present. And, I repeat, that the remedy for these, and all the other evils that have been referred to, is to be found, not in penal and prohibitory laws, nor in an increase of knowledge; but in an increase of *morality;* and that again must be the product of improvement in moral education. Those who look for it from any other source, look in vain, and prove, by the fact, that they know but little of human nature. Knowledge and virtue are different attributes of mind, received through different channels, derived from different sources, and cultivated and promoted by different processes. Yet the belief seems general, that the same form of training, which improves youth in their intellectual, improves them also in their moral faculties—and that it does so *of necessity*. This

is a fatal mistake, and results from a defective knowledge of the constitution of the human mind. A few remarks, therefore, in rectification of it may not be amiss.

If we may judge from appearances and sentiments often expressed, the common opinion is, that the great work of improvement in morals can be best, if not alone accomplished in seats of learning, including schools of every grade, and in places of public worship; and that the most effectual means are precepts, injunctions, and threats, exhortations and sermons, and the formal conning of lessons in text-books prepared for the purpose.

That this is an error, appears as well from reason and experience, as from the principles that are known to predominate in our nature. Our practices and habits, whether virtuous or vicious, are much more the offspring of example than precept—of spontaneous imitation, than logical argument, or authoritative command. We become enamoured of virtue and are induced to pursue and practise it, for the same reason that we become enamoured of other things that are lovely and attractive; not from hearing its praises and recommendations; but from its being presented to us in a living embodied form. We learn to discharge our duty cheerfully and instinctively, because it has been rendered pleasant and habitual to us, by example and practice—especially the example of those we venerate and love. Nor is it possible for us to attain to ease and readiness in it in any other way. In the performance of moral acts, as in every other kind of exercise, whether bodily or mental, we are comparatively defective and awkward at first, and become expert only by discipline. Nor will discipline in one process render us dextrous in another. To teach a boy to read, write, and cipher, has no *necessary* influence in rendering him obedient, kind, and charitable, conscientious and pious. Unless moral training is connected with it, this is true, from whatever book the pupil may take his lessons. To this the Scriptures form no exception. A youth may read them daily and listen to the most earnest lectures and learned comments on them, and still be wanting in practical morality, unless he be otherwise suitably disciplined. Duty and virtue imply action of a given kind. And in no form of action can we

acquire facility and adroitness, without a suitable course of experience.

On this subject another serious mistake prevails. It seems to be the common belief, that the prevention of vice, and improvement in virtue are the same. In other words, that virtue, instead of being a reality, is a mere negation; and that, therefore, if a youth be simply restrained from immoral acts, he is trained in moral ones. The consequences of discipline founded on this error, are often ruinous. When the youthful are merely prohibited from the commission of vicious actions, without being trained in virtuous ones, or inspired with the love of them, they are too apt to plunge the deeper into immoralities, when the restraint is removed. Yet the prohibition of vice in their pupils is nearly all that the directors of common schools and higher seats of learning can effect. Nor can much more be done by public instructors of any kind, whether moral or religious. If pupils bring out of such places of instruction as much correctness and purity of mind, as they carry into them, nothing more can be expected. A greater amount they cannot bring out, as the product of intellectual training. As soon shall dancing, fencing, and horsemanship be taught by mere intellectual discipline, as practical morality. And there would be as much of rationality in an effort to make a young man a chemist, by preventing him from being a mathematician, as in an attempt to render him moral, in the true sense of the term, by alone restraining him from vice. He may be thus made *negatively* moral, until exposed to temptation, when he will yield under the trial, from a want of virtuous sentiments, and become positively vicious.

The ignorance that prevails in relation to the true constitution of the human mind is the chief source of the errors committed in moral education. Nor, as in all other things, is it possible to remove those errors, without a previous removal of their cause. It does not seem to be understood (at least the truth is not converted into a rule of practice) that we have a class of moral faculties entirely distinct from our intellectual ones; and that, to be strengthened and brought to the activity and perfection of which they are susceptible, they must be trained in a manner peculiar to themselves, and adapted to their nature. Hence no

suitable and well digested system of discipline for them has ever been instituted. Or if so, I know not where or when. All important as they are, they are comparatively neglected, as if they constituted an inferior portion of the mind. Yet they require not only regular and positive, but specific training. Do we wish to improve our vision? we exercise the organs of vision through the medium of light. Our hearing? we exercise the organs of hearing by sound. Our taste? we exercise the gustatory organs by sapid substances. Is it our wish to strengthen our muscles? we exercise them in an appropriate way. In like manner, if we would strengthen and improve our moral faculties, we must do so by exercising them, each in its own peculiar line. This is at once common sense, and the result of experience. Yet I repeat, that, as far as I am informed, the practice is no where pursued in our country, in a degree corresponding to the importance of its object.

The true school for moral education is the nursery and the family-fireside, parents and guardians are the proper instructors, and example and practice the most suitable means. There the course of instruction should begin, and there, if possible, be continued, until sentiments of virtue are so developed and strengthened, that they cannot be supplanted by licentious doctrines, and habits of moral action so formed and matured, that they cannot be perverted by subsequent temptations. Nor can this scheme of discipline be too early instituted, or too vigilantly and unremittingly pursued. In consonance with these sentiments is one of the wisest maxims of the wisest of men. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The most sage and philosophical, moreover, of the British poets concurs in this, in one of his most instructive distichs:

> "'Tis education forms the common mind;
> "*Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.*"

Nor is the mode of imparting this bent either obscure or difficult. A few words are sufficient to disclose it.

Let parents exhibit in their families examples of strict morality and social decorum, and their children will follow them. Let them train their children in the performance of moral and social

duties—in being kind, charitable, courteous, and beneficent, just and generous, obedient, mild, and forgiving—and such duties, for the practice of which opportunities are hourly occurring, will become in time their pride and pleasure. The discharge of them may thus be made favorite objects of their ambition. They should also be early taught and made to feel, that fierce explosions of passion are unamiable and wrong, and recoil in some way on those who indulge in them; that profane and indecent language is rude and unmannerly, as well as immoral; and above all, that the violation of truth, and every form of deception, whether by speech or action, are *mean* and *dishonorable*, as well as criminal. Nor should it ever be forgotten, that the terms *meanness* and *dishonour*, judiciously employed, have often much more influence in deterring the youthful from vice, than the words *crime* and *punishment*.

