AN ADDRESS

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THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA,

AT ITS SECOND ANNUAL MEETING,

HELD IN THE ROTUNDA, ON THE 4TH OF JULY, 1839:

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ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN: We have assembled to take our share, in the celebration of the anniversary of American Independence. From the Canadas to the Gulf of Mexico, from the steep Atlantic stream to the remote regions of the far West, this day has been hailed with one voice of glad acclaim. In the roar of artillery, in the chants of the churches, in the still, small voice of secret prayer, in every form by which the human heart can testify its gratitude and pleasure, its advent has been commemorated. This day, a mighty people have been called together, like the Hebrews of old, to hold high festival in honor of a great national deliverance. We have been summoned to worship at the same altars, upon which our fathers first kindled their beacon fires. We are gathered together to drink of the same fountain of old associations which once a year, at least, pours its refreshing stream upon our national character.

We are all contemplating the same models of heroic excellence, for which our revolutionary era was distinguished; and in view of the trials and sufferings through which they passed in common, and of the success with which their efforts were crowned in common, we devote this day, after the custom of our fathers, to the spirit of union, and to all of those feelings which lead our people to a common destiny. This is no Roman triumph which we celebrate. No captive's wailings disturb the music of the procession. We present none of those mournful contrasts between the extremes of human pride and misery, which elevated the exultation of the conqueror by exhibiting to him the despair of his victim, whose tears watered
the dust of the chariot behind which he trod. We have wasted no provinces, sacked no cities, and trodden down no vineyards, in achieving the conquests which we have made. We celebrate the triumphal march of civilization through the wilderness, and we are doing honor to the genius of human liberty, and to the sacred majesty of peace. Some wrongs indeed we have had from men at arms; yet by arms we have redressed them, and the angry feelings of the occasion have passed away, with the smoke as it lifted from the field of battle. We turn aside from such successes, which are common to all nations, to others which we claim as peculiar to ourselves. We have subdued obstacles which lay in the way of human happiness; we have established forms of government which we believe are to work an entire revolution in the face of human affairs; a revolution which is to elevate the great mass of mankind, not only in the social but in the moral scale of the Universe. We have extended the empire of useful arts over the wilderness; and our vines and our fig trees cast their grateful shadows over the repose and the habitations of men in the once wild haunts of the savage.

But this day has higher uses than those of mere pleasure, or of national gratulation. It becomes nations as well as individuals to set apart, at least, one day in the year, which like Mirza, they should always keep holy. It is well to turn aside occasionally from the busy pursuits of life to contemplate the past, to survey the foundations upon which our institutions rest, and to consider the best means of preserving and improving our blessings. It is in the calmness of retrospection, that we form the most impartial estimates of men and things. The mind returns from its wanderings amid the mouldering monuments of the past, subdued by a sense of the instability of human affairs, and more disposed to enter into that self-examination, which is sometimes necessary both for nations and individuals. A clear view of the errors of others, may admonish us to discover and amend our own, and the most favored nations have much to do in this respect. No day can be better selected for such contemplations than this, when the voice of party is hushed, when the spirit of sectional rivalry is at rest, and when we have left what concerns the present, for a while, at least, to study the past that we may improve the future.

There is no period of the same extent, in the history of man, which offers a more interesting field of inquiry, than the chapter upon American affairs, for there is none of like duration, which presents such changes in the entire aspect of human society. A little more than three centuries ago, and what was then called the civilized world, was in a state of infancy as compared with the best days of Grecian excellence, or Roman supremacy. In all that concerns the application of the useful arts to human happiness, the latter state of the world was infinitely behind the former. The luxuries of the last, would have been deemed scarcely comforts in the first. Trade was then confined in narrower limits, than in the palmy days of even Phoenician adventure, and the maritime achievements of Hannibal had come to be regarded as fabulous by the very Portuguese, who stood foremost in that day in the career of commerce and discovery.

Nor was there anything more encouraging, in the moral and social state of the world at that period, than the humble and simple man, who “out of the deep shadow of an unknown world to guide Columbus to its uncharted shores—that ancient mariner, who “past like night from land to land,” in the fulfillment of his mysterious mission. His imagination, naturally ardent, had been long abandoned to reveries of discovery, and fed by the strange tales of Marco Polo and De Mandeville; but stimulated as it was by these circumstances, and the first impression of those delightful regions, its wildest visions deplored no such results, as he would now behold. He was permitted to revisit the earth. He would find the Garden of Eden, which he had seen in himself approaching, as far to seek as ever. The simple natives of those islands, from whose conversion he anticipated the most important results, to Christianity, have disappeared like the mists from the land and the seas that knew them. The holy sepulchre is still in possession of the Turk, notwithstanding the treasures of the new world which were to furnish the crusade to redeem it.

And Spain, whose empire he so much enlarged, so far from growing into the importance which he had hoped and imagined, has dwindled into a second rate power. And yet he might view this failure in his scheme, without a sense of disappointment, when he looked to the great changes, which since his day, have taken place in the face of human affairs. For he would survey the vast extent of the new world which has been reduced to the use of civilized man, as the tide of population rolls on from the Atlantic to the Pacific: he would be-
hold the wonders achieved by the human mind, since it has been free to range the boundless domain of knowledge, and by the arts of industry, since it has been free to strike for itself. He would see the great republican principle of government; operating under new and enduring forms, open the way to honorable ambition and useful enterprise, alike to all, and calling into activity the highest and humblest talents which can contribute to human happiness. He would behold the whole moral and political world, stirring under the mighty changes which have resulted from modern improvements.

