



AN
A D D R E S S
DELIVERED BEFORE THE
L I T E R A R Y S O C I E T I E S
OF
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE,

July 28, 1841.

BY J. B. CONDIT.

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DARTMOUTH COLLEGE, AUG. 2, 1841.

DEAR SIR,—By a vote passed at a joint meeting of the United Fraternity and Social Friends, it is made our agreeable duty to express the thanks of the Societies, for your very able and eloquent Oration, delivered before them on Wednesday last, and to request a copy for publication.

Very Respectfully,

In behalf of the Societies,

G. W. BENSON,
JOHN E. TYLER,
LORENZO CLAY.

REV. J. B. CONDIT.

PORTLAND, ME., AUG. 9, 1841.

GENTLEMEN,—It is with diffidence that I comply with the request of the Literary Societies, for the publication of the Address delivered before them, at their recent Anniversary. While I acknowledge the kindness with which you speak of it, I regret that it is not more worthy of it.

With great respect,

Yours,

J. B. CONDIT.

MESSRS. G. W. BENSON,
JOHN E. TYLER,
LORENZO CLAY.



A D D R E S S .

GENTLEMEN :—

The student, during the longest and most eventful career, can not forget the hour when he was an actor in a scene like the present. However distant the point from which he looks back to it, it stands elevated above the common plane of life, in singular and sacred prominence. The bond which is forming during his academical years, is one of the strongest that encompasses his earthly existence. The sympathies which are here awakened, are consecrated; they are not such as are exposed to rude contact with the world. Select and delicate, they retreat from the harsh exercise of the promiscuous crowd; yet, they remain unquenched through life, an unseen source of influence. They prompt aspiring mind in its hardest struggles; they cheer the hours of despondency, and soften, with kind alleviations, the wounded spirit. Such an occasion as this, is a means of fostering these sympathies; when we can lay aside the armor with which we have girded ourselves for the conflicts of life, annihilate in imagination, the interval which has fled since we occupied the classic hall, and refresh ourselves on the mount of communion. While here engaged in the pleasant task

of the student, and especially at the close of these duties, you anticipate, with satisfaction, a frequent return to this spot, to kneel at these altars again, and to kindle afresh your literary devotion. Let me assure you, that continued fidelity to the high purposes of life, will make such a return a peculiar privilege, and give to the sympathies now formed a lasting fragrance.

When you summoned me from a scene of far different labors, to take a part in the exercises of this day, I found myself moved by the sympathies just alluded to, and determined to obey their impulse. Though a stranger with you, and though registered among the sons of a distant institution, they forbid me to feel like a stranger; they confer the right and the privilege of a home beneath your classic shade, while they enforce upon me a deep conviction of the importance of the duty to which your kindness has called me.

In the selection of a theme to the consideration of which this hour is to be devoted, I may not have consulted the public taste so much as the suggestions arising from the associations of my own mind. I will hope that I shall not be compelled to encounter your dissatisfaction, if I pass by the subject of Popular Education, so often illustrated by abler men, or if you are not invited to gather the precious harvest from some field of popular literature. I trust that a candid estimate of the great end of all your acquisitions, and the claims of the age, will evince that I am not out of place, when I introduce to your attention, *some of the more important moral characteristics of eloquence.*

With such a design before me, I am encouraged by the conviction, that eloquence has already, to some ex-

tent, secured your attention, as a grand instrument of power in this country. This department of study has been gradually assuming the position which it merits, in the colleges of New-England. It is enjoined upon the guardians of the youthful mind, by the nature of our civil and religious institutions. The popular principle which pervades the whole, determines how mind must be governed. It must be left free for the action of thought, illustrated and enforced by eloquence, spoken and written. To educated men, this work mainly belongs. The facilities offered for exerting this agency, imperiously call for the most studious training of the mind and heart. I am happy to know that the venerated institution within whose precincts we are assembled, is behind no other, in the provisions requisite to qualify her sons for this work.