Important moral impressions may be made on children by the treatment of domestic animals; and, in a matter of such moment, no opportunity of the kind should be neglected. Neither scenes of cruelty nor gusts of passion should ever be presented to them. Such spectacles inflame their own passions, indurate their feelings, and deaden their sympathies, or prove injurious to them in some other way. They should witness nothing but moral sights, inhale only a moral atmosphere, and be occupied as much as possible in moral performances. Under such training the contraction of vicious habits would be unexpected and unnatural, and the formation of virtuous ones in the direct line of cause and effect.

Parents cannot be too circumspect, as to the characters of those who attend on their children. By remissness on this point, the infant mind is often sullied by moral blemishes, which can never be effaced. And the heartless indifference usually manifested in relation to it, is as astonishing as it is culpable. It may be safely asserted, that the charge of the nursery is frequently given to those who would not be trusted with the care of the sheepfold. This is unpardonable, and leads to evil by a law as certain and immutable, as that by which warmth and moisture excite vegetation, or a ponderous body inclines toward the centre.

But if the mere neglect of parents is a sure source of vice in their children, and therefore highly blamable, where can I find terms to reprobate, as it deserves, the criminality of corrupt and profligate parental examples! or how sufficiently deplore the disasters they entail on families and the community! To pronounce them, by way of distinction in guilt and mischief THE CURSE OF THE LAND, would not be a denunciation too deep for their demerits. For when I calmly reflect on their inherent turpitude, and survey the whole scope of their influence, direct and indirect, present and future, I am compelled to regard them as a fountain of evil more hateful and prolific than any other. Contrasted with them, the seductive influence of youthful associates whitens into innocence. If guilt and infamy are a greater evil, and more to be deprecated than disease and death, there might be difficulty in proving to the satisfaction of sound reason, that parental infanticide is a deeper crime than parental profligacy. The former but consigns to the grave a single innocent, saving it from the ills that humanity must endure; while the latter is instrumental in rendering a whole family monuments of depravity, vice, and misery, revolting to sense, outcasts from affection and sympathy, and, as far as their influence extends, a blight on society. Nor does the evil terminate with themselves. They in turn become profligate parents and infect their descendants; and thus the stream of corruption runs on and widens, diffusing its mildews to an unknown extent. I repeat, that if destruction of mind is worse in all respects than destruction of body, (and who will deny it?) I can scarcely perceive on what ground the deliberate perpetrator of the former deed should be held less criminal, than he who under a gust of impassioned excitement perpetrates the latter. Besides; the profligacy of parental example not only brutalizes the *minds* of children; it leads also to bodily diseases in them, which hurry them as lazars to premature graves. And thus to the infectious example of the parent is the death of the children virtually attributable.

Will it be alleged that I am delineating too broadly and colouring too highly this picture of family-immorality and its consequences? I reply, that I do not think so; and instances innumerable in proof of my opinion might be easily cited. There

is scarcely in the United States a village or a neighborhood, that does not furnish them; and towns and cities exhibit them in thousands. Or will it be alleged that parents are not aware of the full extent of the desolation they spread around them, by their pestilent example? I again reply, that it is not possible for them to be ignorant of facts which they daily witness; and which, had not habitual vice and profligacy hardened their consciences, would madden them with remorse. Does vegetation wither under the emanations of the mancinella and the upas? and does poison bred of *material* corruption infect and destroy the most powerful frames? We know it does. How then can the tender and susceptible minds of childhood and youth resist the poison of *moral* corruption? especially when it is administered by a parent, on whom the child has been accustomed to rely for mental as well as corporeal sustenance. Under such circumstances, to escape contamination is all but impossible. If the infection does not strike in one form, it will in another. Of this the parent must be sensible, because he sees it. He therefore sins deliberately against knowledge, and is not only a felonious, but an unnatural destroyer.

Tell not me that any man believes he can rear a family in virtue, industry and usefulness, or that any human means can save them from vice and pollution, while he is himself an idler or a spendthrift, a gambler or a debauchee, a drunkard, a profane swearer, a brawler, a liar and a slanderer, an open cheat, or while he indulges an impure and licentious conversation, or destroys the peace and harmony of his fire-side, by habitual outbreakings of groundless jealousy, unprovoked rage, or any other form of furious passion. And, if these outrages on morals, or any of them, be indulged in by a mother, I need hardly say that the scene is still more revolting, and, in some respects, the catastrophe more deplorable. When the palm and the olive shall spring up and be fruitful on the rocks of Spitzbergen, and in other respects the present laws of nature shall give place to new ones, then, and not before, may filial morality flourish under the bane of parental profligacy.

Such, in brief, are some of my views of moral education, especially of the place where, and the persons by whom it can be best conducted. Morality is the growth of home, early impres-

sions, virtuous example, and *practical* lessons, as essentially as the pomegranate and the banana are the growth of regions bordering on the sun. I do not deny that the reading and studying of moral productions, especially the biographical memoirs of virtuous and distinguished characters, and an attendance on moral exhortations in academies, colleges, places of public worship, and elsewhere, are useful. Far from it. But I contend that their influence is limited; that they make but a small portion of the aggregate that constitutes a complete moral education; and that a reliance far too exclusive is placed on them, to the neglect of means that are much more effectual. And I further contend, that parents, especially *mothers*, whose responsibility to God and society for the conduct of their children is unspeakably weighty —I contend that they have it in their power to do for the morality of the country ten thousand-fold more than all our teachers of theology, literature, and science, and all our pastors of churches united. By reading and an attendance on public instruction much may be learnt of the science of morals. But habits of correct and efficient morality, and a fruitful love and pursuit of virtue, are the issue chiefly of practice and example under the parental roof. Never, until views like these shall have been adopted as rules of action, will man possess the moral soundness of which he is susceptible.

Another point to which the Spirit of Improvement should be directed by us, is Polite Literature. I mean the acquisition of a ready, accurate, forcible, varied, and elegant command of the English language, in conversation, writing and public address. To express myself in fewer words, yet more comprehensively, I mean *Accomplishment in English Scholarship*. Our deficiency in that, as a people, cannot be denied. With but few exceptions, our literary performances, whether oral or written, fully attest it. While they are sufficiently marked by good sense, vigorous thought, powerful argument, profound and comprehensive views, and lofty eloquence, they are wanting in correct taste and scholar-like handling. The reason is plain. For the attainment of the latter qualities we have never made an effort worthy of the object. Nor do we hold them in the estimation to which they are entitled. In still plainer terms, we have never

seriously and thoroughly studied the English language, but have so far toyed with it, as to learn to express ourselves in it fluently, intelligibly, and *at times*, *grammatically;* and, content with this limited acquisition, we have attempted nothing farther. To finished scholarship we have never aspired.

