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AN ADDRESS

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ON THE 4TH OF JULY, 1835.

AT THE REQUEST OF THE

WASHINGTON AND FRANKLIN LITERARY SOCIETIES

OF

LA FAYETTE COLLEGE.

BY GEORGE MIFFLIN DALLAS, ESQ.

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Lafayette College Easton, July 4, 1835.

RESPECTED SIR,

Authorised by the respective Societies we represent, we hereby tender you their unfeigned thanks for your able, eloquent, and highly interesting oration, and earnestly solicit a copy thereof for publication.

With sentiments of sincere respect and esteem, sir, your obedient servants.

J. E. BONHAM, } *Committee of the*
J. W. WOOD, } *Franklin Literary*
J. MONAGHAN, JR. } *Society.*
WM. RIDDLE, } *Committee of the*
BARNABAS COLLINS, } *Washington Lite-*
H. S. RODENBOUGH, } *rary Society.*

HONOURABLE G. M. DALLAS.

GENTLEMEN,

Undeserving as I think it of the complimentary language you are kind enough to use, the address delivered by me this morning at your invitation, is entirely at your disposal.

I am very respectfully,

Your friend and servant,

G. M. DALLAS.

4 July, 1835.

To Messrs.

J. E. BONHAM, }
J. W. WOOD, } *Committies.*
J. MONAGHAN, JR. }
WM. RIDDLE, }
BARNABAS COLLINS, }
H. S. RODENBOUGH, }



ADDRESS.

We must all derive gratification when noticing a tendency in the literary associations of our country to combine with their public exercises the sentiments and epochs of patriotism. The two societies, at whose call I venture for a while to claim your attention, have significantly selected for periodical exhibition a day of national commemoration: a day on which it is scarcely possible for an American citizen to think of any thing but the glories of the land in which he lives, the exploits and the wisdom of its founders, the freedom and excellence of its institutions, the brightness and the beauty of its future! In this selection is conveyed a silent, but acknowledged instruction to their present representative: directing his efforts to harmonize with the pervading feeling, to swell the general anthem of exultation, and to contribute what he can to invigorate the loftiest of human virtues. I proceed to execute this commission in the spirit with which it has been flatteringly confided, and to tender for your indulgent acceptance some observations and recollections congenial to the occasion.

Since the Declaration of Independence, issued fifty-nine years ago, the achievements and merits of those who made or sustained it, have been annually and most justly the theme

of grateful eulogy. In every district of our immense territory, the voice of an emancipated and happy people has untiringly preserved the high renown and affirmed the unsurpassed wisdom of these public benefactors. It is a subject which for centuries to come will be proudly resumed by each succeeding generation on this continent: whose strength, interest and fulness cannot be exhausted: and which will awaken generous and salutary emotions as long as posterity are able or worthy to appreciate the brightest models and purest actions of heroism. The vast and wonderful results, too, which have flowed and must continue to flow from the hardy and uncompromising promulgations of our great charter, present a boundless range for philosophic and impressive eloquence. At each recurring anniversary fresh events are recorded illustrative of its renovating progress among the governments, and for the happiness, of men: the resistless advances of its spirit noted in the fall of feudal dynasties, the overthrow of inveterate abuses, the abandonment of prejudices, the enlightenment of the common mind, the equalization of rights, the prolongation of peace, and the cheering re-establishment of social, intellectual, and religious liberty. These are incidents and topics appropriate to the Fourth of July, and to the descendants of those who have given it an immortal pre-eminence on the calendar. At this hour, they are engaging the memories, kindling the affections, and ennobling the patriotism of millions who surround us.

But it is not my purpose to enter so wide and diversified a field. I would fain attain my object by another more contracted though equally direct pathway. Where am I? at the confluence of the Delaware and the Lehigh: in one of the most populous and cultivated of the interior regions of

my native state, and in the presence of an assemblage of fellow-citizens whose vigorous minds and generous hearts expand with the sympathies of the day. Of what shall I speak? of what can I speak, to you, in unison with the time? Let it be of our immediate home: of that Commonwealth in whose fame and prosperity we are all deeply and lastingly, concerned—whose moral and mental contributions towards universal good can neither be disputed nor overshadowed: let it be of peerless Pennsylvania! Unused to boast for invidious contrasts, we may yet be permitted to bear to the national jubilee the sense of her excellence, and in the general chorus keep at least one note of grateful triumph exclusively for her!