It can hardly be necessary to disclaim all purpose to elevate the moral resources of the orator, so as to depreciate the intellectual. Indeed, such is the intimate relation between them, that I may not omit, in this place, to allude to those mental qualities, without which, the eminence which the orator should occupy, can never be reached. Nothing will compensate for intellectual leanness, for a narrow range of study, or for contractedness of thought. His mental endowments must be the essential dependence of the orator. It is not by the mere excursions of the imagination, or the unstudied appeal to passion, that he will gain a substantial and permanent victory. Let him not enter the field like the proud champion, who, trusting to the glitter of his polished armor, falls before the single weapon of his skilful adversary. There is a flash

which startles for a moment; but you will soon recover from the shock. Though you are counted a conquered foe, your arm will soon nerve with original strength, and your face will flush with new courage.

The cause of literature is dear to us, and we can only feel solicitous to awaken a sympathy with it, in its purest and healthiest spirit, in its most extensive range, and to bid the student of eloquence advance in those paths from which he will gather its selectest influences. He must study the finest specimens, the productions of the best writers, that he may mark the workings of mind, detect qualities of thought, and receive the influence which refines and elevates taste. He must maintain the closest intimacy with the developments of passion, and those delineations of character which are furnished in the works of genius; associating his mind with the style, the sentiment, and the philosophy of those who have enthroned themselves in the empire of knowledge.

With true sincerity, I subscribe to the highest doctrines ever urged on this subject, from any chair of rhetoric. The mind which is to move the men of this age, must aim not only at the sternness and vigor of nature, wild as she ever grows, but also at that finish and fertility that will make its light clear and captivating, and its conquests easy. Study nature in her original. Study nature as some child of her own inspiration has embodied her. Study her in the pictures drawn by the pencils of the masters. Stand not merely in the outer court, where you can take the form and dress of thought, but press into the inner sanctuary of mind. Carry your enthusiasm with you. Sit

under the droppings of that inner sanctuary, with an absorbing devotion, until you can breathe its atmosphere as your native element, and until your spirit is raised to the tone of its most sublime revelations. It is not sufficient that you hang up the portraits of standard excellence before the eye, or become familiar with the genius of language. You need to study and come in contact with the soul. There is no magic influence from the living or the dead. There is no mysterious transforming power, which asks merely for a state of passivity in the subject of its action. There is what some call communion with nature, which has none of the rapture of him

Who feels the breeze of nature stirring in his soul.

So there is a supposed communion with master minds, which leaves one as it found him. Having had no fellowship with their spirits, having made no analysis of their modes of thought, and having failed to detect their sources of power, he has studied them to little purpose. Fortunate is that student who determines not to be satisfied without these deep and intimate communings with great minds—who comes early to be ‘nurtured at the breast of philosophy,’ and with every kind influence of nature, genius and truth thrown about him, advances to maturity.

It would be pleasant to pause longer in this department of the subject. The intellectual resources of the orator extend through the whole range of the scholar’s pursuits. They are found in ancient classic lore, and in the wealth of Anglo-Saxon mind. They consist of the permanent remains of centuries past, and

the products of mind which time is constantly gathering. As you go back to consult the ancient masters, they do not stand before you like the forms dug up amid the ruins of Pompeii, breathless skeletons of what once lived; but they are still instinct with life. They still breathe and speak in all their wisdom and authority. As the disciples of Pythagoras, during the process of initiation, saw not the person of their teacher, but heard him from behind a curtain, that they might be inspired with reverence for his opinions; so the voice of the ancient masters in eloquence, as heard from behind the curtain of ages, comes with an authority that should be reverently regarded by the scholar. But it is time to proceed to the main design of this address, and notice some of those moral elements which contribute to the excellence of true eloquence. It would be vain for me to hope to enumerate all the moral constituents of the orator's power, or to enlarge, in any degree appropriate to their importance, on those that shall be named.