The human intellect has subdued the wildest and most reluctant elements of nature to the ministry of men. Commerce, rejecting the narrow limits within which he had seen it confined, now sweeps in full career far as the breeze can bear the billows' foam—and dismissing its ancient coursers, the winged winds, as too slow and unsteady for its use, has yoked the power of steam to bear its car with fiery speed from sea to sea and from land to land. The barriers which have hitherto divided mankind geographically, are passing away, and as the National spirit decay, that of the cosmopolite is gradually taking its place. The modern improvements in the arts, have tended to render men more equal in the means of acquiring knowledge, of communicating between distant places, and of obtaining whatever of comfort or luxury constitute the usual ends of human exertion; and in doing this, they have placed the members of communities more nearly upon terms of equality, in all that gives social power and position. As a consequence, a new element seems about to claim the mastery, even of European society. Increasing knowledge and increasing means of combination, are soon to furnish the great mass with all that is wanted to place these governments under their control; indeed, the time-norn fabrics of those ancient monarchies are already shaking, as their foundations crumble beneath them, and tremble to the surge, as the restless tide of change rolls by.

It is not to be supposed that even Columbus, with all his imagination, could attribute the whole of these mighty changes to his discovery; but he might well inquire how far it had contributed to it, and by what causes they had been produced. Inquiries which it may become us to institute, for they look not only to the origin of our institutions, but into their nature and uses. To understand the causes of the great moral and political changes, which we now see developed in society, it will be necessary to take a brief review of its progress. Without following metaphysicians in their specula-

Upon the social contract, it is enough for us to perceive, that the organization of society was called for by the necessity of protecting the weak against the strong, who under the operation of the selfish instinct, would subject the persons and property of all who were in their power, to their uses and control. Union was necessary among the many who were weak, to overcome the plundering propensities of the few who were strong, and who could overcome them in detail; although unable to resist the power of the mass.

Combinations, or societies of men, afforded the only means of concentrating power enough to regulate the natural inequalities in strength, and the ends for which this power was to be exercised. Were to secure to each individual the free exercise of his will, and the uninterrupted enjoyment of his property, so far as the one could be exercised, or the other enjoyed without injuring the equal rights of others. But it was necessary to reissue the exercise of this power of the mass, in the hands of some man or of some body of men, as might be supposed best to secure its application to the purposes for which it was created. Hence arose the institution of government. And now, the very danger which society was formed to guard against had assumed itself under a different form. This right to wield the whole power of society, must be exercised by a convention only of its members, from the nature of things, and this very institution may be converted by those who direct it, into the instrument of plundering; those who do not control it. There are two great principles which enter alone, or in combination, into all human governments; they are all governments of the few or of the many. By the government of the few we mean, that which is controlled by less than a majority of its citizens, whilst that of the many comprehends those governments whose actions are controlled by a majority, or more than a majority, of its citizens.

So far as the government of the few looks to the great end of social organization, its institution must proceed upon the supposition, that it was better to endow a few at once with special privileges, who, content with the advantages of their position, would administer the power of the mass for the good of the whole, so as to satisfy them with that government which they administered. Looking to this end only, it is manifest that this form of government would be less burthensome to society, as the number was fewer of those who were thus endowed. Experience, however, has disappointed the calculations of what would seem to be the theory of this form of government. In point of fact, men are never satisfied with the pow-


er which they have already attained. Great as may be the power thus confided to the few, imagination can always depict something more, and with the control of government they have the means of gratifying such desires. An enlightened and far-sees selfishness would perhaps admonish them of the danger of their losing the power which they already have; in the attempt to seize more, but the future, to which it appeals, is too distant to restrain them from the effort. They have always grasped at more than was given them, and it has been essential for their success to interest more members of society to aid them in their schemes. For this, patronage, wealth, spoils are necessary, and these are to be drawn at the expense of the great mass of the people. As they enlist more to their aid, they have more to reward, and their government becomes more and more oppressive to their people. But up to a certain point they strengthen themselves by their corruptions, having lost the affections of the majority, they become stronger by increasing the numbers of the minority, who live upon the plunder. They run down at length, either by weakening or degrading the mass who give the social power which they wield, or by oppressing them to such a degree as to drive the people to revolution.

The other class of governments would seem to look to this great end of society from another point of view. When all who are interested in government, have a share in its control, it would seem that as none but just laws can promote the interest of all, so none but those believed to be so would be enacted. If it were practicable to administer and maintain a government so as to have no law which did not secure the assent of all, experience would conform to all the expectations of such a theory. But the necessity for promptness and despatch in business, the imperfections of our nature, and the difficulties of collecting the sense of the scattered members of a community, are so great, that it has been found essential to enable a part to determine the action of the whole. In most democratic governments, a simple majority controls, and this, though a better mode of attaining the great social end than its rival form, is still, like all human means, an imperfect instrument for its purpose. There is less danger that a majority will plunder the minority, than of the reverse, when it is in their power to do so. As the dividend to each would be less in the first case, so also would be the temptation to perpetrate the wrong; more too is to be expected from the moral sense of the many, than of the few. Nor could the minority have much cause of fear from the majority, if there could be a society that had but one common interest in which all were concerned. But when from sectional position and the distribution of wealth, there are fixed minorities and minorities upon certain interests, a knowledge of human nature, and the warnings of experience, all admonish of the danger to the just rights of such minorities.—Here is the grand difficulty in the way of republican government, to which wise men have directed their inquiries for some time past. A just and enlightened public sense is, undoubtedly, a great safeguard; but as human government is directed against the selfish principles, so its contrivances generally seek to overbalance the temptation to ill, by another which still more strongly induces to right.