Conformably to the census of 1830, and the ratio of increase deduced from those of 1810 and 1820, our population now exceeds one million five hundred thousand. It is scarcely a century and a half since the memorable landing of the founder; prior to which period, not a germ of civilization had here taken root: all was huge forest, rude plain, barren mountain, or wasted valley: the “untutored Indian” chased his hardly less savage prey along the margins of these noble rivers, launched his scooped canoe timidly upon their surface, or with his bow and arrows stealthily tracked the entangled recesses of the interminable woods. On the very beach, emerging from his dense and dark covert, the wild warrior Tamanend gazed, with no prophetic forecast, upon the groupe of placid strangers, who, quitting the deck of the “good ship Welcome,” stepped upon the sand, with William Penn at their head, claiming the unknown region as their allotted province. How short a space of time’s ceaseless current between that small beginning and the pre-

sent great consummation! How swift and mighty have been the causes which, in the ordinary length of two lives, dispelled the wilderness, banished the barbarian, burnished the neglected face of nature, and poured life, light, gladness and Christianity into every corner of Pennsylvania!

The rapidity of this physical and moral redemption must be ascribed to peculiar and honourable characteristics. It derived no impetus from contiguous pressure, overflowing and spreading beyond an ideal or arbitrary boundary: its original fountain was three thousand miles distant: and the fertilizing fluid rushed not at first like a steady stream, but fell as it were, in detached and gentle drops upon the soil. Nor was it at any period urged forward by the quick hand or peremptory tone of violence: conquest and usurpation are alien to our annals. Nor did there exist within our limits any meretricious attractions to cupidity or credulity: the glittering and delusive mines of gold or silver, and the fabled waters of immortality, were stationed farther south. No! the progress of Penn's settlement, from 1682 to 1835, its expansion, its prosperity, its abounding wealth, and its exalted reputation, as a colony or as a Commonwealth, are far otherwise, and more satisfactorily explained by a few striking features of its history, legislation, and manners.

The destiny of Pennsylvania, can be said to have been foreshadowed in the character of William Penn. More than the Athenian or the Spartan lawgiver, this extraordinary man gave to the community he established the impress of his own mind, and the stimulus of his own virtues. He was calm, sagacious, practical, and persevering: peaceful alike in temper and on principle: patient amid obstacles and profound in judgment; with an understanding at once powerful

and refined, and a heart deeply and delicately alive to the promptings of benevolence. About him there was neither bustle, nor pretension, nor display: too mild for military pomp, too upright for rhetorical art, too bold and manly for imposition, his force was in his truth, his attraction in his simplicity, and his persuasion in his meekness. With clearer conceptions than others possessed of the condition, climate, and resources of this land, he courted the spirit of gain, or of discontent, or of enterprize, or of ambition, by no flattering promises of sudden acquisition or of indolent repose, and no gaudy pictures of adventure or of sway. His candor, cheered it is true, and justly cheered, by a rational foresight, yet told of toils to be endured, of perils to be braved, of hard privations, of prolonged industry, and of stern equality. Such were the rough but unyielding materials with which he chose to cement his foundation. Having, in a letter of the 5th of January 1681, mentioned the chartered confirmation of this territory, which he then termed his "*country*" with a resolution to have "a care to the government that it be well laid *at first*," his earliest preparatory proceedings, "*the Great Law*," and the "*Conditions and Concessions*" to purchasers, abound with wisdom and precautionary policy, while the pure morality and unbroken faith of his council under the Elm, and his treaty with the guileless and confiding Lenè Lenappe, have been and ever must be held unmatched by precedent and beyond all praise. From grafting by such a hand, and under the genial sunshine of such sentiments and acts, the fragrant blossom was sure, the rich fruit inevitable. It was impossible for the companions of Penn, or their immediate posterity, not to catch and transmit the admirable qualities of their chief, to

carry his precepts and his practices into all their conduct, and to preserve in their entire social system, as it expanded and towered, a moral resemblance to a model so firmly approved.

