

ways

ADDRESSES

DELIVERED

AT THE INAUGURATION

OF THE

HON. ABRAHAM BRUYN HASBROUCK,

AS PRESIDENT OF RUTGERS COLLEGE,

NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J. SEPT. 15, 1840.

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ADDRESS
TO THE PRESIDENT ELECT

By PHILIP MILLEDOLER, D. D.

**PROFESSOR OF DIDACTIC THEOLOGY IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE
REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH AT NEW BRUNSWICK,**

AND

LATE PRESIDENT OF RUTGERS COLLEGE.

ADDRESS.

HONORED AND DEAR SIR :

It is with great cordiality that I perform the duty assigned me by the Board of Trustees at this your inauguration into the Presidency of Rutgers College.

The unanimity which has marked the proceedings of the board in this case, and the general satisfaction expressed at your appointment, may, we trust, be considered as favorable indications of divine direction, and pledges of future blessings.

The trust, sir, which will this day devolve upon you, is of a high, confidential, and sacred character.

Did it simply relate to the training up of youth in secular learning, for the promotion of secular interests, it would be exceedingly important. Whilst great care has been taken to secure the ablest instruction in those branches of science and literature, which are ordinarily taught in other colleges, and so to avoid all charge of sectarianism that the most fastidious in denominational predilections can have no reason to complain, we wish it to be generally and distinctly understood that a strong, moral, and religious influence has been continually brought to bear upon the minds of the pupils committed to our care, and that this influence, though of a general nature, is nevertheless of a decidedly practical and Protestant christian character.

We firmly believe, and have uniformly acted upon the

principle, that mental culture, to attain its highest elevation, must be connected with the fear of God—with habitual reverence of the Bible—and the practice of its sacred ethics.

Our views on this subject are well expressed by the celebrated Rollin, "When reason, said he, has graced the understanding of a scholar with human science, she must deliver him, if it has not been done already into the hands of religion, that he may learn how to use his acquirements, and that he, himself, may be consecrated for eternity.

"Reason should inform him that without the instructions of this new master, all his labor would be but a vain amusement, as it would be confined to earth—to time—to a comparatively trifling distinction—and a frail happiness; that this guide alone can lead man up to his beginning—carry him back into the bosom of the divinity—put him in possession of the sovereign God he aims at—and satisfy his immense desires with a boundless feeling."

Rollin's Belles Lettres, Vol. 1.

Some of our youth who have here received impressions never to be erased, are now doing honor to themselves, and to this institution, in the pulpit—at the bar—in the medical department—as well as in other honorable avocations; whilst others who entered the institution for the express purpose of preparing themselves for the gospel ministry in our own or sister churches, have here been cherished and encouraged in their christian course, and are now found either laboring in the domestic field, or carrying the lamp of heavenly truth to the most distant nations and regions of the earth.

From these statements, sir, you will perceive that something more will devolve upon you this day than the mere charge of a literary institution as such, and that a far higher and nobler object is connected with it.

Pious parents and guardians send their children and wards to this place, that while prosecuting their other studies, they may have the benefit of that moral and religious influence which will consecrate their acquirements.

The classes of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church send us their hopefully pious young men to be trained for the Gospel ministry. These, after previous trial had of their fidelity and talents, are transferred, if approved, from the college to the seminary, and from the seminary to their respective fields of labor, both at home and abroad.

It follows then, that this fountain of learning is to be regarded as having a peculiarly sacred end and bearing never to be lost sight of by its instructors, and that if the best interests of our own American Zion, or of the civil community in which we live are to be consulted—we are bound to the utmost vigilance and exertion that it be kept pure and healthful.

Upon you, sir, that you may meet the expectations of the church of God, and of your country, this charge will now rest with a peculiar emphasis.

The great design of those who long since preceded us in their councils and efforts for this institution, was to furnish an able, learned, and well qualified ministry for our church.

This, whilst we were yet colonies of Great Britain, was the basis of their application to George the 3d, in 1770, for a charter, and is thus met in that instrument itself.

“We do will, and ordain, that there be a college called Queen’s college, erected in our said Province of New Jersey, for the education of youth in the learned languages, liberal and useful arts and sciences, and especially in divinity, preparing them for the ministry, and other

good offices—and that the President of said college, by and with consent of a majority of its Trustees, confer all such honorary degrees as usually are granted and conferred in any of our colleges, in any of our colonies in America.”

This charter was afterwards ratified and confirmed by the council and general assembly of the state of New Jersey, and the power of granting degrees was finally extended in 1799 to “the conferring of any degrees granted by any other college or University.”

We cannot here possibly enter into a history of the institution from its first organization under this charter to the present day :—suffice it to say, that being originally unendowed—checked by the war of the revolution—afterwards unsustained by legislative patronage—and always principally dependent on private benefaction, its pecuniary embarrassments have been such as to compel the trustees, again and again, to suspend its operations.

This state of things continued with but little variation till the removal by death of the late venerable Professor Livingston.

When he who now addresses you had been appointed his successor in the Theological department, he soon became aware, by the multiplication of Theological schools—the extraordinary efforts employed to fill them—as well as from the general state of the church of God in our country, that our own seminary could not be sustained, or well sustained, without reviving the literary institution. Of this the funds of the college would not admit.

This difficulty, he believed, might be removed by filling up the Theological professorships, and obtaining without pecuniary compensation the volunteer services of the Theological professors in the literary institution.

This plan having been suggested to his then only colleague, the Rev. Dr. John De Witt, he at once nobly acceded to it, and the same having also been suggested to some of the resident trustees, was approved, and gave rise to the covenant entered into between the board of trustees of Queens, now Rutgers College, and the general Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church—to placing the college more immediately under the fostering patronage of the general synod—and to that plan of the institution to be revived, which was submitted to, adopted, and published by synod in their minutes of 1825.