The imperfection of human means, is also in the way of placing the action of government under the control of the moral sense, even of the majority of the citizens. For so difficult is it found to collect the sense of the majority of the people, upon their affairs, as they severally call for attention, that the device of representation has always been found necessary. These representatives, of course, can reflect the will of the people but carefully for all, and the few who are thus clothed with authority, and armed with the power of society, have interests from that moment, separate and apart, from the masses of the community. It is to the interest of the people that they should retain this authority, only so long as they do what is right; it is to the interest of the few, if they consult only the selfish principle, to retain it upon any terms.

The more patronage and wealth which they have to distribute, the more adherents they gain to themselves, and to increase this beyond what the public good requires, they are forced to rob some one. They seek for spoils in cunning laws, which create an unjust distribution of wealth; they lead on, if they can, one class or section of the community to plunder another; they attack the moral sense of the republic wherever it is vulnerable, because they know that this, when well informed, would defeat their purposes, and they endeavor to persuade the people, that their only hope for safety and happiness consists in retaining them in power and authority; and thus detach them, if they can, from the consideration of the common interests of the governed, to engage them the more thoroughly, in the support of the personal views of the governors.

But the knowledge which the people have against this danger, is as definite as the public mind, and in procuring means of controlling public opinion, with enough certainty and rapidity to check these designs in their inception. It is not enough for
the security of republican institutions, that every citizen should
be equal in political privilege; these privileges are distributed as
the means of attaining the ends of government, and the great
end to be attained, is that each citizen should be equal in the
eye of the law when made. This last species of equality, is
the great test of good government, after all; and without it,
there is tyranny either of the many or the few.

Some of the earliest illustrations of these forms of government,
of which we have authentic accounts, are to be found in the lead-
ing states of Ancient Greece. In their splendid rivalry for pow-
er and glory, each in turn acquired the ascendancy; each sought
to introduce its peculiar form of government, where ever its in-
fluence could be felt; and as the Athenian or Lacedemonian
influence predominated, so the spirit of democracy or oligarchy,
prevailed in the surrounding states.

The Athenian government was so loosely constructed, as to
give the democratic principle no fair chance in the comparison
with its rival. And yet, whilst it exhibited the defects of that
form of institution, it displayed at the same time many of its pec-
nuliar excellencies. The tremendous energy of a government
which embodies the public sentiment of society, the march of
mind when the paths to public honors are open to all, the pro-
gress of the arts, and the growth of commerce, when trade is
freed from even a portion of the restrictions which usually
embarrass it, were all displayed in the early stages of the
Athenian republic.

It was at this period only that the Athenian institutions were
republican in spirit, as well as form. But with the victories,
came the spoils of war, and in the distribution of these, power rap-

didly passed from the hands of the many, to those of the few.
Instead of viewing their government as a charge upon them-
selves, and curtailling it in all but its necessary expenses and
patronage, the people began to look to it as the means of in-
dividual support. The few who administered the government,
were nothing loath to a system which gave them the power
resulting from such a distribution, and they gathered the spoils,
by the only available mode—that mean of plunder.

Encouraged by Pericles, who changed the entire spirit of
their institutions, they commenced by robbing their allies,
when they seized the common treasure at Delos, and they end-
ed by plundering each other.

Parties no longer divided upon principles which looked to
the public good, but ranged themselves under individuals, for
the sake of the honors and wealth which they distributed.
Under the administration of Pericles, their government became
an oligarchy in spirit, although the republican forms remained;
and true to its instinct, which seeks to increase the dividend,
by diminishing the number to receive, as far as is compatible
with the reservation of power enough to work the social ma-
cine; signalized the change by selling five thousand free
citizens into slavery.

With this change, commenced the decay of their political
power and grandeur. When the government ceased to be ad-
ministered for the common welfare, it was no longer supported
by the common efforts of its people, and it lost its vigor in the
decay of the national spirit. Under the administration of their
splendid aristarch Pericles, their day of heroes and statesmen
was rapidly passing away, and that of wits and courtiers, of
artists and philosophers began to take its place.

It was a natural consequence of the power of Pericles, that
the saloon of Aspasia should attract the talents and abilities
which before adorned the Areopagus, or sought for conven-
tence and fame in the Pnyx. As the walks of political ambition
were more and more restricted, the national genius sought a
new field of industry, and achieved its conquests in the great
realm of arts and letters.

"Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Then waxed to ecstasy the living lyre."

Their achievements in arms had been undoubtedly great,
although we may not quite believe "quicquid Grecia mendax
audit in historia;" but their triumphs in the moral world were
infinitely more wonderful—Triumphs which perhaps the A-
thenian spirit would never have achieved, but for its previous
culture under republican institutions, which offered their hon-
or at least where ever it could be found.

The wanderings of Athenian genius, amid the boundless
domains of human thought, are ever where marked by the
imprint of the living mind.

"It is here that its monuments will endure when the
marble of Phidias shall have crumbled into silent dust, and its
mural portrait, like the Alexander of Apelles, exhibits the light
of heaven as a trophy in the hand of man. The colors of Apell-
es have faded, and the canvas which received them has per-
ished, but the radiant forms of Athenian genius must en-
dure, whilst the light of truth remains, or the human mind ex-
ists to receive it.