During that portion of our history which preceded the confederacy of the colonies and the revolutionary struggle, embracing an effective period of seventy years, a broad basis was gradually moulded for a superstructure of vigorous republicanism. No part of this continent was better prepared for the transition of 1776. Although it be true that our Proprietaries and Lieutenant-Governors successfully managed to avert from the people the severity of many vexatious inflictions of the mother-country, and thus kept alive here a stronger attachment to the transatlantic empire than was felt elsewhere: yet had we by plain and frank manners, by the consistent inculcation and enforcement of equality, and by a sturdy course of self-government, become ripe and ready to glide, without the slightest shock to order, or to established habits of thinking, into an avowed as well as actual democracy.

The early character of the social intercourse of Pennsylvania may yet be remembered by a few of its inhabitants. It is glowingly pourtrayed by a living sage as having exemplified in real life, the simplicity, innocence, and happiness of the Arcadia of ancient poets. Far removed from the cumbersome forms and constraints of European courts: utterly disdainng the frivolities and caprices of fashion: affecting no titles, knowing no ranks, and coveting no honours: seeking competence only by useful industry, and content only by practical virtue: our ancestors formed a society where age was never without reverence and youth never without

friendship, where genius was too much cherished to be envied, love too pure to be false, and misfortune too sacred to be traduced. It was, indeed, as perfect a state of domestic and almost fraternal concord as human frailties will suffer to exist. Although natives of various climes, and using various tongues, the German, the Swede, the Hollander, the Frenchman, the Dane, the Welshman, the Scot—thronged through the portal which Penn had opened, and eagerly sought within his asylum repose and happiness, according to their peculiar tastes, yet did each contribute some distinctive portion to the common stock of moral value, while the presiding genius of the place, extinguishing all rivalry save that for the general benefit, actuated and harmonized the whole. In one trait it was natural that the settlers should agree: an abiding aversion to the artificial distinctions and morose intolerance which had impelled a flight from their comparatively luxurious homes: and from this sentiment alone would result an ever-active tendency to illustrate their social and political relations by conventional plainness, charitable forbearance, and direct truth.

To the annals of this community, animated in its primitive formation as I have thus faintly sketched, belong a series of movements in the cause of freedom and beneficence, more striking, more efficient, more uniform, and more lasting, than can be justly claimed by any other people. I speak with no intention to exaggerate. Pennsylvania has crowded within the short term of her existence, achievements of polity of which the oldest nations might be proud, and which all must acknowledge. It befits us occasionally, however briefly, to revert to them. Amid the general proneness to extol surrounding or distant states, let us at least hint

among ourselves that, in certain matters, interesting to all humanity and glorious to our predecessors, this beloved Commonwealth still enjoys an unrivalled ascendancy of merit.

One hundred and thirty years have elapsed since the legislative body of the province in "*the law concerning liberty of conscience,*" declared "Almighty God its *only Lord!*" and thenceforward to the present hour, that declaration has been maintained, theoretically and practically inviolate. It emanated from, and was addressed to, those who felt and knew its unchangeable truth: its vitality spread through all their habits, reflections and language: their descendants caught it among the earliest rudiments of moral or intellectual culture: it has become as native here, and as inseparable from our being, as the atmosphere we breathe. Remark, that Pennsylvania, with no subservient imitateness, inculcated mere *toleration*: the philosophy of that is as old and as rational as paganism: but she proclaimed the simple and sacred principle, afterwards embodied in both her constitutions of 1776 and 1789, of "a natural and indefeasible *right* to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of conscience."

It is sometimes difficult to realize the belief that what we have peacefully and uninterruptedly exercised as an absolute and unalienable right—what we should deem it preposterous and vain for any human power to attempt controlling or abridging—was long, very long, fruitlessly craved by our ancestors from the splendid tyrannies of the eastern hemisphere, and was denied to them because dangerous to their social tranquillity and their immortal destinies! Nor can we truly appreciate the legislative enunciation to which I have

referred without recollecting that *conscience*, everywhere until then, and even now throughout the far greater portion of the world, was and is subjected to governmental rules of coercion and test. Pennsylvania, in this—in severing radically and forever all connection between municipal power and spiritual homage—has marched ahead of mankind at large. Her experience too triumphantly vindicates the safety as well as justice of the policy. Countless as are the modifications of doctrine and the peculiarities of worship within our limits, no bigotry or fanaticism ever invaded their separate independence. Religion here has never been the fountain of bitterness and blood. She stalks not among men as a relentless avenger, exacting repentance on the rack, or conversion at the stake. Her crusades, inquisitions, chains and tortures are unknown. With us, her pathway, illuminated by the effulgence of perfect freedom, is profusely strewn with blessings: while her gentle voice, with healing on its wings, whispers pleasantness and peace.