From this statement of facts it will easily appear, that the design of employing the services of the Theological professors was then adopted by Synod as a measure of necessity, and may I add, that the labors of such a charge, especially at the beginning, and more especially to the executive officer, were immense. Nothing I am persuaded but that same stern necessity which induced the call for their services could have reconciled them to the undertaking.

Of the success which has attended their efforts, it becomes me to speak modestly. I shall not, however, hesitate to assert—that considering the circumstances under which their labors were commenced, and the difficulties seen, and unforeseen, with which they were connected, that as much solid good has been achieved as could have reasonably been expected.

I believe also that I may venture to assert, that although the superadded duties of their charge have been cheerfully and faithfully performed by the professors, yet, that one and all have looked forward with solicitude to the time, when, by a more extensive endowment of the institution, they should be relieved from these services.

That hour has not yet fully come.

It is a matter of congratulation, however, that an important step towards it has been taken by your appointment, Sir, to the presidency of this college.

Convinced as I am of the overruling providence of God, in all things; and especially in the concerns of his church, I rejoice with all my heart that the choice of the board has fallen on one in whom the church can be so generally united.

I think I can assure you, Sir, in their name, that the officers of this institution will affectionately co-operate with you in the performance of your public duties, and so far as depends on them will forward and facilitate the work in which you are engaged.

And may our covenant God, for his name's sake, and for his churches' sake, crown all your efforts for his glory with distinguished and with visible success.

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee :

The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee :

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

New Brunswick, September 15th, 1840.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

HON. ABRAHAM BRUYN HASBROUCK,

PRESIDENT OF RUTGERS COLLEGE,

September 15, 1840.

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES :

The first impulse that is felt under the circumstances in which by your instrumentality I now find myself placed is, to acknowledge the honour conferred upon me in being selected as the Presiding Officer of this Institution. Here, at least, in this calm retreat, remote from the fierce contentions and maddening strife of the outer world, the heart may freely express its emotions; and the language of diffidence, as to the satisfactory discharge of the responsible duty I have assumed, will be subject to no imputation of insincerity, to no suspicion of an affected reluctance. The ground on which we stand is indeed holy. This is not the place for vain words or idle shallow protestations. This consecrated house—these solemn services—the impressive remarks just made by the venerated man whose place I am to occupy, this assemblage of youth, this convocation of those interested in their welfare and that of your institution, all conspire to impress my mind at least, with a deep sense of the importance and responsibility of the occasion. You will allow me then, gentlemen, while indulging in becoming terms of respect for you, to invoke upon the business of this day, a blessing from on High: and while I assure you of my entire belief in your cordial and unanimous assistance, to remind you, and to be myself reminded, “ that unless the Lord keep the City, the watch-

man waketh but in vain!" With an humble reliance, therefore, upon his guiding and guardian care, together with the conviction of your continued fidelity to your important trust as members of this corporation, and of the kind and zealous co-operation of the experienced and able gentlemen with whom I am to be associated in the labours of this institution, I assume the duties of the Presidency of Rutgers College. My respected friend, and venerable predecessor, has now surrendered into your hands the trust you have so long confided to his care. He has his reward in the consciousness of faithful service; in the gratitude of many made wise for time and for eternity by his precepts and by his example; in the recorded and oft-repeated declarations of the regard of your Board. He will have a still richer reward hereafter, in the *well done* that awaits the close of a life like his. Eulogy would be ill-timed here; but I may be permitted to say, that when my allotted period of duty in this place shall terminate, happy indeed shall I be, if like him, I can look back, with an undimmed eye and with unabated strength, upon a long course of honest and applauded labor in your cause; and if, like him too, I shall be able with a Christian's thankfulness for the past, and with a Christian's hopes for the future, to inscribe upon the memorial of my separation, "*Hitherto hath the Lord helped me.*"

Having received your unsolicited and unexpected invitation, gentlemen, to preside over this Institution, I did not feel myself at liberty to decline, merely because the duties of the station, important and interesting as they are, might have been more acceptably or profitably discharged by others. The business of this world would be sadly deranged, and the healthful action of society seriously impaired, were deference to superior attainments or ability, however graceful and becoming

in itself, to form an insuperable or habitual impediment in the discharge of public or private duty. Such is not the suggestion of a well regulated mind, nor is such the law imposed upon us by the Great Ruler of the Universe ; which, while both teach us to place a proper though distrustful estimate upon our own powers, they still keep in bright view before our eyes, our duties to neighbours, to friends, and to humanity at large. We are not required to bury the talent, humble as it may be, entrusted to us by the Giver of all good ; but on the contrary to use it as a skilful artist would a picture for exhibition—to choose for it a position where its design and character may be best seen,—where the light may so strike it that even if it do not glitter and sparkle like the diamond, it may nevertheless shed the milder lustre of a less costly but still precious material. In the economy of this life there are peculiar and appropriate duties incident to every station and every grade of character, as there are also those of a common and universal application, covering as it were, with one broad mantle of responsibility, the whole family of mankind. The Roman moralist with a beauty of language which no translation can imitate, but with the power of truth, which strikes forcibly on the most imperfect vision, has said, that in nothing does man more nearly resemble the divine Being than in conferring happiness on his fellows ;—that the most fortunate or splendid career of life has nothing so bright as the power, nor nature itself any thing more noble, than the wish to serve the cause of humanity. Happy, thrice happy is he, who has the means, the opportunity and the leisure, to acquit himself of his peculiar and appropriate obligations ; who can stand up in the midst of his fellow-men, an armed champion, ready to uphold the right, and to redress the wronged,—a shield of defence and a tower of strength,

giving encouragement to the weak and hope to the despondent. A station like that, so commanding, so influential, so beneficent in its nature, it is the lot of few, very few, to attain. The gorgeous thrones of Eastern despotism, even when described by Arabian romance, grow dim and lustreless, compared with the holy, heavenly, yet mellowed light, radiant from such a condition of enviable existence. The names of Howard, Wilberforce, Clarkson and Fry, of Boudinot, Jay, Varick and Rutgers, will shine like the stars forever and ever—while others, like meteor flashes, arresting momentary attention, have long since passed into darkness only rendered deeper by the transient illumination.