In commingling to Sparta, the great rival of Athens, we find an
oligarchy; if not in one of its happiest, at least in one of its
most enduring form, constituted, as it would seem, for milita-

al warfare. The city was a camp, the spirit of martial law always prevailed, and, separated from the rest of mankind, in customs, in feeling and in kindly association as effectually as if they wore the brand of Cain, their successes in war were relieved by few of those virtues which mitigate its horrors. Almost without trade or commerce, and early taught to despise the costly wants of civilized man, they were long in suffering from the effects of that false distribution of wealth, which so often becomes the cause of national decline. But the victories of Lysander and Agesilaus introduced along with foreign gold, new relations and new wants in Spartan society. However well suited these institutions were to a state of war, they were unfit to regulate man in his pursuit of wealth; and with a change of customs and pursuits, the national spirit and glory declined. When it did fall, it sunk into dreamless, barbarous sleep. It exhibited none of those dying glories which adorned its rival's fall. None of the splendors of art, or triumphs of philosophy restored its influence upon new fields of human enterprise—Its strength was physical—and in the decline of that, it sunk like the dying gladiator in barbarous indifference to the future, of which it had no knowledge. It made none of those imperishable conquests of the human mind, for which Athenian genius has celebrated so many triumphs. It was in the spirit of its institutions to make war upon human sensibility, and to cultivate no other ambition but that of military renown; and in accomplishing these results, they destroyed the genius of their people.

As the Grecian power declined, another star was rising to the ascendant. The Roman institutions had already taken the form which was to extend their empire to the farthest limits of the civilized world. We have already seen that a government which enacted no laws but such as received the unanimous consent of its citizens, would establish none which were not at least believed to be just. But we also see how impracticable it would be to administer a government upon such a plan. The Romans pursued a kindred idea by kindred means. They arrested the action of their government until there was unanimity amongst the great interests of its community, and by establishing mutual checks between the representatives of property and numbers, they contrived that justice should be done both to personal rights and those of property.

Had the means adopted been exactly fitted to the end, and had they understood the great condition of human existence, that man must live by the sweat of his own brow, and not by plundering others, it would have been difficult to have fixed the limits to their national prosperity and grandeur. As it was, they armed their government by these means with a social power, which overcame all the opposition which the nations of that day, under less energetic organization, could interpose to their progress; and perhaps nothing but the spoils of these mighty conquests which destroyed the genius of their institutions, could have overthrown the fabric of their power. Under this form of social organization, which brought the combined weight and energies of every interest in the community to their national enterprises, they raised their empire upon foundations so deep and broad that no external pressure could shake it.

Their system of military colonization, their abstinence from all interference with the customs and religion of conquered nations, their distribution of political privileges amongst those whom they had subdued so as not to disturb and divide the common sentiment of the people, all evince the wisdom of their government, whilst the true genius of the Roman republic persisted over its destiny.

The fortune with which they sustained themselves under the terrible reverses of the second Punic war, the concentrated energies of the people which it was impossible to subdue, are a correction of the power of the social machine as it was then organized. The battle of Zama was the turning point in the genius of their institutions. Human experience vouches the fact that whilst the organic law of a community measures out political privilege by one rule, the distribution of wealth amongst its members, regulates political power by another. Unless the system of government adjusts in some measure the two sources of political influence, it seems almost impossible to secure that government from change and revolution.

The ancients saw the difficulty, but the exact remedy yet remains to be discovered; because the laws which regulate the distribution of wealth are imperfectly understood. They could conceive of no better remedies than the remission of debts and the equal division of lands, which always proved the fruitful source of civil war, and resulted in the destruction of all the social ties and public virtues. We have reason however to believe, that the path to this grand discovery is open before us. The doctrines of free trade, which are to politics what the Christian religion is to morals, are teaching the wholesome truth, that nations, no more than individuals, can long subsist by plunder without a disorganization of the social and moral elements which compose them. They have already demonstrated the fact, that when property is secure and industry is free to strike for itself, the stream of wealth like that of water, seeks its level...
by a natural law of gravitation; that so long as this equilibrium is preserved there can be no sudden or disturbing changes in the relations of society; and that labour and capital combine according to their natural affinities, when the loadstone of profit is the only influence which attracts them.

It is in the application of these laws to the complicated concerns of trade, that modern investigation finds its greatest difficulties. And it is in ignorance of the true causes and remedies for such evils, that man so often rises with the sword to cut the Gordian knot which his skill does not enable him to untie.

Many of these truths are no where more strongly exemplified than in the Roman history after the period of which I spoke. When they had amassed the plunder of the world, it was impossible to fix upon any method of distribution which was just amongst its citizens, and not utterly subversive of public morals. Lands, treasure and grain were all to be distributed amongst its citizens; and the system produced its usual results, when they began to look upon the government as the means of individual support—Parties became personal and ceased to be political in their ends. The people ranged themselves under those leaders who could and would distribute most.

The factions of Sylla and Marius, of Pompey and Caesar, and of the ruthless Trimvirate, devasted Italy with a course of the most cruel and bloody proscriptions which the world has ever known; except perhaps under the French revolution. The free population became vagrant, their fields were left uncultivated, the public morals were corrupted, and amid this general decline, the equestrian order rose to a power and consequence unknown to their laws or constitution.

This order, which farmed the public revenues and undertook the public contracts, organised a money power more extensive than any which the world has known. Even Caesar was forced to conciliate it by a remission of a portion of their public liabilities, before he could face Pompey in the field. Enjoying as it did the best fruits of public patronage, and wielding the money power of the world, this order exercised an influence upon government too strong to be resisted, and used it for the most selfish purposes.

The records of crime and human depravity exhibit nothing darker than the instances which it draws from Roman history, about and after this period. And yet so wisely had their conquests been secured by the policy of the republic, that the conquered sunk with the conquerors in the scale of degradation, until the wild northern hordes poured in upon them. Man now receded in the scale of civilization, and new forms of government held their iron sway over Europe.
government, and attacked none then existing; and yet its influence was essentially democratic. It cultivated the intelligence and virtue of the public mind, and thus was laying the only sure foundation for republican government. It taught the equality of man in the eye of divine law, which is the model for human legislation. It attacked the selfish principle, out of which grew the necessity for human government, and wrought for empire over the will of man. For under the awful sanction of future rewards and punishments, it appealed to that tribunal from which nothing can be concealed, to answer for the motives which ruled his actions. It sunk the physical and elevated the moral nature of man. It partially lifted the veil which shrouded the future, and revealed the mere shadows of our pursuits, in the clear light which rose from beyond the vale of human life.