Kindred in its excellence, and of almost equal merit, is the formal and impressive denunciation of domestic slavery. The injured and degraded African, fettered by the cupidity and stunned by the blows of polished Europe, was first cheered by the sound of emancipation in the sequestered wilds of America. During the two centuries which preceded the landing of William Penn, from the fatal period of the Portuguese invasion of the Gold Coast, an entire race of human beings had been doomed the victims of avarice, cruelty, and oppression. The accursed traffic rioted in the sanction of Spanish imperial letters patent, had been connived at by the Virgin Queen of England, and was openly encouraged by a monarch of France, falsely as foolishly sur-

named the *Just*. An unchristian policy leagued with an insatiate and remorseless spirit of gain, annually loaded thousands of our fellow creatures with chains, tore them violently from their country, and consigned them in untried climates, beneath the rods of unknown masters, to unlimited and unsparing servitude. At the height of this inhuman atrocity, whose cancerous roots were transplanted hither by British traders from the West Indies, there was heard, in 1683, from the bosom of a secluded German settlement in Pennsylvania, a calm protest and an earnest appeal. It was the impulse of nature, and the lament of humanity: the air in which it was breathed proved congenial, and bore it in time to distant nations, and to the hearts of all. From that moment, may be dated the commencement of African redemption: it slowly and steadily advanced, our noble commonwealth by her celebrated statute "*for the gradual abolition of slavery*" perseveringly in front of the movement—until now, throughout christendom, and with the potential anathema of every government, the **SLAVE TRADE** ranks among the worst, the vilest, and the meanest of crimes.

The pride of ardent and unvarying action on this interesting subject has been accompanied, throughout a series of years with characteristic prudence, and has ended in complete success. The fire of enthusiasm, even in so righteous a cause, was controuled and directed by a deep and abiding sense of relative justice. We have encouraged, we can encourage, no visionary projects of abrupt reform: nor can we presume, in the slightest degree, to shake the constitutions, or to affect the legal enactments, of other communities, except by the power of a wise and triumphant example.

Our career, calm and continuous, is on the eve of consummation. We have, at last, without violent and dangerous empiricism, expelled the disease which the vices of others introduced among us. An erroneous nomenclature and ill directed enquiries led, it is true, to an injurious and mistaken result in the census of 1830—imputing to this Commonwealth the possession of an increasing number of slaves: but the ascertained fact is that we have nearly purged our soil of every vestige of this pestilent opprobrium, and that, at this moment, of the one million and a half of our people, not twenty are subjected to involuntary servitude, even under ameliorated rules and circumstances.

Liberty, indeed, well-poised and deep-seated liberty, in all its spheres and applications, has early and late and ever been the object of fond and foremost pursuit. In the disenfranchisement of the conscience and extinguishment of domestic slavery, vast and vital ends were accomplished, vindicating fundamental principles, giving security to the pursuits of individual happiness, and eradicating the most fruitful sources of conflict and disorder. But, the bondage of the mind—that, too, was to be relieved: the shackles of ignorance, which clogged the understandings and degraded the sentiments of the mass of mankind, keeping them the passive victims of oppression, or the wretched dupes of prejudice, these also were to be broken asunder, or to be dissolved under the irradiating influence of instruction. Our forefathers had voluntarily quitted communities whose inexorable systems perpetuated with the few a monopoly of all the means and all the opportunities of intellectual advancement: they appreciated the immense power conferred by education, and they resolved that it should be equally attainable by

all. In the consciousness that no good social structure could endure unless maintained by a succession of intelligent and upright citizens, our founder himself, in his "preface to the frame of government," inculcated and exacted the erection of public schools. Without such an expedient, he foresaw the abortive end of all his exertions and hopes; his superstructure, however promising and attractive, soon undermined, and a degenerate race accelerating its ruin.