Milton after describing the occupation of all the heavenly hosts, emphatically adds, *they also serve, who only stand and wait*. And it is even so in this humbler sphere of action. All have not equal powers and similar opportunities to do good. But we are not at liberty to refrain from circumscribed and limited duty, because the greatest possible benefit cannot be conferred by our labors. The faintest ray of the most distant planet, that twinkles in the spacious firmament above us, yet increases the general beauty of the whole; and the scanty rill that trickles down its native rock, scarce enough to slake the hunter's thirst, yet contributes to swell the noble river in the plain, and to elevate the tallest billow of the sea—*Non omnes omnia possumus*. We cannot all wield a giant's strength, nor "wake to ecstacy the living lyre." But still there is an effort every individual can make,—a task every one can accomplish,—a good every rational being may attain. It is his duty, imposed by the most sacred obligations, and enforced by the most salutary and authoritative precepts, to make that effort, to accomplish that task, to attain that good. To scatter as with a sower's hand the abundance of his own garner;

and imitating the beneficence of Heaven, whose bounty he every moment enjoys, to fructify and embellish to the extent of his means, all within the sphere of his influence; to add to the common repast, if not the costly solution of Cleopatra's extravagance, at least, the mite, which like that of old, will be rendered acceptable by the humble and kindly spirit in which it is offered.

The occasion, young gentlemen, students of Rutgers College, affords a fit opportunity, upon this first introduction to you, for a few remarks connected with your duties and privileges, here in the presence of those to whom you and I, in different relations indeed, are yet equally responsible. The accomplished master of Roman eloquence, when addressing the Conscript Fathers of the Senate, on a subject of great moment, in the consciousness of superior power, and with a declared estimate of ability, which modern propriety would not tolerate even in a Cicero, after invoking their justice and impartiality added, *Ut me attente audiatis, id ipse efficiam*. The prevalence of a far nobler morality in these latter times, renders such invocations to duty now unnecessary, and in the progress of refinement a speaker standing in a place such as I occupy, and in the relation I have here formed with you, is sure of a respectful even though it be not a gratified attention, and enjoys as a spontaneous tribute what it seems could once be exacted only by arrogated or conceded ability. The remarks which it shall be my task to make upon the proper culture of literary habits and upon the choice of proper objects of regard, may prove neither new or striking, but I trust, nevertheless, they may lead to some results neither trivial nor unimportant.

It is a principle, I believe, laid down and admitted as an axiom by every writer whose business it has been to analyze and define the character of the human mind,

that it is in its very nature and essence, progressive. All knowledge is acquired; the powers and faculties of the soul, like those of the body, being slowly developed and expanded. The intellectual ray that shines so faintly in earliest infancy, as sometimes to startle parental apprehension as to its very existence, grows bright and brighter unto the splendour of mature life, just as the powerless arm of childhood in the progress of time, becomes the gnarled and vigorous limb of a Sampson or a Milo. In plain and simple phrase, the tendency of our nature is onward. *The divinity stirs within us*,—urging us still to seek new attainments,—to gain larger possessions,—to climb higher and higher for more noble and extended views,—to count all things but loss for the glorious liberty of winging an eagle's flight far, far, above the vulgar level of daily occupation, and of fixing an eagle's eye, steadfast and serene, upon the very source of light and knowledge. It is upon this impulse of our nature, upon this craving desire for more light, upon this irrepressible principle of expansion, that Addison, in one of his beautiful essays on that subject, founds an argument in favor of the immortality of the soul. And what more unequivocal evidence of its origin can be asked or need be furnished? Its native home is above, its look is heaven-ward,—

Rivers to the ocean run,
 Nor stay in all their course,
 Fires ascending seek the sun,
 Both speed them to their source.

So the soul, spurning its thralldom and circumscribed limits here, tends upward for the acquisition of greater knowledge; and pants, as the heart panteth after the water-brooks, with Cherubim, and Seraphim, to enjoy its full and perfect bliss, in still beginning and never ending improvement.

The main purpose, however, for which I remind you of this familiar quality of the mind, is, that I may the better fix your attention upon the fact, that in laboring after knowledge, we are only following the bent of our nature. A mind satisfied with its present attainments, and indifferent to further progress, is a mind diseased, sicklied, and impaired by the gross and sensual gratification of the body, or suffering under the excitement and delirium of vanity. The principle of gravitation acts not more universally and unceasingly than does that law of every healthy mind to which I have adverted; and he who is wise in his own conceit, may rest assured that there is more hope of a fool than of him. The man who says in reference to his own intellectual attainments, "soul take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for many years," exposes himself to the surprise of a just and a heavy condemnation. The very Malvolio of Shakspeare's graphic page, he struts through life with the emblems of his folly blazoned on his person, and apparent in every act; and is saved from contempt only by the kindred emotion of pity. Nor is he more to be envied who slumbers through life with a sort of dormouse existence, half sentient, half inanimate—having the powers of an angel, unexercised, unimproved, and almost unknown to himself, encased in a form of sluggishness and torpidity. "Creation's blot, creation's blank," he moves among his fellow men a wooden automaton, insensible and impervious,—himself the only object of his solicitude, and his own the only meditation of his heart. One dull, unvarying round occupies his days, and the dreamy, profitless existence comes at last to a close, and then his history is told, as you would tell that of his horse or his ox; he was born—he ate and he drank, *he died, and was buried*. Such a man mars the beauty of his nature, breaks the very

main-spring that gives motion and activity to his system, and converts into dust and ashes, the only principle that separates him from the oyster upon which he feeds.