I. That element, first of all worthy of attention, which should belong to eloquence, is *moral purity*. As I have already alluded to the cultivation of the intellectual qualities of the orator, it is appropriate to remark, that this moral characteristic derives high importance from its relation to them. It would be profitable, if this were the time, to illustrate at length the reciprocal action between mental and moral excellence; to trace the influence of purity of heart on the intellect—enlarging its comprehension of truth and its power of exhibiting truth in an attractive form. It is

a subject on which the history of mankind affords ground for the most satisfactory conclusions. We are not left to speculation. Such is the light of each successive age of letters, that none will deny, and none will misunderstand the assertion, that the tone of mental action is materially affected by our moral sentiments. If strong actings of the mind are put forth while vicious principles and unbridled depravity bear sway in the heart, they take the savor of corruption, so as not to subserve the cause of truth, or command the sympathy of the wise and good. Plant the intellectual structure on the ruins of the heart, and you not only give it an unsafe foundation, but you mar its glory and spread around it an atmosphere deleterious to spiritual health. Who is a stranger to those instances in which moral defects evidently impaired the powers of a mind fitted to impress itself deeply on others? Who has not seen the giant intellect warped by a deranged moral nature; putting itself forth in the defence of error, leaping the sacred barriers of principle, bounding onwards with commanding strides, but with a death-dealing tread?—an intellect laden with knowledge, with which it might enrich wherever it opens its treasures; but whose treasures are corrupted and perverted. It is good to feel the attractions of a master spirit, to be encompassed with his bands, and to follow him in the pathway of discovery. But how sad to see, while yielding to his fascinations, the darkness gathering over that path from the attendance of debased passion. This moral defection is not always visible at first. The artist selects the block of marble, pure and white, and applies his chisel. His

work is nearly finished, when, as he passes his instrument around the eye, it suddenly sinks on account of some interior defect. The fascinations of the skilful orator may conceal from ordinary view, the vein of corruption which is found on a closer inspection to mar the countenance of the mind. But when dark shades from the heart are thus thrown among the creations of the most brilliant intellect, though its light may at first dazzle and charm, it will soon fade.

It is to be remembered that in eloquence, the man is impressed on his productions. If his mind is thoroughly aroused and engrossed by the subject, it will be stamped there. He must thus gather his energies around his theme in intense action, if he would enlist the sympathies and energies of others. It is breathing the spirit into the form of his own creation, and making it a living soul. The power to do this, is mental greatness. Without impropriety, I may point to the perfection of this greatness as it is seen in the Infinite Mind. His works are his own beyond imitation, and exceeding the energy of the highest angel. You behold the Author in them all. You behold him in the beautiful print of the flower, and in the bold form of the towering mountain; in the inimitable touches of the rainbow, and in the frown of the angry cloud; in the gentle moving of the evening breeze, and in the terrific sweep of the hurricane. The echo of the Creating Spirit is heard throughout the range of his works. We never come into full sympathy with the language of nature, until we hear it as the voice of God. This is the eloquence of nature, whether heard

in the chorus of the mountains or in the dirge of the ocean. The mind of man has a creating power; and when it moves to its work in the majesty of its original strength, every thought will acknowledge its parent. Though falling infinitely beneath the Eternal Mind, alike in strength and purity, and therefore hardly admitting of comparison; yet it rises toward it. It is susceptible of increased elevation and strength from the presence of pure principles, which will impart to its productions a moral beauty. You are fastened to the words of him whose spirit breathes forth in every sentence lucid and pure as the crystal stream. He carries you captive at his will. You think with his thoughts and feel with his emotions. It is then mind indicates its alliance with Infinite Intelligence, and in every radiation, cheers and animates the spot on which its light falls. But how dark and repulsive the spirit of him in whose productions there is an infusion of moral corruption—who stamps upon them a heart of disloyalty to every good law, to principle, to his country, and to his God. And while he cannot command the approbation of those in love with what is dignified and excellent in virtue, he will find in others more or less of a corrupted taste, in sympathy with his own. As you trace the touches of such a mind impregnated with moral pollution, there you meet with the features of the original. Its power sometimes comes down on a generation with desolating effects; either interweaving itself by a gradual and unseen process; or breaking forth as with a volcanic energy to blight the fairest fields of intellectual and moral being. There is reason for uttering strong language, when

we are assured that the associations which genius can create, the charm of language and of voice, may all be united to give character and currency to that which will only debase.