Of the course of education pursued in most of our higher seats of learning, this is proverbially true. There, singular as the fact may appear, the *study* of Greek and Latin is preferred to that of our mother tongue. I have said "*the study;*" for while we bestow on the former languages a degree of attention that may be so denominated, we only *read* the latter, without attempting to possess ourselves of its ample resources in richness, beauty, and power, as a vehicle of mind.

When we contemplate the literary exercises pursued in most of our colleges, we are almost tempted to believe that the youth of our country are trained to become ancient Hellenists and Romans, rather than Americans of the present day—to speak, write, and transact business in Greek and Latin, in preference to English. In this remark my true meaning is, not so much that we waste time in needless devotion to the two former languages, as that we culpably neglect the study of the latter. I am no foe to what is termed so proudly Classical Learning. Neither am I so passionately enamoured of it, as to rank it with the highest branches of knowledge. That the estimate placed on it is beyond its merit, I am compelled to believe. On two points connected with the subject I speak confidently. An acquaintance with Greek and Latin is not necessary to a full understanding and command of English; and a thorough knowledge of the latter is infinitely more important to an American scholar, than a like knowledge of the former, and of all other languages whether dead or living, ancient or modern. To these truths add a third. Some of our best disciplined Greek and Latin scholars are shamefully defective in their knowledge and command of their native tongue. They can neither speak nor write it grammatically nor spell it correctly. Men *thus miserably* defective in English scholarship have been known to me holding Professorships in some of our colleges, and on one occasion invited to the Presidency. Nor is this all. The English language, as al-

ready intimated, is now so mature and perfect in itself, that it may be studied *alone*, in its structure, principles, and uses, without the instrumentality or aid of any other. Its minority is past; and it is prepared to set up for itself, and claim independence. It is now no more sustained by Greek and Latin, than they are by it. Nor is it any longer necessary that it should be studied in its connexion with them. As well might it be contended that they should be studied through the medium of it. True; it has been greatly improved, enriched, and ornamented by them. But its riches and ornaments are now its own; and it is instinct with its own spirit, subject to its own rules, and elevated by its own principles and powers to a rank not inferior to that of the LEARNED LANGUAGES. Notwithstanding this, we discreditably content ourselves with comparative smattering in our own tongue, consider a knowledge of it but an inferior attainment, and confer the title and rank of scholars on those only who know something of Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic. And if, for want of other employment, any one has delved into the Herculaneum of Sanscrit, we are prepared to idolize his genius and learning, and pronounce him the *Beau Ideal* of students and men of letters.

That this prescriptive homage paid to ancient and foreign languages, and the undue estimate we place on them to the disparagement of our own, checks our pride and enthusiasm, and consequently our progress, in the study of the latter, cannot be doubted. It is written in the principles of our nature, that such an effect must necessarily result from such a cause. We are not formed to become enamoured of things deemed inferior, to pursue them with ardour, and exult in their attainment. The aim of our ambition is upward. While we call Latin, Greek, and Hebrew THE LEARNED LANGUAGES, we, by necessary implication, pronounce the English UNLEARNED; a term which, if it does not attach disrespect and obloquy to it, divests it at least of dignity and standing. And when we would indicate a man as uneducated, and of humble attainments, we proclaim him a mere *English scholar!* Thus do we dishonour our native tongue, and prevent its due cultivation, and our own improvement in it, by virtually representing it as a petty and degraded object of study. It is

moreover the prevalent belief, that the only way to attain pre-eminence in English literature, is to become thoroughly steeped in Greek and Latin. In proof of this, it is asserted that British surpass American writers in the style of their composition, because they are more deeply versed in classical learning.

These two notions are groundless. The study of Greek and Latin is not the means by which pre-eminence in English is to be attained. As soon shall mathematics be learned by the study of music, or sculpture by the study of chemistry. Nor do British surpass American writers in style and manner, because they are better versed in the *dead languages*. It is because they are better versed in their *own language*. And their superior knowledge and command of that arise exclusively from their superior attention to the cultivation and employment of it, as a distinct pursuit. They make it of itself an object of much more regular and persevering study. Nor is it possible to attain distinction in the use of it on any other ground. Were Americans to discipline themselves in the knowledge and employment of it, as carefully and thoroughly as many Englishmen do, without ever opening a Latin Grammar, or learning the Greek alphabet, they might be much more distinguished as authors than they are. It is notorious that some of the most accomplished writers in Great Britain, France, and America have had no acquaintance with Greek or Latin. To prove this, I need only cite the names of Shakspeare, Buffon, and Franklin, to which scores of others might be added. William Cobbett wields one of the most powerful and eloquent pens of the day; and his style is as pure and correct, as it is vigorous and manly; yet he is a stranger to the ancient languages. Washington is also an admirable writer. For masculine strength and propriety, precision and perspicuity of style, he has few equals, and perhaps no superior. And the compass, depth, and fitness of his thoughts have never been questioned by friend or foe. In some of his compositions, the reader is at a loss to decide, which is superior, the matter or the diction; but he imbibes from both a thorough conviction, that neither could be improved. For eloquence, argument, force and dignity, to which might be added moral sublimity, his address to the American army at Newburgh is a masterpiece. Yet

Washington was but an *English scholar*. To all this may be added, that some of the most correct, pure, and graceful writers of the English language are females, totally unversed in ancient literature. To prove the *practicability* of becoming an accomplished English scholar without a knowledge of Greek or Latin, one instance is as good as ten thousand. Though I am not prepared to recommend, as some have done, the entire substitution of certain modern for the ancient languages, I notwithstanding state unhesitatingly, that there are at least three modern languages, besides English, which should be taught in every college and university in the United States. My allusion is to French, German, and Italian—and Spanish might be usefully added to the number. The establishment of Professorships of these in our colleges and universities would be a measure of great value.