It would be impossible for the finite powers of the human intellect, to measure the extent of this influence upon the moral and political progress of man, but it is easy to see the direction in which it tends. It is easy to perceive that it is snapping all human institutions, which are not founded in right and administered in justice. Whilst this spirit was working upon the moral nature of man, other causes were operating to increase his power and improve his physical condition. The art of printing was already placing men more nearly upon terms of equality in the means of acquiring knowledge, whilst it ministered to the power of the commons in increasing the facilities for concentrating public sentiment.

The discovery of gun powder was fast reducing the success of military operations to a question of wealth and numbers, which again depended upon the progress of the peaceful arts of industry, whose growing importance could not fail to elevate the consequence of the great mass of operatives.

These influences were already slowly developing their results; when the discoveries of Columbus and Vasco de Gama opened the vast field for the spirit of adventure, and the enterprises of commerce; towards which they were more eagerly directed, as they were restrained at home by the fetters of the feudal and protective-systems.

To the commons were now opened new roads to wealth and honor with their power and influence; and from this period is to be dated their steady and progressive rise in European society. A rise, whose progress has continued to receive new impulses, not only from the improvements in arts, but from the results of the great American discovery. It is now that changes in government, and in the relations of society, begin to
He buried his frame to hardships, and cultivated those feelings and virtues, which are the fruits of solitary meditation and a communion with nature in her most imposing forms:

It is in the nature of the human mind to rise with the subject which it contemplates, and to fill with conceptions of the vast and infinite mind the silent evidences of creative power which rejoice in solitary grandeur around it. Such were the men who led the march of civilization into the fastnesses of the forest. And yet heroes, without a name, and conquerors without renown, the memory of their deeds has perish with them; or scarcely survived the shortlived tradition from father to son.—Deeds upon which the ancient fancy of Ancient Greece would have loved to dwell, as it wrought out a mythology of demi-gods and heroes, to which the poet and the painter would resort for subjects to adorn his page or his canvas. Perhaps the day may come when fancy shall restore what tradition has lost, and splendid monuments of their deeds may establish the debateable land between poetry and history. The time may come when there shall arise a mythic age in American history, as the poet seizes what the historian has neglected, and the pioneer of the wilderness may yet, perhaps, usurp the place of the demi-god of antiquity. Thus were the circumstances which operated upon individual character, and served to inspire that spirit of independence, which we see developed in our institutions. As societies, the discipline of circumstances was temporarily republican. Forced to rely upon their own resources for protection from external dangers, they were impressed with the necessity for common exertions and common deliberations. Societies were disciplined to think, to deliberate, and to act in masses, and these energies had already been wonderfully displayed; not only in the Indian and French wars, but in their commerce and industry.

The republican spirit of the colonies had been thus thoroughly trained, when it took issue with the mother country, and though its antagonist was the most powerful upon the earth, it had resources within itself which more than counterbalanced the tremendous odds of wealth and numbers against it. Although each colony had a complete government, yet each was separate and independent of the other. Their federal government, with its civil and military establishments, had to be formed in the very hour of trial. There is no instance in history, in which the capacities of a republican form of government have been tried under so many disadvantageous circumstances, or in which they have developed themselves more signal. The Federal government, when formed, could scarcely be said to have either executive or judiciary; but the representatives of the States in Congress managed to embody the public sentiment of a population scattered from Massachusetts to Georgia. The public mind of these scattered members exhibited the capacity both to deliberate and act with enough of promptness and energy, to meet the emergencies of a long and bloody war, and whatever was wanting in foresight or dispatch, was made up by the fortitude under trials and the energy in action, which characterize public movements when they are directed by the public will. I pass over the military history of this period. There is doubtless much in this to gratify the just pride of the American; but as I said before, other nations have equalled, or even excelled us in military achievement. Our triumph was more in the noble ends which we attained, than the means by which we reached them. Our glory is in the matchless spirit displayed by our people, the firmness with which they sustained reverses, the fortitude with which they passed through the terrible calamities of war, and the spirit of mutual forbearance and fraternal affection which the states exhibited towards each other, under circumstances which try most rudely the strength of the social bond.

Our pride is in the civic spirit which animated the American soldier, sometimes supplying the want of military discipline, as at Bunker's Hill and the Cowpens, and at others leading him hungry, naked, and with bleeding feet over the snows and sands of winter, or exposing him without murmur to the burning heats of a Southern clime. It was no common sight when the war was over, to see the soldier laying down his arms, whilst his pay was in arrears, and enduring what he believed to be an unjust neglect of his rights and necessities, sooner than violate the duties of a citizen. Well may we glory in the heroes and statesmen of that day. First amongst whom stands the grand impersonation of the spirit of the American Revolution—the commander-in-chief himself. A man who ranks first in the list of human benefactors, and who has, by the exercise of his benevolence, and by his better understanding the true wisdom of virtue, become to any other who has ever lived. A character in which the great and useful qualities were so justly balanced, and so lofty in their proportions, that it seemed the smaller from its elevation and the symmetry of its parts; and to the superficial observer presented none of those qualities in a remarkable degree, because there was no deficiency in any one to set off the excess of another. And yet the history of
his life and achievements demonstrate his eminent endowments in them all. Well may we glory in

"That high and holy name,
The light, the landmark on the hill of fame,"

which rises like the star of human hope to cheer the night of national bondage, and to covenant with man, that in the practice of those virtues in whose halo it reposes, he may redeem his liberties from their most fallen estate. But he's gone—he has gone and left neither his like nor his mantle behind him. Well will it be for us, if we retain enough of his spirit to appreciate his virtues and understand his character.