Nor need we be deterred from the pursuit of knowledge by any apparent or real difficulty in the way. It has been beautifully said in the experience of this world's calamities, that "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb;" but the benevolence of Him who formed us, is no less strikingly illustrated in the facility with which the mind attains the object of its desires, and in the pleasure derived from the very difficulties of its attainment. If it be true, as I have observed, that there is an inherent and essential propensity in our spiritual formation to further and still further improvement, to greater and still greater expansion, how utterly irreconcilable would it be with our notions of the benevolence of the Deity, that we should be doomed to feel desires which could never be gratified—to suffer the torments of Tantalus in being surrounded by pleasures of which we could never partake, that, in a word, the aspiring genius of the soul should like the struck eagle of the Poet, be stretched upon the plain "to soar no longer through rolling clouds" into the depths of air. But such is not her melancholy fate. Like the fresh lark she springs upward from earth to sky, and exults not only at the first gleam of the morning, but in the very triumph of the ascent. There is no royal road to learning, but neither is there a *Lion in the way*; and the difficulties to be met and overcome are only such as to give new vigour to our powers, and to enhance in our own estimation, the value of our acquisitions. It is a familiar exclamation of the Poet, "how hard it is to climb to fame's proud temple!" But the shrine at which knowledge bows, and where she would lay her offerings, is of

easier, pleasanter access. Each upward step leads to new prospects and still greater delights. The toil of ascent is constantly repaid by the fulness of enjoyment. A hand unseen but by the votary, still beckons him up, and a voice unheard but by his ear, still urges him on, until he stands at last in the very recess of the temple, complete in all the armor becoming his origin and his end.

It is remarked by the acute and philosophical but infidel historian of England, that "the superiority which the pursuits of literature possess above every other occupation is such, that even he who obtained but mediocrity in them, merits the pre-eminence above those who excel the most in the common and vulgar professions." High as is the authority from which this proposition emanates, its truth would still be questioned by many a hardy soldier of fortune, and many a successful follower of a gainful occupation; by the Souvaroffs and Wellingtons, the Rothschilds and Barings of the day. It is, however, undoubtedly true, that a solid reputation, whether in literature or science, is of all merely human things, the only real adamant which time and storm pass without injury. The commentaries of Cæsar, for instance, have done more to fix his character, and give an enduring value to his name, than all his military achievements, brilliant and important as they were. In looking back upon the history of Greece and Rome, so replete with every thing to command attention, where does the admiration of manhood rest, but upon the sages, poets and orators, who shine out like beacon fires from the dense and murky atmosphere? Do we not rather linger with Plato and Socrates in the groves and gardens devoted to philosophy? or stand in the forum of the capitol to listen to the thundering accents of Demosthenes, or the harmonious periods of Cicero, than follow Scipio

or Marius or Pompey, even when moving on with all the gorgeous pageantry and magnificent accompaniments of a triumph decreed by a grateful senate? What is it that has made England for more than a century the cynosure of the world? Surely not the history of her wars in India, or on the continent of Europe—not even the battles of Blenheim, Trafalgar, or Waterloo, gained by men as gallant as ever went forth in their country's service. She points as she should do, with the maternal pride of Cornelia, to her philosophers, poets, orators and dramatists, as her chief ornaments, richer than the diadem of her sovereign; to men whose fame was her chief glory even in her most high and palmy state, as it has been her surest stay in the hour of her adversity, when as now, discontent and treason were gnawing at her vitals; to men whose names have sanctified in the eyes of her own children, and palliated in the opinion of all, the gross abuses of her social system, and have thrown over the rottenness and defects of a corrupt and antiquated polity, a robe of splendour which might have shamed the woof of Ormus or the purple of Tyre.

But the general verdict of mankind has been strikingly pronounced in favor of the position of Hume, in the different degrees of feeling manifested at the death of two distinguished individuals, who more than a quarter of a century ago, were pronounced in a leading literary Journal, the greatest men then living. Napoleon, the mighty conqueror, the maker and destroyer of thrones, who disposed of kings and emperors, in the words of another, "as he would of the titular dignitaries of the chess board," died under circumstances that appeal strongly to general sympathy—a prisoner upon a rock in the sea. Yet the event caused no expressions of regret, no formal pageantry and pomp even of legalized woe.

“The world’s great victor pass’d unheeded by.”

A cold *sic transit* was the only expression of sympathy, and he was left *alone with his glory*, to point a moral or adorn a tale. But when the Great Unknown, the author of *Waverly*, who reigned over an extended empire of mind greater than the world had yet seen, when he, too, the Magician of the North—laid aside his wand, and wrapped his mantle round him, and bowed his head in darkness, then did Nations the remotest from his green grave, stand sorrowing, dejected friends around his memory; and *Abbotsford* became the shrine to which every heart resorts—a reverential loving pilgrim. The civilized world deplored his death, and the lakes, streams and mountains of his native and beloved land, mourned the loss of their minstrels faithful song. In his own touching strains,

“Call it not vain; they do not err,
 Who say, that when the Poet dies,
 Mute nature mourns her worshipper,
 And celebrates his obsequies;
 Who say tall cliff and cavern lone
 For the departed bard make moan;
 That mountains weep in chrysal rill,
 That flowers in tears of balm distil,
 Through his lov’d groves that breezes sigh,
 And oaks, in deeper groan, reply—
 And rivers teach their rushing wave
 To murmur dirges round his grave.”