I am not ignorant that, in making these remarks, I am treading on disputed and perhaps hazardous ground—hazardous, I mean as to the feelings I may awaken—for I have no apprehension that my position is untenable. On that point I feel secure. But I even fear that my intention may be mistaken—that what I have said in favour of the study of the English may be construed into an effort to discredit the study of the ancient languages. Be it however distinctly understood, that nothing is farther from my purpose than this. I do not condemn, in the abstract, the study of any language. My condemnation falls exclusively on the neglect that prevails as to the study of our own. And that deserves to be condemned, because it is both discreditable and injurious to us. It produces in the style of the writers and public speakers of our country a crudeness and want of finish not observable in that of the writers and speakers of France or Great Britain. The selection of our words and phrases is often bad, their grammatical relations no better, and the structure of our sentences worst of all. True; to this we are not without honorable exceptions. But their number is small. Nor will it ever be otherwise, until we shall take pride in being called *English scholars*, instead of considering the title a mark of reproach. Then, and not before, will the language of our country be cultivated as it deserves, and reared to the perfection of which it is susceptible. As yet that has not been done even in Great Britain,

notwithstanding the high condition of her literature. And I confidently believe one cause of the deficiency to be, the excessive and superstitious devotion still paid by her scholars to classical studies, to the partial neglect of their native tongue. Were they, like the ancient Greeks, to study their own language, on its own principles, regardless of its descent from other languages, they would bring it in time to much more than Grecian perfection. I am supported in this belief by the fact, that we live in a period of the world much more enlightened than that of ancient Greece; a circumstance favourable to improvement in language, as well as in other branches of knowledge. And that the talents of the English and the Americans are equal to those of the ancients, is not to be questioned. Nor is there in the English language any defect to render it inferior to Greek or Latin. In this era of unprecedented improvement, therefore, it may be easily made to surpass them both, as an instrument of the mind.

Am I asked in what way the English tongue is to be brought to this high and desirable state of perfection? I answer, by the course which alone gives perfection to other things—*persevering study, constant practice, and a lofty aim.* We must have scholars who will make the cultivation of English a regular pursuit; who will first perfect themselves in it as it *now is*, and then labour to *improve* it. And that it is as worthy to be thus studied as any dead language, no one will deny. We must also render it *fashionable* to speak and write in a cultivated style. For in diction, as in all things else, fashion is supreme. It both dictates and enforces the mode of speech—the absolute *lex et norma loquendi*, which none must disobey. And, at present, to speak or write in a highly cultivated style, is not the fashion in the United States. In proof of this, facts might be adduced from every quarter. Our presses prove it; our pulpits and courts of justice prove it; our twenty-seven or eight national, state, and territorial legislatures prove it; and, above all, the daily conversation of millions of our fellow citizens proves it. Were I to add, that choiceness of diction in writing and speaking is more likely to be condemned and scoffed at, than admired and imitated, it would not be easy to convict me of

error. One thing is certain; among our public men scholarship is of no avail, and they therefore neglect it. In our legislative and other deliberative bodies, it is often defeated and driven from the field, by presumptuous bluster and coarse declamation. Nor is it any recommendation to the high-places of the nation. They are won and worn by men whose scholarship consists in their knowledge of intrigue.

The public ear of Athens was so highly cultivated and strictly critical, that no orator or reciter dared to offend it. The mispronunciation, misplacement, or tasteless selection of a word was instantly visited by a murmur of disapproval. Enamoured as our public declaimers are of admiration and applause, and anxious as they are to attain popularity, a similar taste among the American people, or even a portion of them, would soon be productive of a similar effect. It would render our orators and writers as select in their diction as those of Athens. Such selectness would be *the fashion*, and thus would the work be done.

That this fashion may prevail, then, let it begin in our seats of learning; I mean, in particular, our colleges and universities. They must be the nurseries, where the scions will be reared, and thence transplanted, to scatter their fruit throughout the community. To drop the metaphor. Might I venture to address the directors of Colleges and Universities, in the language of advice, I would say to them: cultivate English in your institutions, as you do Greek and Latin, and your labours will benefit the literature of your country, infinitely more than they do at present. Make English composition and criticism a daily, instead of a weekly, semi-monthly or monthly exercise; and award to superiority in them, what it certainly deserves, the highest honors of your schools. Let the study of English become a regular and distinguished college pursuit; let taste and excellence in it be duly honoured and encouraged, and the effort cannot fail to be successful, nor its result to be important. It rejoices me exceedingly to be able to say, with truth and justice, that in the pursuit of a course of literary training of this description, the University of Nashville is peculiarly distinguished. If any other institution in the country rivals it in this respect, the fact is unknown to me. And the sound and excellent fruit of such train-

ing was amply manifested on this platform in the exercises of yesterday.

In our present schemes of education generally, as far as they have fallen under my notice, much less time is devoted to the true *practical* cultivation of English literature, than to that of any other branch of knowledge. I say the "practical cultivation," which consists alone in the careful and correct employment of language in writing and speech. Mere reading, precept, and examination are wholly insufficient, as modes of discipline in polite literature. The principles may be thus acquired, but not the art. As soon shall an able mechanician be made by such means, as an able writer. In this, as in every other form of art, practice alone begets perfection. Nor is the whole yet told. To attain distinction in writing and speech is the work of a lifetime. If the labor be discontinued with the discontinuance of college studies, it were as well had it never been begun. Such brief and defective training is but a waste of time. Let the process be commenced at college, or rather in an earlier stage of education, the rules and principles be learnt, the taste acquired, and as much as practicable of the art attained, and the scheme be completed by subsequent practice. Every lawyer, physician, and divine, and every one who aims at political or any other sphere of public life, should exercise himself daily in writing or speaking, or both. I mean in *tasteful* writing and speech. No other sort contributes to eminence. Loose and careless practice in these arts proves injurious rather than useful, by the creation of loose and careless habits, and a corresponding style and manner. In composition, whether oral or written, precisely as in other efforts, let the aim be elevated and the struggle earnest and persevering, and some degree of excellence in it will inevitably be achieved. Let it be humble, faint, and vacillating, and the issue will conform to it. So immutable is the correspondence between cause and effect.