But the crowning triumph of the men of that day, was in the institutions which they have left us. We have seen that the great dangers which republican governments had to apprehend, were from a disturbance of the natural laws which regulate the distribution of wealth, and from the accumulation of patronage in the hands of the government; the effect of which last is to change the nature of parties, dividing them more upon personal than political grounds, and ending in transferring the power from the many to the few. We have seen too, that the wisest nation of antiquity provided against the first evil by introducing mutual checks between, property and numbers; but fell under the accumulated spoils and patronage of its government, by the distribution of which, the government controlled the people instead of being controlled by them. The framers of our constitution approached these difficulties from another point of view; they applied the spirit of analysis, which had wrought such wonders in physics, to political science. They analyzed the interests of society, and the powers of government, and by excluding from the control of a particular interest, as far as possible, all who had not a common concern in it, they diminished pro tanto the charge of legislative plunder. They sought this end by sectional divisions, and by multiplying the number of governments. The township had a petty government, which regulated matters in which the township only was concerned; the county government regulated interests peculiar to the county; the state government took charge of the general concerns of the townships and the counties; and the Federal Government was entrusted the common interests and only the common interests of the states. If it were possible to mount up in these confederacies by a single interest at each stage, and if these interests were not so intimately linked as to require a combination of several in the different stages of the progress of this confederacy, it would be difficult to affix a limit to the capacities of

the system. It was obvious that by this process, they met to a great extent, both the difficulties in the way of republican government; for the patronage was divided amongst so many governments that the danger was diminished of its accumulation in the hands of any one, whilst the risk that the majority would plunder the minority, lessened in proportion as those were excluded from the control of a particular interest, who had no common concern in it.

Upon the ends and the general nature of the means by which they were to be attained; all seemed to agree, but there was a difficulty in the particular adaptation of those means to the ends. It is here that the doctrines of the states right school exhibit the most profound knowledge of the nature of the evils to be met, and of the remedies to be suggested. If the founders of this school were not thoroughly imbued with the free-trade doctrines, which by a strange coincidence were promulgated in the same year that American Independence was declared, they certainly had a conception of some of the great truths, which they taught. For having secured a free trade, within the limits of the confederacy; having given to the citizens of the United States the privileges of the citizen in each; having enforced the obligation of confederates; and having provided for the defense of the confederacy in case of war, they had embraced all the great common interests which it was necessary to attach to the Federal government. They perceived that the best mode of saving the general government from the evils of a large patronage, was to limit its subjects of expenditure; and the interest committed to its charge, with the exception of that of common defense, were such as involved no necessity for a large revenue. The laws regulating industry and securing the property and personal rights of the citizen, were left according to their theory, for the state governments. In these matters there were more unity of interest and harmony of feeling, and consequently there was more hope of calculating the conflicting interests of society than in the confederacy at large; whilst the general regulations in relation to freedom of trade and intercourse between the states, prevented anyone from injuring another, except in some mode which was equally injurious to itself. With the internal structure of the state governments, they had nothing to do; but it was for public opinion and the progress of knowledge to introduce such changes and mutual checks as experience demonstrated to be necessary. Such is the general theory of what ought to be the operation of our system, and there is much in the nature of our institutions to reduce it to practice. The
Congress itself contains a mutual check between a majority of the whole people, and a majority of the states. In addition to this the states are organized into societies, each with its separate government and laws; and whenever a Federal law has been manifestly partial and oppressive, they have always interposed in some shape or other to avert the evil. But this theory after all, will find its best support, if it be true, in public opinion.

Such, gentlemen, is the principle of combination which constitutes the American experiment in their system of Federal government. A system which is developing capacities to unite more people under the same social bonds, than any other of which we have any account. Perhaps the speculation may not be too wild, which sees in this experiment, the germ of a new system of national law, whose remedies may correspond with its rights, and which may regulate the conduct of nations towards each other with as much facility and harmony, as the present advances in government have enabled us to adjust the individual relations of society. The progress of the great Christian and Free Trade systems of morals and politics, would seem to promise some such results; for they teach that most of the social conflicts which have disturbed the world, proceed from mistaken views of national interest. As these doctrines obtain in practice, the number of necessary restraints upon the freedom of human action rapidly diminishes; and as we perceive government from the care of particular interests, we increase its capacities for including a greater number under the same social bonds. But without entering the fields of speculation, we see the result of our experiment at home and abroad.

Nearly our whole continent testifies its importance here; and abroad we see the common in advancing happiness and power, almost pari passu with the progress of American discovery, settlement and adventure.

The influence of our political example is abroad. We see it in the restless state of the moral elements, which seem to feel the first throes of some great convulsion, which is to upheave and perhaps reverse the stratification of society. How deeply freighted then with human destinies was the bark which bore Columbus to our shores! How immeasurably the historical results of his adventure exceeded even the fictions of his imagination! How encouraging it is to human exertion to see the happy influence which one man may exercise over the entire condition of his race! And yet when we look to the slender fabric of reason, upon which he pushed his wild suit with such successful vehemence, it would almost seem that the impulse was sent from above, and that his spirit was warned of God in a dream, to conceive and execute what appeared to be so strange a purpose. The drama of human life, which in the last three or four centuries has been crowded with such a succession of grand events, apparently at last the results of individual genius and industry, ought to deepen man's sense of his responsibility. If it be the influence of our example which is working change and revolution in human society, under what solemn obligations are we bound to mould this example in virtue and wisdom? If we have undertaken to loosen the winds of human passion from the cage in which they were bound, and convert their mighty energies to useful purposes, how deep is our responsibility to give, if we can, a right direction to their impulses; to send them forth, not in storm and tempest, to rage the land and vex the seas in their fury, but to temper and refresh the moral atmosphere which we breathe; to guide them so as not to oppress and overwhelm the institutions, which have been planted in society, and under whose refreshing shadows man reposes, but to shake the sap which ministers to their growth, and to loosen the earth, which binds their roots too closely?