The tendency of the mind to knowledge, the gratification its pursuit constantly affords, and the high distinction which the world has accorded to literary merit, having been thus considered, I will ask your attention to a few remarks more directly applicable to the subject proposed for your consideration.

Among the proverbial treasures in which the literature of Spain abounds, few are of more general importance,

and none more appropriate to my purpose, than this : *Choose that which is most useful and habit will soon render it the most agreeable.* That we are the creatures of habit, is as familiar to us as that we are creatures of dust ; but the full force of the saying is not so readily acknowledged. In matters indeed that relate more immediately to our animal existence, in our sleep, food, raiment and recreations, we all confess the influence, nay, the despotism of this power ; but its operations upon the inner and nobler man, upon the delicate texture of the mind are not so easily traced. And yet it requires no very profound research in metaphysical science, no intimate acquaintance with Locke or Reid, or Stewart, or Brown, to learn that the habit of attention, for instance, is as much a habit as to dose—as to walk fast, or to walk slow. Now, it is commonly urged upon us by parental authority, and in all the various forms of monitorial instruction, to acquire this or to avoid that bodily habit. And all the while our intellectual habits, those alone which form the man, compared with which all else is trifling, are too often left to the chances of time, or to the suggestions of our own tardy experience,

“ Our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert—”

and the maturity of manhood stands a leafless tree in the summer's ray, for want of the gushing springs, which, like the streams of the wilderness, failed when the traveller's need was the sorest.

The habits of early life, those formed in a collegiate course, are of immeasurable importance from their constantly increasing force, but yet it is never too late to break a bad habit, or to begin a good one. And if there be any one of you just now entering or further ad-

vanced upon the prescribed course of study here, who is not an habitual reader, let me urge him to commence straightway. The task may at first be irksome, and the author, although of standard worth, may seem dull, but our proverb tells us, that the habit once formed soon will be found agreeable. It was said by Charles 12th of Sweden, that he who was ignorant of arithmetic was but half a man. If I might be allowed the privilege of a version of such an apothegm I should say, that he who is not a constant reader is but the tithe of a man; a disposable cipher in the decimal sum, whose only use is to increase the value of the numerical figure he is made to follow. In the present condition of the world, when knowledge is showered upon us like manna, by the literary enterprise and benevolence of the day, not to read, is to fall back in the race before us,—is to hide ourselves from the light whose effulgence is shed all around us,—is to lie like the sluggard ship upon the broad waters, with its sails close furled and its crew asleep, while others of the fleet spread all their canvass and square every yard to catch the breeze that impels them forward. Books of every description, in their cheapest form, are almost rained upon us, and can be obtained in such abundance as to be with us and about us every where and always. To the disgrace of ignorance, now must be added the imputation of sloth, obstinacy and morbid indifference to the opinion of the world. The necromantic term which unlocks the doors and throws back the bolts is known to every man, and he has but to pronounce the word, and the treasures are his own. Besides the actual benefits of such a habit, as a means of knowledge, it furnishes sources of amusement highly important in their influence upon human happiness. A book is a silent, unobtrusive companion, who converses only when we wish it, and upon the very

topic best suited to our prevailing taste or the whim of the moment. It is a guest who deranges by no dull formality or vulgar pretensions the quiet of the study or the cheerful ease and freedom of the parlor circle; who makes no exaction upon the time or reluctant hospitality of the host, but may be dismissed with the freedom of an inmate, to be called back again at a more convenient season. I pity, says a writer, the individual on a rainy day who is not fond of books. But how many a dull and cheerless hour, even in sunshine and serenity, must steal upon such a man's existence; spreading clouds and gloom over every surrounding object, and infusing the poison of discontent into every cup which pleasure would offer.

“Unknown to him when sensual pleasures cloy,
To fill the languid pause with finer joy.”—

the joy of holding communion with the mighty dead or with living genius, exploring the wonders of nature, tracing the progress of human improvement, or lapping the mind in the elysium of the poet's dream. In short, a taste for reading makes, in the words of Bacon, “a full man—full of all the capacities of enjoyment—full of all the means and appliances of usefulness, of all that goes to form and strengthen character, which in its humblest form, far exceeds in value the bubble reputation so eagerly sought by many.” A taste for reading lends to its possessor a new charm in every thing around him, and imparts a solace under all the petty ills of life.

“The meanest flowret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale;
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are op'ning paradise.”

It is true, indeed, that so prolific is the press, the healthful aliment of the mind is in danger of being impaired

and poisoned by the very rankness of the soil which produces it. The tares are now well nigh choking the wheat of literature; and in the fields to which you are invited, amid the plants reared by sages and christian scholars, are found in full luxuriance, and in gaudy flower, the very weeds of false taste and still falser philosophy. Heartless essays upon a system of morality which Rome or Athens would have repudiated—political theories which put to shame the wisdom of the wise man of Laputa, who would extract sunbeams from cucumbers—mystical disquisitions of a philosophy self-styled and well-named *transcendental*, bearing upon its front the inscription of the ancient altar, *To the unknown God*;—"Orphic sayings" which lose much of their power of mischief and something of their malignant sneer holy things, in the unintelligible jargon of a newly invented tongue—voluptuous lyrics—debasement romances—histrionic biographies of dancing girls and vulgar buffoons—all these and more are heaped in thick profusion upon the literary banquet table of the day. Your own good taste, young gentlemen, as well as a sense of danger from such fare, will lead you to food more suitable to your principles, and more congenial with your immortal spirits. Upon each and all of these I would write with a guardian's care, and with a parent's solicitude, "touch not, taste not, handle not."