Intellect, progressive and energetic intellect is the life-blood of freedom. The mind instinctively hungers after knowledge: give it the aliment, and it collects strength, elasticity, and force; keep the food away, and withering in debility, it shrinks back upon itself, incapable of effort, insensible to wrong, and indifferent to virtue. Mutual assistance in its cultivation is the primary duty of civilized men; which being neglected, a relapse into barbarism cannot long be postponed, or what is worse, a hurried and headlong fall into the gloom and the bitterness and the baseness of despotism. William Penn sought to make his sanctuary for human liberty and happiness perennial and indestructible: he sought to fix within it a self-motive and renovating power: and he carved upon its corner-stones, and he wrote upon its walls, and he instilled into its inhabitants the necessity of education. Nor did he do so in vain. His exhortation was prolonged as a living sound through each following generation, and has never been unheeded. From the act incorporating "*the overseers of the schools*" in 1697, through both our republican constitutions, down to the establishment of this college in 1826, and to the present hour, almost every year has been signalized by legislation directly or indirectly fostering and promoting this great purpose. The public

lands, the public purse, the public enthusiasm, and even the public errors on other subjects have been made its tributaries. It never has been, it never should be forgotten. Not less than two hundred and forty-five statutes, an immense but no unmerited proportion of our entire body of laws, have been exclusively devoted to it. Superadded to innumerable minor schools prescribed in grants of corporate privileges for charitable, religious, or other objects,—and apart from the recent attempt to carry out the injunction of the organic charter by lighting the lamp of tuition at the door of every citizen—we have established two universities, nine colleges, and fifty-eight academies. I touch on this ample illustration of her unchanged conviction and unrelaxed zeal, only to exhibit the position of Pennsylvania as to this pre-eminent interest. Her honour lies in its perfection: her salvation rests on its perpetuity. Much as she has accomplished, all is not yet attained: but enough already appears to justify the proud belief that her people, tranquil and unostentatious, are still as a body unsurpassed in the attributes and means to push free principles and free institutions to their widest, loftiest and best results.

However hastily obliged to weave this chaplet, I cannot wholly omit some of the brightest and most fragrant of its ornaments. Not, indeed, such as glow amid the laurel wreaths of martial nations: not such as befit the victorious garlands of Macedon or Rome: nor such as bloom along the ruthless ranging of the lion or the leopard. But flowers whose fadeless verdure triumphs over time, and whose perfume spreading throughout all space, rises as a grateful incense to the skies. Where, let me ask, where is the recognized and favourite abode of benevolence? On what

spot of this torn and turbulent earth has the spirit of divine charity fixed her home? Amid what people are to be found the noblest demonstrations of an enlarged, unceasing, and pious philanthropy? Turn to the annals of Pennsylvania, and there read the answer: let her unobtrusive but indefatigable "*Society of Friends*," from Penn to Benezet, and from Benezet to Vaux, be followed through their countless achievements of beneficence: let the pervading and unvarying impulse of her entire population, as attested by its representative assembly, be traced: and let the eye glance rapidly over her numerous temples dedicated to the "*holy experiment*" of alleviating the miseries of humanity, protecting its weakness, solacing its decline, ministering to its wants, healing its infirmities, surmounting its incurable deprivations, or securing even to its vices the priceless hope that springs from penitence!

The world has so long been deluded by the glaring and dramatic qualities of men: their boldness in battle, their cunning in council, and their eloquence in debate: and the pages of history have so exclusively nourished a taste for daring or dexterous exploit: that the gentle works of systematic, disinterested, and devoted *goodness* fail to attract the admiration to which they are certainly and pre-eminently entitled. Nations, ever rivals for renown, are rarely competitors in the spheres and operations of benevolence. Our ancestry started with purer aims: and spreading forth the chart of practical virtue, resolved steadily to steer through all its passages. They pursued no phantom of decoying glory, and sought no bullying trophy of greatness: they looked not for compensation, though there was something within their bosoms constantly impelling, and as con-

stantly repaying, their labours: and they felt no desire for fame, though they have gradually reared its imperishable monument!