To be more particular. There are still other means to be resorted to by him who would arrive at eminence in English composition. For the improvement of his taste and fancy, in common with his knowledge of language, and to expand his mind and enrich it with matter, he must study attentively the British

classics and historians, and frequent the most cultivated literary society. He must compare what he thus derives from books and conversation with what he perceives in nature and feels in himself. By the pursuit of this course, he learns to observe, discriminate and judge, without which he can never be distinguished as a writer or speaker. His materials being collected and digested, must next be selected and arranged according to the purposes to which he means to apply them; and he must then form clear and distinct ideas of what he intends to express. Preparation being thus made, let his thoughts and opinions be independent and unfettered, and his language, style, and manner his own. He should rarely imitate, and never copy, but, in every case, be, if possible, original and himself—original at least in manner, if not in substance. An imitator, whether in style or matter, proclaims by his practice his own *inferiority*, and a copyist his *nothingness*. We are told that Demosthenes transcribed the writings of Thucydides ten times, that he might acquire the vigour, and imitate the style of that great historian. This is a mistake. Demosthenes was no imitator, else he would not have been Demosthenes—an incorporation of all that is mighty in oratory—nor would the world have striven in vain for twenty centuries to imitate him. That he might have *improved* his own style by that of Thucydides is probable; but that he descended to an imitation of it, appears impossible. The workings of originality in him were too strong to have permitted him to play the imitator, had he made the effort. Equally repugnant moreover to such self-degradation must have been his spirit and temper. His proud consciousness of his own sufficiency and independence must have been a constant monitor within him, forbidding him to yoke himself to the example of another. Besides, his style, in fact, is not the style of Thucydides. It is equally concise, vigorous, and plain. But it is the style of Demosthenes. Far beyond the style of Thucydides in vehemence, it has occasionally a fire in it, that must have almost blistered the lips it issued from. For a writer or speaker to improve by high examples of diction as well as of thought, is laudable; but to *imitate* is *servile;* and to *copy*, *ignominious*.—A few remarks more on the importance of perfection in English scholarship, especially to an

American, and its great superiority over all attainment in classical literature.

The history of America, civil, political, and military, is yet to be written in a manner corresponding to the magnitude of the theme. So is its natural history, in all its branches—a work to try the most accomplished and graphical pens. So is its poetry, the materials for which are unequalled in splendour by those of any of the other quarters of the globe—perhaps of all of them united. If the features and fortunes of Greece, Italy, and an inconsiderable section of Asia Minor have given immortality to verse and its authors, and rendered them objects of wonder and praise throughout the cultivated world, what may not the grandeur, physical and moral, of the American continent inspire and produce? Nor is it in history and poetry only that we are deficient. AMERICAN LITERATURE generally, in all the variety and vastness that must characterize it, is yet to be created. And, as the elements of the work are immeasurable and resplendent, so must be the monument they are destined to rear. Artificers only are wanting. But not in genius. American genius is equal to all that its country demands of it, whether for purposes of usefulness or glory. For all the exigencies of the former class it has already shown its fitness. For those of the latter it is not yet sufficiently disciplined. And the discipline must consist in ENGLISH SCHOLARSHIP. The resources of our language will supply the means.

On their scholarship alone depends the true and never-ending glory of Greece and Rome; and, but for her lack of scholarship, Egypt would rival them. Through that deficiency, her lustre is buried in the gloom of her catacombs. When the faint and fading record of what she was shall have been effaced, as it will be, from her fallen temples and mouldering pyramids, her history will be a blank; while that of Greece and Rome will live on in their literature, as long as mind shall be cultivated and its productions admired.

Of Great Britain, France, Germany, and modern Italy, the same is to be true. When their arts and commerce shall have failed, their armies and navies been conquered and destroyed, and their piles of architecture reduced to ruins, still will

their literature survive in its mightiness, and tell to all succeeding times the story of their struggles, their downfall, and their renown.

Nor, as respects our own country, is the case to be different. English scholarship is to be the source of the imperishable glory that awaits her. Embalmed in that by the genius of her sons, her name and renown will have nothing to dread from the ravages of time. When her stripes and her stars shall be dim, and her once victorious thunders silent; when her canvass shall no longer whiten the ocean, nor her granite fortresses frown over her bays and inlets, and the traveller shall ask in vain for the site of her Capitol, as he now asks for those of the Capitols of Priam and Busiris—when, some hundred ages hence, all other remnants of her greatness shall have perished, her glory shall find a secure asylum in the bosom of her literature. And that literature will be looked up to with a more sacred regard, and be justly deemed a richer source of knowledge and refinement, than any that the world has hitherto presented. Then will ENGLISH SCHOLARSHIP, now so much neglected and undervalued, have done a thousand-fold more for the interest as well as the aggrandizement of America, than all the classical learning that Greece, and Rome, and Palestine have given us.

Another subject which is already earnestly embraced by the Spirit of Improvement in our country, and vigorously acted on, requires a passing notice. I allude to our roads, canals, and navigable streams, which constitute the channels of the life-blood of the Union. It were vain in me, within any period, much more within that of a few minutes, to attempt to compute or even conjecture the influence of such passes on national prosperity. That they increase the wealth and industry of a community, by developing and bringing into action all its resources natural and artificial, and by facilitating the conveyance of its products to places of sale, is known to every one. But their moral and intellectual influence is not perhaps so generally recognized. Yet, that in that respect also they operate powerfully cannot be denied. In all their bearings and effects, *industry* and *idleness* are the opposites of each other. Nor are they more so in any point, than in their influence on morals. While the latter produces crime,

the former prevents it. An industrious is never a vicious community. An idle one is always so. Promote industry, then, and you promote virtue. Hence the construction of roads, the excavation of canals, and the improvement of the navigation of rivers are favorable to both. Nor are they less so to the cultivation and advancement of intellect and manners. Facilities in travelling, a widened and varied field of observation, the transaction of business on a broader scale, scenes of novelty and high excitement, and an increased association of multitudes with each other—these advantages, even when enjoyed singly, and much more so when united, enrich the mind in knowledge, enlarge its views, and invigorate all its powers of action. In simpler language, they improve a people in their intellectual resources as well as in their courtesies, and all the minor virtues of life. In a special manner they minister to their refinement in taste. And they are amply afforded by the changes alluded to in the condition of our country. Within the last five-and-twenty years the multiplication of travellers, in the United States, is great beyond all that had been previously imagined—in many places, more than five hundred-fold. And, independently of all other considerations, the ingenious contrivances of the vehicles of passage, added to their power, and the splendour of some of them, cannot fail to improve the minds of many of the passengers. From a law of our nature which every one must feel, to gaze repeatedly and with high gratification on beauty, grandeur, and perfection, is to participate of them. Our natures are amended by such spectacles. There is a moral in the contemplation of the sublime and magnificent, to which few persons are impassive, and none perhaps insensible. By such a view the mind is lifted, for the time, above grovelling thoughts, and its vicious purposes are arrested. The frequent repetition of such impressions, therefore, must be salutary. And what spectacle, the product of human effort, can surpass in sublimity and grandeur, a superb steam-boat moving majestically against wind and tide, or a locomotive engine, followed by a train of splendid cars, sweeping along its track, like the eagle on his path! It is in accordance, I say, with the principles of our nature, that such sights should operate favourably on those who witness them.