It is an old remark that man is the artificer of his own fortune. 'This truth, important at all times, is particularly so in reference to your pursuits and habits here. Man is the artificer of his own fortune. God has given us the materials indeed, but it depends upon our own exertions, whether for our intellectual being we shall rear the marble halls of Italian magnificence, or permit it to burrow in the earth with the demi-brutal troglodyte. "It is not in our stars," says Shakespeare,

“but in ourselves, that we are underlings.” The farmer might as reasonably expect that his neglected and forsaken field will yield a rich and abundant harvest, as the intellectual man that his mind will produce the golden apples of a refined and cultivated understanding, without previous culture and improvement. The primeval curse of barrenness is not confined to earth; its influence reaches the spiritual soil within us, where bad passions, gloomy doubts, and degrading skepticism, worse than thorns and thistles, spring up in profusion upon the arid, herbless and dreary waste. You must not be apprehensive of ultimate failure. We are all, each and every one of us, utterly unconscious of our own powers and possible attainments. *Possunt quia posse videntur*. “Our doubts,” says the great master of the human heart, whom I have already quoted,—

“————our doubts are traitors,
And make us lose the good we oft might win,
By fearing to attempt.”

Diligence and perseverance will attain much, if they do not accomplish every thing. The stern unyielding resolution we daily see exhibited by men in pursuit of wealth or political preferment, need only be summoned to the work of the mind, and the victory is secure. “It is wonderful,” says Foster, “how even the apparent casualties of life seem to bow to a spirit that will not bow to them, and yield to assist a design after having in vain attempted to frustrate it.” “The mind is its own place,” and embellishes as it shall determine the habitation of its rest. “We have,” says a late writer, “our inclinations more under our command than we can imagine, till the experiment is tried. There is not a more effectual bar to the attainment of substantial distinction and success in the race of life, than the notion that our propensities and aversions are not under our control.

We are too apt to mistake indolence for inability, and to excuse our reluctance to enter upon the rugged and more laborious paths of science by pleading antipathies which we have never set ourselves to overcome."

Your engagements and pursuits here, young gentlemen, are, you will remember, only preparatory to your future course of life. The tastes, the habits, the attachments, the principles formed here, will have an abiding, a controlling influence upon your character in all time to come. As you sow now, so will you reap hereafter. The officers of this institution, from an inspection of the the record of your conduct here, will be able to tell, often with prophetic certainty, on your departure from these walls, the extent of your usefulness, the grade of your character in the haunts and struggles without. *The child is father to the man* ; but more emphatically is it true that the Collegian shadows forth in no obscure lines, the future member of a profession, the future citizen, the future christian. The grace of God may indeed intervene to pluck the brand from the burning, but without that, you may yourselves read your future histories in your present tendencies and habits; the picture of the longest life that may be allotted to you, may be found delineated in the short span of your Collegiate course. How important then is it for yourselves, for your parents, for your country, that you should now in the spring time of life form such attachments, cherish such sentiments, select such principles as will lead to your future usefulness and respectability. A cloud of witnesses on earth and in heaven, watch with intense interest every step you take, every action you perform.

Jupiter est, quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris.

In this view of the subject, I will venture to call your attention still further to some topics connected with

your future duties as members of society and as citizens of a free state; for it is here, it is now, as I again repeat, that not only the measure of your value but the nature of your services, in either capacity, must be determined. I meet you here, then, on the borders of that land you are soon to occupy, and over which you are in a short time to exert an influence, which shall be for weal or for woe, for the healing or destruction of the nation, as you may yourselves now resolve. I bring you a message from the busy world without. I have come up hither from the din of the distant conflict; from among those who bear the heat and burden of the day; from the dusty highways of life, to greet you in behalf of the good and the wise; to invite you to enlist under their banners; to tell you what they expect of you; and to remind you in some small measure of what is due to yourselves, to your fellow-men, and to your country. I meet you here to assist in all honesty and sincerity of purpose in your preparations for the responsible, I might perhaps say, perilous duties that await you; to counsel you with all the affection of a father, in the selection of that armour, that panoply complete, which alone will enable you to mingle unharmed in the dangers of the conflict. My heart's desire and prayer to God is, that you may escape the terrible imprecation, "curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof. Why? Because they came not to the help of the Lord, against the mighty."

It is not to be concealed, my friends, amidst all the wonderful improvements of the times, the advance of knowledge, the spread of religion, the progress of liberal principles of government which now cheer the heart of every christian and philanthropist, there are yet at work principles of evil which may sooner or later cause the destruction of all this seeming good. In the midst

of this splendid summer day, when the sun is walking like a giant in his course, calling forth into life and beauty, all the ends of the earth, there yet hangs upon the distant horizon a dark and ominous spot, no bigger than a man's hand, which may overspread this glorious sky with the gloom, and sweep the surface of society, with the destruction of a tornado. To him, whose ways are as just and wise as they are inscrutable, we must cheerfully submit the issue. But yet it must ever be borne in mind, that the condition of existence here is unremitting vigilance; that in proportion to the value of any blessing are the toil and anxiety with which it is to be won or preserved. The form of government under which we live, while it produces a greater share of national prosperity and a higher degree of individual happiness, than have been enjoyed by any people, since human governments were instituted, imposes upon us at the same time duties and responsibilities commensurate with its excellence and inseparable from its very being. There is a constant, unceasing, mutual action and re-action between the government and the governed:—and it is only when the people are virtuous and intelligent, that the system can by any possibility be productive of good. Indeed, without virtue and intelligence in the people, it is perhaps the very worst form of government, for it is then the sway of hypocrites,—of demagogues,

Who mean license, when they cry liberty,
And bawl for freedom, in their senseless mood:

who have the people on their lips but their own selfish and unprincipled purposes in their hearts. It is obvious, then, that without the virtue, without the knowledge, which are the pillars of the temple in which freedom is enshrined, the edifice must totter to its fall.