We can only acquit ourselves of this responsibility by the successful execution of the experiment, which our fathers have instituted. And if the true theory of our system has been this day developed, our success will depend upon that of the political school founded in Virginia. The voice of experience teaches us to say upon the subject, for it has so happened, that the acts of the Federal government which have broken the union and tried most deeply the affection of our people, have arisen in a departure from the doctrines of this school. The spirit of the age imperatively requires the cautious limitation to which these doctrines regulate the inductive process of social improvement. The facilities which are now afforded for concentrating the public sentiment of masses to bear upon a particular question, have created the temptation to association for the purpose of forcing their opinions as the rule of conduct for societies, whom they have no just right to control. The political school which confines the action of societies to their own peculiar concerns, and which interposes constitutions checks to their unasked interference with others, affords the only great moral defence which we have against this spirit.

We have already seen associations formed in our own country, with adopting the principles of French fraternization, have solemnly dedicated their propagation under horrors at which the human blood runs cold. We have seen them, unmindful of the kindly associations of the past, of the fraternal bond of
union, and of the solemn covenants of the Federal compact, threatening to move upon our domestic institutions in the storm of civil war, and to revolutionize the order of the household government itself, which is the basis of every human society. We have seen them seriously planning a decomposition of society into its original elements, as if it could be done without destroying all of those institutions which man has erected for his happiness and protection, or without slaking the ashes on every hearthstone in the best blood of the house. Like the Buccaneer, they invoke the blessing of heaven upon their enterprise of blood and rapine, and they justify their horrid crime as a sacrifice to human happiness, by the hope of relieving the consciences of one race from burdens which they do not feel, and of bestowing upon the other privileges which they could not enjoy. With such a spirit as this you cannot reason. Time only can correct its excesses. The spirit of fanaticism is always reckless and deaf either to reason or entreaty, until its paroxysm is over. "Tell me," says an Arabian proverb, "a mountain has moved, and I may believe you, but tell me that a zealot has changed his manners, and I mark you for a liar." It would be as vain to reason with such a frenzy as with the herd of swine which rushed madly down the steep. They will see, even the plenteous consequences of their own acts, but in their mad attempt to govern man by abstractions and universals, they forget that the circumstances in which he is placed, modify the truth of every political proposition. They do not remember, that the value of social institutions is to be measured more by the happiness which they give, than by the means by which they attain it. Nor will they yield to the fact, that success in their schemes would only serve to injure the condition of both races. They forget, that on the one hand to emancipate the negro without property or political privileges, would be to make him the slave of society; a condition infinitely worse than his who was bound to an individual master; not only by the ties of interest, but by those of personal sympathy and kindly association: Whilst on the other, to free him with these privileges, and to place him in active collision with another race, without the hope of union between them, would be to:

"Let one spirit of the first born Cain
Reign in all bosoms, that each heart being set
On bloody courses, the rude scene may end,
And darkness be the barrier of the dead."

Blind to the effects upon themselves of the organization of Southern society, which uniting the interests of labor and capital in the person of the master, makes him, so far as he understands his own interest, the exponent of the just relations between those two great political elements, and places him in a conservative position towards the union; they strike at the very organization which contributes so much to the just administration and stability of our government. It would be vain to show them that neither race has ever improved more rapidly, than under their union in Southern society—The inferior race fitting the earth for the uses of man, in exchange for the civilization and moral culture, which it has no where received so rapidly; as under the discipline of its circumstances, and the dominion of the white race in the South. The fact that no laborers, as a class, enjoy so large a portion of their productions as the Southern negroes, weighs nothing with them in mitigation of the sentence which they have pronounced against the institution of slavery; and yet, it is the only relation in which the two races can co-exist in harmony, and operate for the mutual benefit of both. Place these races in a state of independence and rivalry, and the stronger would exterminate the weaker, either by actual force, or more surely still, by appropriating the means of subsistence; and yet these associations are neither willing to permit the existing state of things to continue, nor to meet the difficulty of its destruction. Nay, they strike at the very trade, whose law it is to remove the slaveth rough those countries in which he subsists with most comfort, that so he is best fitted for his occupation; and thus they endeavor to destroy the only hope, if there be one, for the ultimate freedom and perpetuation of his race. With such a spirit it would be as vain to reason as with the "caput insanae tribus Anticyris." The only remedy is in the constitutional barriers which the states-right doctrines oppose to such schemes, or in physical force. If we are true to ourselves and the school in which we were reared, the former will always prove a sufficient protection.

How many high considerations appeal to us in the preservation of our institutions; The stability of our institutions, the success of a great experiment, the reputation of our ancient commonwealth, and the safety of all around us. The time has come when Virginia expects her sons to rally around her. She is not what she has been. Her voice is no longer heard first in the councils of the nation. She leads up no great political triumphs, now. The axed and the fasces, it has been said, are no longer to be carried before her. She has sunk in the decline of her political school; and her "lions-of-states-rights is sleeping."—This is the ungrateful theme, which should never dwell upon my tongue if it be true: But I am a Virginian;
interest, and to which we owe our educations. An object, whose importance is not to be measured, until we can ascertain how far the progress of knowledge contributes to national prosperity and happiness. An object which a republic can scarcely estimate too highly. It is in popular knowledge that we lay the deep foundation of public power. It is in the institutions of learning that the youthful mind receives its strongest bias; and the state which is behind its neighbors in intellectual improvement, is rapidly declining in the scale of relative strength. It is by the men of science that the first impulse is generally given to those revolutions in the arts, or in public opinion, which change the face of human affairs. They are the pioneers in the great moral world, who pursue Truth to its hidden retreats, or follow it to almost inaccessible heights, in search of the means by which they conduct the march of the arts, and the progress of society. The student, who keeps his pale vigil in the temple of science, and feeds its lamp with the oil of life, often exercises a far more powerful influence upon society, than the government under which he lives, and which needs neither his existence nor his labors. A state which neglects the means of rearing such men, in the present condition of the world, is abandoning the hope of conquests far more important than any which armies or fleets could achieve. Mr. Jefferson, who was a profound observer of the nature not only of our institutions, but of man himself, has selected the founding of this school as one of his best titles to the grateful recollections of posterity.