But these facilities of conveyance are calculated not merely to increase our industry and wealth, and improve us in intelligence and refinement, manners and morals. They are fitted to subserve still higher purposes. Besides being main sinews of strength to us, as regards foreign nations, they are among the chief bonds to hold the States together, and thus maintain the integrity of the Union. They render us much more compact as a people, than we otherwise could be, give greater identity to our interests and feelings, and, expanding our patriotism beyond a narrow attachment to single States, or any geographical sections of country, infuse into it a lofty spirit of nationality. As respects communications between the remotest portions of the Union, and on the broadest scale, they all but annihilate time and space, and bestow a kind of ubiquity on man—I mean that such is their *tendency now*, and such will be their *positive effect hereafter*. At that period, the term *distant* will no longer be applied by one section of country to another—by the East to the West, or by the North to the South; or conversely. It will be exchanged for one denoting *proximity of place* and *augmented friendliness*. Under such circumstances the amalgamation of the people will be in all respects complete—if earthly means can render it so. Should foreign war then occur, and invasion be threatened, we could meet and repel it in a consolidated mass of neighbours and friends, not in detached parcels of a people widely scattered, and strangers to each other. And should rebellion spring up, it could be crushed in the bud, by precipitating immediately on the disaffected spot the united powers of the nation. Rome fell by her own weight, because the extent of her empire was immense, and her movements between its remote divisions slow and uncertain. Could her legions have been swept over land on the steam-car, or wafted by the same power over her seas and rivers, she might have quelled her rebellious Provinces, repulsed her invaders, and maintained for centuries longer her integrity and dominion—So incalculable are the benefits we are to derive from the improvements now in progress, and the further ones contemplated! and so infinitely desirable are their steady prosecution and early completion!

A few remarks on one improvement more, and I shall close

my discourse. I allude to the IMPROVEMENT OF TIME. Nor is any other of equal moment, more especially as respects yourselves and your obligations to your race. It is important at every period of life, but trebly so in youth. To neglect and waste time is to neglect every thing within its scope, *yourselves included;* and to abuse it is still worse. Properly to improve it, on the contrary, is to do your duty in its full extent; that being the condition on which you have been entrusted with it. On this point, however, let me not be misunderstood. My purpose is to speak of the improvement of time exclusively in its relation to sublunary affairs. The task of expounding and enjoining its improvement, in its connexion with HIGHER INTERESTS, I leave to others more suitably qualified for it, and to whom it belongs, as a professional calling. And, that I have hitherto declined all special recommendation of religious improvement, is in part for the same reason, and partly because I consider it included in the improvement of morals. My understanding of the matter is, that morality and religion should never be dissociated, else both will suffer. As heretofore mentioned, I regard religion as the consummation of morality. To serve our fellow-men from proper motives is to obey a heavenly command, as well as to perform an earthly duty.

To speak of the value of time, in the abstract, is not my intention. On a theme so often and ably discussed by others, I could do little else than reiterate truisms already familiar to you. Nor shall I dwell on the fact which all should remember, that the amount of time you can ever hold in actual possession is the *veriest point.* It is the *present moment, and that alone.* The moment that has just flitted by you, to mingle with the past, you can never recall; and to you the moment next approaching may never arrive. Swift-winged as it *is*, and in your grasp as it *seems to be*, the arrow of the destroyer may still outstrip it, and be foremost at its mark. Youth and health give no charter-right to time, any more than infirmity and age.

The first rule of wisdom, then, on this subject, is, to improve the present moment, and not defer its business till the next. Nor can any one employ your time but yourselves, because it is not transferrable property. It cleaves to you like your existence,

of which it is an element. Your other possessions you can transfer; and factors may manage them to good account. Not so with your time, the most valuable of them all. Every portion of that not correctly appropriated by yourselves is abused or squandered. As often as you employ other persons to transact business within your own power, and remain in idleness yourselves, while they are engaged in it, you commit a twofold waste—of your time—and of the hire you pay your agents. You might have saved both; yet you have lost them, and can regain neither. Hence the high value of two rules of action contained in one of Addison's Spectators.

"Never postpone until to-morrow, what you can as well do to-day;" and

"Never do by proxy what you can as well do yourself."

That exceptions to these rules *may* occur, is *possible*. But that they are extremely rare is *certain*. And no exception should be admitted until strictly examined. It is on subjects of this kind, where personal ease is concerned, that first appearances are most apt to be delusive, and first impressions to mislead. It is in such cases that the sluggard, clinging to his dreaming place, exclaims, "There is a lion in the streets; a lion in the path;" while the incubus of indolence is the lion that affrights him.

But even of those who are not accounted slothful, how small is the number that adhere to the two simple but highly important rules of practice just cited, admit their propriety, or are sensible of their existence! and how immense is the mischief that results from their neglect! But the very flight of time forbids me to dwell on these two modes of improving it. Nor is it, I trust, requisite. To announce them to the intelligent is to prove at once their correctness and importance.

The two greatest abuses of time are its appropriation to vicious purposes, and habitual idleness. To the audience I am now addressing, however, special remarks on these faults might be out of place. None therefore will be offered. Next to them, perhaps, in impropriety and the evils they produce, are a want of punctuality in engagements, procrastination, and a neglect to improve the fragments of time. A few observations on these are deemed admissible.