But mere knowledge without virtue will not fit us for the duties of freedom. The heart, the heart, must be right, as well as the head be clear. The affections of the citizen must rest upon the proper objects; his sentiments must move unbidden and spontaneously, in harmony with the eternal principles of truth and justice. The new commandment of the gospel, the great law of love, must be the ruling principle of his conduct. To enjoy the full measure of his felicity, all that his condition here will allow, the citizen must be good, not only in his moral and religious, but in his civil and political relations. As the people are the sources of power, they must be virtuous, or the government will be corrupt; the fountain must be pure or the stream will be turbid.

I need hardly, young gentlemen, in connection with this view of the subject, remind you of the fate of Revolutionary France—of that awful lesson written on the page of history, in characters of fire and blood, for the benefit of all future time. Perhaps at no former period of her history had that polished people been so far advanced in science, in the arts, in every thing that constitutes in some sense at least, the glory of a nation, as at the commencement of her former revolutionary struggle. But God was not in all her thoughts. Religion by a solemn legislative enactment was declared an imposture. The bible was burnt by the hands of the common hangman; and the goddess of reason personified by an inmate of a brothel, was worshipped by philosophers and scholars, by nobles and peasants—by a nation of infidels. Then ensued a scene the like of which no eye hath witnessed, and no tongue can tell. Since the destruction of the guilty cities of the Plain, over the ruins of which, now roll the dark and briny waters of the Dead Sea, never has the vengeance of Hea-

ven been so signally displayed. France, the fairest portion of Europe, was swept with the besom of destruction. In the energetic words of another, "it became one great charnel house, in which life went out, not in solitary instances, but by an universal extinction. Knell tolled upon knell, hearse followed hearse, and coffin rumbled upon coffin, until the grave, the insatiable grave, said—*it is enough.*"

" On the tomb of hope interred
Scowl'd the spectre of despair."

And even now at the distance of a century, the crimes of that bloody day seem yet hardly expiated. For no where in all Europe is internal peace so often disturbed, is government so insecure, does happiness hang upon so frail a thread, or religion so little affect the heart, as in the land where fanaticism could at one time slaughter the Huguenots like sheep, and where, at another, infidelity, speaking with authority, and standing in the high places of power, could blasphemously deride the existence of a God. Alas! alas! that with such a history before their eyes, men should yet be found who can hunt among the discarded abominations of that day, for principles of policy and conduct to be adopted by the happy and intelligent people of these United States; that the poison which then produced lamentation and death, should now be recommended as the elixir, that will cure the necessary ills, and renovate the health of the body politic. Wonderful delusion! that men should cherish in their bosom those fiery serpents of the wilderness whose sting is death, and refuse to look for safety upon the principles held up by the experience of mankind, and approved by Heaven, as alone conducive to the public weal.

Let me urge upon you, young gentlemen, while you

strive to obtain a knowledge of the principles of our government, of the constitution by which it is administered, and of the laws under which we live, at the same time to cultivate a deep and permanent feeling of regard for all those institutions which have been devised by the philanthropy of the age, to advance the welfare and improve the condition of mankind. The age we live in has been truly called the age of benevolence. The brightest page in the future history of the 19th century will not be that which shall tell of its fields of blood, the destruction of navies, or of cities wrapt in fire by self-devoted patriotism. These, alas! from Genesis down, are but the common familiar topics of all histories. Nor yet will it be that which shall tell of its wide spread commerce, or of knowledge diffused, or science advanced, or of improvements in the arts; of steam-boats, canals, and rail-roads, honorable and distinctive as they are. Oh, no! it will be that which shall record the formation of bible societies, tract societies, missions; of temperance reform and common schools. These, these are the things in which we differ from those who have gone before us; these are the stars which from the dim obscurity that shall hereafter rest upon the present, will shine with unfading splendor till time shall be no more. What though we have built no Babels by which to scale the heavens, what though we have erected no Pyramids to stand forever in the burning sands, the puzzles of future times, and the monuments of our folly or our cruelty? Yet have we under a sense of duty, and in a spirit of kindness to our fellow-men, established these noble institutions; yet have we every where put up these Jacob's ladders by which the angels may descend to us, if we cannot ascend to them; by which man, if he cannot in the present state reach the skies, may at

least lift himself up from the degradation and misery of earth.

These institutions, gentlemen, independently of higher motives to which I now but allude, but which you cannot too solemnly ponder, are entitled to your most friendly notice, by your obligations as citizens and patriots. Go, said the statesman to his son just commencing his travels, "go and learn with how little wisdom the world is governed." However just or unjust may be the sarcasm, certain it is, that without religion and morality, it cannot be governed at all. They are the key-stone of the arch, the cement that binds the parts into one compact whole. While, therefore, these institutions improve the moral condition of mankind, they at the same time add strength and stability to our political system. At least they are the *Corinthian Capitals* which beautify the columns of civil society. Do you seek to know their influence upon humanity? Do you ask to learn the mighty spell by which the oppressor's rod has been broken, and the captive has been set free? How it is, that in the short space of forty years, principles of government which before were to be found only as bright abstractions in the visions of philanthropic philosophy—in the benevolent day dreams of Plato or Sir Thomas Moore, have now become not merely rules of daily conduct for the many, but the familiar household terms of czars, and kings and cabinet ministers? How it is, that the doctrine of our Declaration of Independence, borne by the viewless air, have been sown broad-cast over the earth, and have brought forth in some places thirty, in some fifty, and in some an hundred fold? Why it is, that, comparatively at least, national frontiers are no longer defined by the bristling bayonets of a cruel and mercenary soldiery? or national honor vindicated only on the "perilous edge of battle?" That states no longer