From the multiplied departments of this admirable action, let me select but one on which to concentrate your notice: it exemplifies them all: and is universally conceded to be, in its progress and perfection, eminently our own.

The corrupt and unchecked passions and propensities of human nature force upon every community, in despite of the wisest rules and precautions, a class of criminals whom society, actuated by the resistless motive of self-preservation, must deprive of liberty and must subject to punishment more or less exemplary. The treatment of fellow-beings thus situated: of convicts, who have forfeited rights which they abused and privileges which they perverted: the manner of their seclusion and penalty, reconciling the social purpose with the inextinguishable claims of a common humanity: this is the problem which, having painfully and fruitlessly perplexed sages and statesmen of every age and every land, has been solved by the mild spirit, unshaken constancy, and unremitted care of Pennsylvania. I will not indulge in details however striking in character: the occasion forbids my doing so: but let us remember that by the principles, organization, and discipline of our penitentiaries we have nearly superseded a necessity, in any case, for the summary process of taking life: that our legal vengeance is tempered by the design and the practicability of moral reform: and that in the silence and solitude of protracted imprisonment, 'the world forgetting, by the world forgot,' the suffering victims of their own vices are, in mind, and feeling, and habit, slowly but surely rescued and regenerated.

And how was this? By what lights of collegiate philosophy, by what aids of power, with what incentives of ambition, and with what allurements of reward, was this scheme of beneficence projected and perseveringly accomplished? By none of these: they had, in fact, long proved inadequate, if not injurious. Europe, with all her learning, and all her honours, and all her wealth, recoiled from even the limited progress of her own Howard. Her numberless prisons continued the shelters of unseemly and infamous brutality, the theatres of riotous profligacy, the charnel-houses of every moral and religious sentiment or hope—scarcely, if at all, preferable to a hasty and indiscriminating appeal to the guillotine or sword. If you wish to comprehend and truly appreciate whence we derive this inestimable feature of our policy, follow a meek disciple of christianity—one of those who have unconsciously embalmed their memories in the gratitude of posterity—follow him into the receptacle of the outlawed and denounced: see him enter amid jeers of scorn, imprecations of profanity, and threats of desperation: mark how, from month to month, and year after year, his time, his compassion, his fortitude, and his health are expended in voluntarily associating with the vilest and the worst: how he notes their peculiarities, their modes of thought, the effects of their fellowship, and the real tendency of their various inflictions: accompany him to the gloomy dungeon of the homicide, and observe how steadily he communes with the agonies of remorse, the fitful relapses of rage, or the hardened inveteracy of malice: how he measures the moral effects of physical causes, and how, in fine, he scans, and explores, and treasures up in recollection, every avenue by which to invade the temper, the conscience, or the soul

of the convict! Go with him, then, to his confidential friends, and hear the disclosures of his long continued and still unwearied experience: with what humility he invites them to share his toils, and how diffidently he hopes, as the consequence of their united vigils and labours, that some relief may be furnished to the undeserving, and some good be done even to the wicked. And behold here, and in his course, the model and the practice, the simple origin and the pious progress of the purest and most perfect institution of modern philanthropy!

Having glanced at some of the services by which our Society of Friends elevated and enriched Pennsylvania, I may be excused for adverting to a well authenticated incident of the revolutionary contest, shewing how, consistently with their peculiar opinions, they proved themselves efficient champions of the nation. That we contributed our quota of wisdom and valour towards independence is readily felt, as the names of Franklin, Dickinson, M'Kean, Mifflin, and Rush, are recalled: but it was perhaps singularly characteristic that another of our citizens, without whose fertility of genius, unbounded credit, and untiring exertions the movements of our armies must have been palsied, if not fatally defeated, often and at times of fiercest trial derived from the sympathy and confidence of the non-combatant class of our people the essential resources and sinews of war. It was in the winter of 1776: while Washington and Liberty lingered in solicitous suspense on the neighbouring site of New-Hope, while a total destitution of means threatened to verify the gloomiest foreboding, and when even the unrivalled vigour and felicity of finance which coped with every crisis, yielded to exhaustion and despon-