Wanton breaches of punctuality and promise in relation to engagements on matters of business, by whomsoever they may be committed, or under whatsoever pretence, are something worse than practical falsehood; they are a *species of larceny*. They take from the disappointed party a portion of his *property in time* (often more valuable to him than his money) without an equivalent. Were the act committed against any other form of property but time, the offender would be regarded and treated as a knave or a felon. Why then is the *time-pilferer* excused and protected? The reply is easy. On account of the commonness of the vice. Almost every one is in some degree guilty of it. Yet for that very reason it should be the more deeply condemned, and the more severely dealt with. A general and deep-rooted evil can be exterminated only by strong measures and stern execution. It is admitted on all hands, that the *practised* promise and engagement-breaker is disreputable and untrustworthy. Every degree of the vice, then, shares its proportion of demerit. Is any one ready to pronounce this stern morality? Be it so. It is not more stern than true. In moral education it should be strictly inculcated; and, in business and social intercourse, its violation should be visited by severe reprehension and some form of penalty. In youth it should be held dishonorable, and criminal in manhood. To its extinction moral discipline alone is competent.

The procrastinator is scarcely less faulty, from the beginning, than the promise-breaker; and he soon becomes identified with him. His habit of violating engagements with himself, leads him in a short time to a violation of them with others. He loses first his delicate sense of truth and honour, and next his conscientious regard for them; and, in this descending course, he soon glides into actions still more reprehensible. Hence the excellence of the poet's precept;

> "——— To thine own self be true;
> "And it must follow, as the night the day,
> "Thou can'st not then be false to any man."

In truth, procrastination is not only "the thief of time;" it is equally the thief of reputation and usefulness. The engagements of the procrastinator, necessarily accumulating on him, render

him always hurried and oppressed by business, and urge him to a violation of truth, in framing excuses and apologies for being constantly out of time. Hence he is as unhappy in himself, as he is annoying to others, and useless to the world.

But the most common failure in the economy of time consists in the neglect to improve its fragments. Of this also almost every one is guilty; and hence it attracts but little notice, and incurs no blame. Yet it is an abundant source of ignorance, and is chargeable with the production of no small amount of crime. As heretofore stated, idleness and vice are related to each other as cause and effect. And if days and weeks of idleness prove mischievous, hours and minutes cannot be innocent. The effect must be proportioned to the cause. Every one who means to discharge his entire duty should have engagements set apart for his *leisure minutes*, as well as for his *hours of employment*. He should remember that the proper employment of minutes will soon amount to the employment of hours; and that of their misemployment or loss the same is true. For three reasons, then, time should be well filled up; to acquire knowledge; to perform useful actions; and to avoid and prevent improper ones. To these may be added a fourth—to secure the approbation of conscience and keep on good terms with ourselves.

The extent to which a man may render himself useful, the amount of knowledge he may acquire, the number and value of literary and scientific works he may compose, and the elevation of standing, and the splendour and permanence of renown he may attain by a proper and continued employment of his leisure moments would be incredible, did not hundreds of examples present themselves, to dispel doubt on the subject, and enforce belief. I need hardly remark, that, of all the instances of this sort the world has exhibited, that of Franklin is one of the most illustrious. Nor is that of Washington, a miracle of punctuality, time-savinguess, and general industry, much less so. This will fully appear, when his voluminous writings, and the entire history of his life shall have been published. Economical in all things, except great and good actions which he performed without measure, he was even *miserly in minutes and seconds*. Unlike the common miser, however, he did not hoard these for his own gratification and benefit. He appropriated them all to the

promotion of the interests and happiness of his race. Count Rumford, who began life in the capacity of a stable-boy, was another memorable instance to the same effect. So was Fulton, who, while an apprentice in Philadelphia, devoted all his fragments of leisure to the construction of machines, until his labors eventuated in the CREATION OF THE STEAMBOAT. Dr. Darwin, Dr. Priestley, and Dr. Rush were in the constant habit of entering in portable note-books the observations they made and the thoughts that occurred to them, when passing from place to place on business, and of incorporating them afterwards in some of their works. Nor is it possible for a man, in the midst of arduous and engrossing professional labours, to become an author of note in any other way. Yet many persons under such circumstances have written voluminously and to great effect.

Lord Brougham is one of the most distinguished minute-savers of the age. And the aggregate of what he has done in the capacity of a scholar and a general reader, a counsellor at law, a member of Parliament, a Lord Chancellor, a transactor of promiscuous business, and a writer, is amazing. Yet he is never hurried nor oppressed by his engagements. For this there is a reason which none should either forget or neglect. He is as punctual as time itself, and never neglects or procrastinates, but does every thing *at* the proper time, and *within* the proper time. Hence his engagements do not accumulate, one adding its weight to that of another, and the whole pressing simultaneously on him. Like Philip of Macedon who conquered by dividing, he attacks every form of business separately and soon despatches it. Nor does he ever work by chance or impulse, but by pre-arrangement and rule. Having divided his time and business into parcels apportioned to each other, he pursues his labours in conformity to his plan. The business assigned to one hour being thus prevented from interfering with that assigned to another, order unites with industry, and steadiness with energy, in the wonderful multifariousness and magnitude of the result. By such means, no less than by his great intellect, has that illustrious personage risen in time through all the grades of official rank, between attorneyship and the Woolsack; and through all the degrees of political influence between incipient Membership and the lead in Parliament. Nor, under the difficulties he has had to encounter

from powerful rivals, inveterate prejudice, deep intrigue, and unrelaxing opposition, would his elevation have been possible under any other course. I shall only add, that a similar course, aided by common prudence and policy, has never failed to confer some share of honorable distinction, connected with much usefulness, on any one that has faithfully pursued it; nor is it any more likely that it ever will, than that the lead will cease to sink or the feather to float when committed to the wave. The laws that govern our moral and intellectual, are as positive and permanent, as those that govern our physical and organic nature. We are born to die; and we are born to be, with equal certainty, elevated or degraded, according to our conduct. Such is the reward unerringly bestowed on industry and perseverence, prudence and virtue, and such the penalty inexorably exacted of indolence and unsteadiness, vice and folly. A few thoughts more and I am done.