“shoot madly from their spheres,” to assert their rights, or redress their wrongs by dyeing the ocean with blood, or covering cities with all their treasures of art, their accumulated grandeur and happy homes with the gloom of desolation or the blackness of despair?—but that instead thereof, they meet to settle their differences by treaties founded upon principles of truth and justice, and recognizing the doctrines of christianity?—by sober compact, and not by brute force? How it happens, that Europe which, through nearly all its history to the beginning of the present century and down to the battle of Waterloo, was but a fortified camp, has become with the few exceptions of internal discord, the land of peace and plenty?—that the sword has been converted into the plough-share, and the spear into the pruning hook, and that its inhabitants have almost forgotten the art of war, while they have luxuriated in the pastoral scenes of Arcadian tranquillity? Why it is, that nations and empires, and people of every tongue, now

“—————move
In perfect phlanax to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders,”

to cultivate the arts of peace, and spread in the benighted regions of the earth the blessings of knowledge and freedom and religion? Do you seek, I ask, to know the influence that has produced a change so general and so great? Go forth, then, with the prophet, and stand upon the mount. And while you survey the bannered hosts that traverse the earth, the navies that encumber the sea, the voyages of discovery, the expeditions of science, and all the other costly and splendid contrivances by which man has deluded himself into the belief that he was advancing the good of his race, ask yourselves, is it in these that the cause is to be found? Listen to the

response of bleeding mangled Europe, as it comes up to you in the din of its hundred battle fields;—catch the moans of unhappy Africa as they die away upon the scorching breezes of the middle passage;—hearken to the tales of Pizarro and of Montezuma;—to the story of the grinding domination of British India,—to the fate of her proud Rajahs and Nabobs, and of her meek and submissive Gentoos. Let the faithful record of universal history give the answer. Then turn your eyes to the little band of humble yet mighty spirits who congregate in the counting-room of a London merchant amid the gloom of a London sky. Listen there to the Granville, Sharpes, the Wilberforces, the Grants, the Thorntons and the Hebers of the day; and in their deliberations mark the first streakings of the dawn that ushers in the day. Yes, from that lowly altar, built in faith and bantered by love, behold a light spring upward which has illumined the world! “As when before the prophet’s gaze the Lord passed by, behold a great strong wind rent the mountain, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake;—and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire, *a still small voice.*”

I speak to you not only as immortal spirits, but as future citizens of the republic, as future members of society, and of the great family of mankind; and it is by your obligations as such, by your best interests as such, that I invoke your support of the benevolent action of the times. It is not enough, however, that you give these institutions the cold support of, “Be ye warmed, and be ye clothed,” or even that you should be the mere followers of others more active and earnest than yonrselves. “My son, give me thine heart,” is the language of every one of them. Give them that, give

them your voices, your counsel, your influence,—and your money, dust as it is, will be but dust in the comparison. Identify their interests with your own ; study their influences, trace their effects, and make it a part of the business of your lives to be acquainted with their details. The cause of public education, the grand distinctive feature of the day, which flourishes even in the arbitrary governments of Europe, sooner or later there to do its work, languishes for want of sympathy in a community most interested in its success. The system, admirable as it is in its design, and richly endowed by the wise and politic liberality of many of the states, without the zealous, full concurrence of the intelligent and religious, without the strong infusion of a heavenly influence, may prove but a plague upon the commonwealth, —a whip of scorpions in the hands of the wicked. No sunshine of mere legislative favor can ever produce results to be desired by the friends of religion or the lovers of freedom. Let your attachment to this, and to its kindred and co-ordinate schemes of benevolence, be the tests of your patriotism, of your fidelity to yourselves, to your fellow men, and to God.—

“ This above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any one.”

Your associations and pursuits here, my young friends, happily furnish, if rightly used, the means of fitting you for all these duties. That you should not yield to generous impulses or listen to high behests, is forbidden by every honest, honorable ambition, by every consideration of duty. “ A royal banquet richly spread,” not with the meats that perish, but with the food convenient for your immortal natures, is here placed before you. Depend upon it, that the gleanings of knowledge are better than the vintages of ignorance and folly.—Riches

fly away upon the wings of the morning, and are the sport of the tempest and conflagration. But a literary taste, a fondness for books, a devotion in knowledge and virtuous principles, are a perpetual possession, of which no accident of time can deprive you. They give dignity to manhood, and add lustre to the most valued and cherished acquisitions of the longest and most prosperous life. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get understanding.—Exalt her, and she will promote thee—she will bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her—she will give to thy head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory will she deliver to thee."

Thus spoke the renowned son of David, from the very pinnacle of earthly grandeur and when arrayed in all his glory; after a long and eventful life, too, in which he had sounded all the depths of human greatness, and taken the gauge and dimension of every human enjoyment. The words of inspiration, spoken to a chosen people, amid the mountains of Judea, were yet intended for all time and for every land. But to none do they come with more solem import, than to the youth of a free state, with whom will soon abide, in sacred trust, the ark of the covenant of liberty; and in no place do they teach a more impressive lesson than here, where, to the duties common to the whole family of man, are superadded the momentous obligations of a religious and well-ordered system of education.