Gentlemen, there are some of you here present upon whom the care of sustaining this institution most peculiarly devolves; I mean those who are members of its community. It is not enough, that the state has filled its chairs with learned professors, or stored its library with books; much of its future glory must depend upon the observance of its discipline, and the diligent application of its students. You have now perhaps one of the first opportunities, with which life has furnished you, for discharging a duty which you owe the state, in sustaining the character of the noble institution, in which she has so deep an interest. If you find the petty restraints of college rules too much for your patience, how can you expect to endure the stern discipline and trials of your future life? And, if you appreciate the high and noble ends of your present pursuits, you must perceive that it will require all of your energy to overcome the difficulties in your grand career of moral and intellectual improvement. How then can you turn aside from these, to elevate into importance, trifling restraints upon your pleasures? You are entering into the probationary state of citizenship when you become members of this community, and you are bound by its rules. A dignified submission to the necessary restraints of law is said to be a high evidence of the capacity to command. The observance of this very discipline affords no mean exercise for that spirit of self-denial, which is essential for great and eminent success in your future career. If the maxim of Bacon be true, that "the duties of life are more than life," how much are its duties to be preferred to its pleasures? Remember that you are the future athletes, who are to wrestle for the prizes of life;—prizes, which, in this country, embrace nearly the whole circle of legitimate desires. You stand in a land in which there are so many stinging vicissitudes in life; and in an age in which grand events have crowded the theatre of the world in such rapid succession, that there is no telling what parts you may be called upon to sustain. In rising the parts of the drama of future life, the highest and the noblest may fall to your lot. Do you not wish to be ready in the emergency when it arises, and to be ready for that life, which "taken at the flood, leads on to fortune"? You are of that generation, which constitutes the rising hope of Virginia; your hands are to be confided, her interest, her happiness, her honor and reputation. Does this add nothing to the sense of responsibility under which you are preparing for the more active duties of life? If you mean to fit yourselves for this high career, you must renounce the pleasures in the pursuit of the duties of life, and, if the labors of this probation at times, should be severe, remember there is nulla palma sine pulvere; if you start for its prizes you must endure the heat and dust of the race. If you fail to sow in the springtime, you can reap no harvest in the autumn of life, and the opportunities can never return. "When you come to wrestle with the men of the world, and with the real difficulties of life, you will find cause to regret every hour that you have lost, and each opportunity that was wasted. It is true, gentlemen, that it is impossible for all to win the highest prizes on the great field of human adventure; eminent success must belong to a few only in each generation. But of this, you may at least be sure, that diligence, in the noble pursuit of knowledge, will bring its own reward, in the new pleasures which it will open up to you, and in the cultivation of the highest part of man, his immortal nature. It is a truth, worthy to be remembered, that whatever the world may think of our efforts, we are certainly advancing in the scale of creation as we ascend the steep of knowledge.
Gentlemen, I have used the privilege of friendship and of the ties which bind us together, in thus addressing you. I have done so, not because I wanted confidence in your spirit or abilities, but because my pride as well as my affections are deeply enlisted in the future success of your exertions; and I wish to see you enter the arena of life with all the advantages of previous training and discipline. As a citizen of the same state, as an alumnus of the same institution, and as a member of the same society, I most earnestly desire the success of each and all of you. I wish to see you go forth into the world with that high and lofty spirit, which seeks noble ends by noble means; with that generous elevation of patriotism which prefers the public good to private fortune; and with that just perception of the true ends of life and the true wisdom of virtue, which may give you fortitude in adversity, and firmness under temptation. I wish to see you soaring above the utilitarian spirit of the age, which measures man's qualities by their pecuniary worth; and trying yourselves by the higher standard of moral excellence. I wish to see you trained in that higher school of public morals, which produced the men of our revolution, and whose discipline will always rear the statesmen and heroes, who constitute the best support and highest ornament of the state. It is not from the recollections of the distinguished fathers, whose deeds have adorned the civil and military character of his state, that the Virginian of the present day can derive consequence or reputation, si coram Lepidis male vivitur. He must do something for himself, and if the leaves of Virginia's glory, like the holly of Avenel, "have been blighted by a half hour's frost," he should bear them, in the spirit of the Gree, "so near the sky as to make amends for their stunted growth." It is here, in the calm retreats of science and upon the threshold of active life, that you have the best opportunities for determining upon the true ends of human exertion, and for acquiring the means of attaining them. Your future destiny will depend upon the correctness of your plan of life, and the steadiness with which you pursue it. I earnestly trust that each of you may now conceive his plan with judgment, and execute it hereafter with perseverance and energy. For he who starts upon the great voyage of life with false charts, can neither be sure of the port which he is making, nor know of the rocks which may wreck him.

But, gentlemen, I am detaining you too long upon a day like this, when we meet, in part at least, to restore old associations, and weave anew the ties of early friendship. An object which has its uses as well as its pleasures. The friend-