In selecting the subject on which I have addressed you, as well as in my mode of considering it, I have been influenced, as you must have perceived, by a spirit of anticipation. My object has been to accommodate my discourse partly to your present station, but more perhaps to one, in which, I doubt not, you will appear hereafter. That some of you at least, as already intimated, haply no inconsiderable portion, are destined to distinction in the public trusts and honours of your country, and their concomitant influences, is a hope I am not a little gratified in cherishing, and which I could not relinquish but with reluctance and pain. When such shall be your high and responsible condition, the searching eye of thousands being rivetted on your measures and movements, an occasional recurrence to some of the humble suggestions of this day, may perchance be neither unpleasant nor useless to you. In the words of a favourite poet,

"——*Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit.*"

True; it is scarcely doubtful that before that period shall have arrived, the voice that addresses you will be silent, and the heart of the speaker dead to such emotions as he now experiences, not more from present impressions, than from a mournful remembrance of the past which they have awakened. Forty years ago, a small band of academical brothers, united in affection, buoyant

in youthful hope, and gazing from the Pisgah of fancy on a Land of Promise of their own creation—such a band sat, as some of you will shortly sit, candidates for the honors of completed studies, and eager to emerge from college seclusion and mingle in the world—and you see before you the last of the party. The others have passed to their account, some in the spring time of life, like flowers untimely cropt by the spoiler, others in the summer of manhood, like the oak laid prostrate by the lightning or the tempest, while the rest, like sere and faded leaves, have dropt into the bosom of their parent earth, where he who tells their story must shortly join them. Of this he needs no other warning, and can receive none so solemn and affecting, as the grave-stone of every companion of his youth. By the voice of no early comrade whom he loved can he now be saluted except from the tomb. But no matter. Time which dims and closes the career of mortals, but freshens and brightens the prospects of our country. She is and will continue prosperous and glorious, the home of industry, genius, and enterprise, the hope of the patriot, the pole-star of freedom to other nations, and the pride and idol of her own children—though, as already represented, neither faultless nor perfect. In ascending therefore to the summit of her destiny, she will still require minds to invent and direct, and hands to execute, under the Spirit of Improvement. Such will be the condition of things for ages to come, until anticipation and hope shall be consummated in reality.

What a field of action, usefulness, and renown does this open to the youthful, the gifted, and the aspiring! Confidently and safely may the records of time be challenged for its parallel. Contrasted with the brilliancy of the present period in this respect, every epoch in history fades into dimness. All christendom is awakened, and more or less in motion to amend its condition, England and the United States being far in the lead. In a special manner, how surpassingly radiant, rich, and inviting is the field that is offered to the sons of the West! And how pressing and full of promise is the call on them to enter and cultivate it, under an emulous and resolute Spirit of Improvement, in a manner and degree worthy alike of it and themselves! Even now is the invocation resounding in the midst of us, not in faint echoes around these walls, but in a louder note, pealing through

the aisles of a more magnificent temple. It is the voice of the Genius of the Mississippi Valley, and should pierce every ear, and awaken every slumberer in his spacious domain, from the Alleghany to the Rocky Mountains, and from the inland seas on the north, to the Gulf of Mexico on our southern borders. Has Nature laboured in this glorious valley on a scale of unrivalled grandeur and beauty? Has she spread over it a soil of matchless fertility, and enriched and adorned it with plains and forests and prairies, lakes, rivers, and mineral treasures, such as she has bestowed on no other region? Has she also given to it a fair and sunny climate, productive of all that delights the senses? and does she fan it with breezes scattering from their wings the elements of health? Has Nature done this for the Western Valley? and do not her sons recognize in such bounties a summons on themselves not to be resisted, to aspire to a proud and praiseworthy competition with her? Has she made such a display of her energies and resources? and will not they at least so far follow her example, as to turn to advantage, by applying them to the best and noblest purposes, the boons she has so munificently placed at their disposal? Shall it ever be proclaimed of this paradise of the New World, as it has already been of that of the Old,

> "Hills, plains, and vales in glorious pomp appear;
> "Man is the only growth that dwindles here?"

Shall the Muse of some future Goldsmith, as he *travels* through the West, find cause to "damn" her sons "to everlasting fame," by such a record of their degeneracy? To all this the Spirit of Freedom replies in an emphatical denial. Nor will Heaven withhold her signet from the prediction. If the descendants of the world's great masters" have "dwindled," the fault is not in Nature. The evil is attributable to another source—the *bigotry* and *despotism* of the Church and the State. The *physical* climate of Italy is as favourable to human greatness now as it was in the days of the Scipios and the Gracchi, the Pompeys and the Cæsars. It is the poison breathed into her *moral* atmosphere, by corrupt and tyrannical Prelates and Princes, that has shed a blight on her children.

But, by the cup of degradation, from which other nations have

been compelled, by the crosier and the sceptre, to drink so deeply, your lips have never been desecrated. From that pollution you have been protected by the wisdom and heroism of your sires and countrymen. They dashed the humiliating draught from the hand that would have presented it, and shattered at the same blow the ensigns of tyranny. Hence the justice of the motto prepared for one of them;

"*Eripuit cœlo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis.*"

The consequence to you is freedom and its immunities, while other nations are still galled by the yoke, and some of them crushed by the foot of the despot. Though these are blessings that can be only contemplated and enjoyed in silent gratitude, not portrayed in words, they notwithstanding speak themselves in a voice of authority, which all should deem sacred, and none disobey. And they claim of every one a return corresponding to the enjoyments bestowed.

In conclusion, then, permit me, as in their name, to invoke you, by your sense of individual duty, and your regard for the public welfare—by the high gifts bestowed on you by the heroes and sages who achieved our Independence and framed the Charter that now protects us—by the bravery, toils, and hardihood of your fathers, displayed in their long and perilous pilgrimage from the east—by their subsequent industry and enterprise, in defiance of want and merciless warfare, in changing a wilderness into cultivated fields, that you might succeed to your present fair and flourishing inheritance—by the rich and beneficent provisions they have made for the protection of your persons and the cultivation of your minds—by your filial piety toward them and their memories, and your patriotic attachment to the glory of your country—by your solicitude to enjoy the full approbation of your own consciences, to be esteemed by your contemporaries, and honored by posterity—by your regard, in all things, for the past, the present, and the future, and by whatever else, occurring to yourselves, may more powerfully move you—by these weighty and solemn considerations united, let me entreat you to enrol yourselves under the banner of the Spirit of Improvement, and so conduct yourselves in its service, as to attain to distinction und usefulness in your day, and transmit your names to future times as BENEFACTORS OF YOUR RACE.