cy: that *Robert Morris*, slowly and sorrowfully retiring from scenes of disappointed effort into solitude, encountered, as if by accident, a now unknown and unnamed "*friend*." With the impetuous energy of despair, he depicted the emergency and the wants of his country, and implored relief for the endangered cause of America. "THOU SHALT HAVE IT!" was the prompt, laconic, and resolute reply: and it forthwith came, to reanimate the drooping forces of our immortal chief and to impel them onward, through the snows and ice and tempests of the dreariest season, to battle with hireling Hessians and to achieve the victory of Trenton! Strange but admirable union of private sentiment and social duty: harmonizing the utmost humility of pretension with the loftiest aims of patriotism, and signally illustrating, at the most eventful period, both the morals and the politics of our founder!

Equally with the topics I have already discussed, the actual condition and the obviously awaiting futurity of this state are fitted to confirm a just pride and an ardent attachment. Let me, though cursorily, present them to your consideration.

On an area of forty-seven thousand square miles and more than thirty millions of acres—with a soil at once generous and hardy, a climate equable and salubrious, and expansive streams penetrating into every section—our population is naturally and essentially agricultural. Their luxuriant valleys, rich meadows, teeming fields, and laden orchards, dressed by the hand of industry and echoing with the sounds of life, attest an abundance that cannot be measured, and a happiness that has long been undisturbed. Time, which elsewhere drained and desolated with moral and physical

convulsions, has tranquilly stored the farms of Pennsylvania with the best materials of power and prosperity. It is there, that labour, spontaneous, free, and productive labour, cheers the heart, invigorates the frame, and exalts the virtues of men. It is there, mid a smiling plenty, unvexed by the crosses of commercial hazard, that the delights and consolations of domestic endearment fix their deepest roots: And it is there, according to all experience and all just reasoning, that the high and habitual sense of personal independence becomes the firmest foundation for those bold and disinterested qualities which are the only safe-guards of republican institutions. Although the Commonwealth embrace within her limits, at least two of the most flourishing of American cities, in whose science, trade, arts, manufactures, and wealth, she exults, and numerous towns and boroughs hourly augmenting in resources and importance, yet must her farmers, with their skill, their toil, their overflowing granaries, their steady habits, and their fearless spirits, constitute for many years, if not forever, her primary interest and her especial bulwark. Such a basis cannot but impart confidence and hope to any community. It is, to the social barque, a well adjusted and ponderous ballast: keeping her poised amid every agitation, and enabling her to move directly onward to her destination.

A recent trial, fresh in the memories of those who note the incidents of great æras, established the title of this class of our people to controuling weight and to entire confidence. Who, indeed, can forget their prompt sacrifices and patriotic energy in the war of 1812? How, far in advance of the general government, they almost insisted upon contributing, without delay and without stint, men and means to vindi-

cate the national fame and maintain the national rights? How, profuse with the hoards of their industry and heedless of their accustomed repose, they demanded taxation and tendered enlistment? How, with ardent acclamation and invariable suffrage, they stimulated and extolled the prowess of their Bainbridge, their Decatur, their Porter, and their Biddle? Nor turned a single glance, nor breathed a single longing wish, towards their rural happiness and pursuits, until victories, glowing and ample and substantial as their own harvests, closed a successful struggle with an honourable peace. It is in the indestructible and inestimable value of a vast mass of constituency like this that Pennsylvania glories: here are the fountains of her moral and political power: these are the jewels by which, in the circle of her sister states, she is alike distinguished and adorned!

In close alliance with those for whom they were chiefly designed, our immense works of artificial improvement may appropriately be mentioned. The civilizing effects of a safe and expeditious intercourse—the aggregate comfort, co-operation, and affluence to which it inevitably leads—dictated that allowance in the proprietary conveyances of our land which dedicated to general convenience, originally ten, and subsequently six acres, with each hundred. Every owner of the soil was thus, by the muniments of his estate, apprized of a wisely adopted policy and pledged to aid its execution. The first turnpike ever constructed on the western continent was constructed here: and the most adventurous or firm set bridges spanned or withstood our floods. For a long succession of years, broad and paved highways were extended in every direction designated by the wants of settlement or the eagerness of enterprize: threading intervening forests, skirting or climbing mountains, and crossing

unchecked the chafed torrent or the wide river. These, for their time, and in the comparative infancy of the subsidiary arts, were undertakings of great magnitude and expense. They rapidly, however, repaid a hundred fold, and gradually gave to Pennsylvania a commodious arrangement and a facility of transportation which encouraged the solid though scattered pursuits of husbandry, diffused capital, and drew into active usefulness its remotest parts. Within a short period, the maturity of mechanical science has driven us onward in this career with redoubled speed. By chaining the Ohio and the prolific regions of western growth, fast to the Susquehanna and the Delaware; by penetrating through every obstacle to the recesses of our boundless mineral wealth; and by levelling every impediment before the rolling car of agricultural abundance; our canals, with their adjuncts of locks, basins, aqueducts, and tunnels, and our rail-roads, with their accessaries of inclined plains, locomotive engines, portages and stations—whether the creations of public policy or private speculation—have outstripped all rivalry, and secured to our cherished home the utmost solidity, duration, and variety of resource. These magnificent embellishments, in extent already unitedly more than eleven hundred miles, and by their utility swelling in vast disproportion the value of the domain they adorn, when regarded in connection with the body of citizens whom I have just described, and as instruments, avenues, and outlets for their incessant interchanges and their unlimited products, give to the future prospects of our Commonwealth a certainty and a grandeur worthy of her history.

The destinies of states may sometimes be accurately foretold: the mysterious events of their coming, time taking

form and hue measurably from their past. In the yet onward progress of this community, her virtuous impulses unabated, and her strength and intelligence advancing with sure footing and unfaltering fleetness, what may she not rationally hope to attain and achieve in after ages? In less than a century from this date, her population, augmenting even with diminished rate, will exceed fifteen millions—the last ascertained number of England, to whom she bears, indeed, a strict resemblance in the quantity of her soil, the nature of her products, and the character of her climate. At that epoch, science, literature, and art, in whose records must still and forever shine the names of our Franklin and Rittenhouse, of our Brown and Dennie, of our West and Sully, and of our great original projectors, Fitch, Evans, and Fulton—will have found votaries without number, and altars every where: and then, her eastern and her western metropolis, with a limitless range of navigation, oceanic and inland—her northren, central, and southern cities, rich marts of manufactures and agricultural supplies—her rural districts studded with thriving and joyous villages—and her copious rivers, with their bustling banks and their crowded channels—will present an aspect of combined happiness, power, and beauty which, under the brightening influence of wholesome morals, just laws, and universal freedom, will be unsurpassed in the realities of social existence!

Let us, in remembrance of the day, superadd to these elating and incentive reflections, that Pennsylvania is an integral and distinguished part of a national union, whose constitution, liberty, fame, and might, are alike a glory and a guaranty: giving to the present the utmost exultation and to the future the utmost security.

Cherishing so invaluable a political relation, in many respects distinct from our social attitude, we may claim to celebrate this great anniversary with peculiar ardour. The Fourth of July was consecrated in our capital: the Declaration of Independence, matured by illustrious patriots and sages was first greeted by shouts of acclamation from an assemblage of Pennsylvanians: And, as the crowning trait of her excellence, let us never forget that, in trials of protracted war, or of distracting peace, our Commonwealth with still "*unbroken faith,*" has steadily redeemed her high and solemn pledge of "*life, fortune, and sacred honour*" in the attainment of its aims, and in the maintenance of its principles!

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NOTE.

A LETTER FROM MR. JEFFERSON.

Th: Jefferson returns his thanks to the Board of Directors of the Society for the commemoration of the landing of William Penn on the American shore. He learns with sincere pleasure that a day will at length be annually set apart for rendering the honours so justly due to the greatest lawgiver the world has produced; the first in either ancient or modern times who has laid the foundations of government in the pure and unadulterated principles of peace, of reason, and of right; and in parallelism with whose institutions to name the dreams of a Minos, or Solon, or the military and monkish establishments of a Lycurgus, is truly an abandonment of all regard to the only object of government, the happiness of man.

Monticello, Nov. 16th, 1825.

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