Let eloquence be cherished as the adopted agency of American mind ; having already a home in this land of intellectual enterprise, fostered by as many kind influences as gathered around her in her youth and brought her to maturity in Greece and Rome ; but let her fair form be kept free from the blandishments of corruption. Let her voice, in every note of it, breathe the inspiration of inward purity, and be addressed only to that which is pure and noble in man. Like the clear waters that flow down these hills, let her ever send forth a current of thought fresh and sparkling from her fountains. If Providence has cast our lot where the springs of eloquence are found in the very soil we tread on, in the air we breathe, in the scenery around us, in our social institutions, it is yet clear, that if eloquence rules among us with her mighty sway, scattering blessings from her throne, she must gather around her the sisterhood of the virtues. Her sceptre must be love, and her crown purity. Her statutes must bear the seal of the divine Lawgiver, and her victories must be those of truth.

II. There is another department of moral excellence in close alliance with that just mentioned, sustaining also an important relation to eloquence. I refer to that sense of moral obligation which gives direction to the energies of the man. It may be supposed that the orator who proposes to himself the

high design of moving men as intellectual and moral beings, of promoting the social and public interests, cannot fail to cherish a deep conviction of responsibility ; that he must have a deep and all-pervading consciousness of the fearfulness of the task. But as a pure conscience and intellectual strength are not necessarily coincident, this field for the best agency of eloquence may be occupied by those over whom an unbending political morality exerts little or no control.

It is to be regretted, that in this country there is any opportunity for such an orator to be heard, with satisfaction. He has ready access to the passions of the people; and the thousand sources of influence of which he can avail himself in addressing the multitude, will assist him in many instances to subject them to his sway. What though the public welfare is made subordinate to his own? What though patriotism with him, is equivalent to personal aggrandizement or the triumph of party? He is not the less ready to make his professions of devotion to human welfare; and, having arrested suspicion, to call into play the passions of men, and then turn them to his designs. We feel authorized to assert, that the power of such an one, will be limited and temporary. If circumstances, for a season, favor this perverted and destructive agency, it is almost sure to overthrow itself. The tide on which it has been carried to some commanding point, will have its ebb. The popular mind will not be permanently held by this power. We claim for the people of this country a strong determination on the side of principle, however it has sometimes seemed, for a season, to be weakened, and almost

eradicated. There is a universal sensibility in the matter of influence exercised over them. Every man feels that he holds his destiny in his own hands. The sentiment of responsibility is created in this nation. Degenerate as the age is pronounced by some to be, character is thought of, and respected. It is subjected to severe scrutiny. It is understood that the orator may have many important elements of power, while he is not to be trusted in the use of them. Therefore, if he has banished from his creed, moral principle and integrity, he has little prospect of escaping condemnation.

From a superficial view of the condition of our country, this statement may be thought to concede too much. Men are easily led by the voice of him who has the address to captivate the passions, and then draw his victims in his train, without giving them an opportunity to canvass his claims to their confidence. Many voluntarily yield to the delusions of some dreaming enthusiast. There is scarcely any notion so much opposed to sound reason and common sense, as not be embraced under the influence of an earnest and skilful advocate. But such examples are not so extensive and enduring, as to militate against the statement, that conscientiousness is extensively estimated as an important element of character, in those who speak in behalf of truth and human rights. While knowledge is rapidly diffusing in conjunction with religion, we believe the day is not far distant, when the only popular eloquence shall be that which breathes an ardent attachment to uncompromising principle. We cannot think of sitting to take lessons on our duties as citizens,

as patriots, as social beings, from those who can sacrifice principle on the altar of personal or party interest, summon the worst passions and prejudices into exercise, turn them against that which is sacred and precious to freemen and to christians, and plant themselves in dreadful elevation on the ruins which they have made.

There are times in the progress of a nation, when the political elements are in commotion, when the clouds lower, when every wind bears a melancholy tone to the ear, and the hearts of men begin to fail them. That policy from which much benefit was expected, is defeated. The imaginations of the people are filled with apprehension of national distress. The foundations of many generations seem about to be broken up. At such an hour of peril, of suspicion, of dire foreboding, where is the man who is capable of meeting the exigency? Is there a man who can rise above all petty questions and sectional jealousies, look with a calm and enlarged view at the distracted scene, concentrate attention on the one great point of common interest, and allay the tumult? Is there a man to whom the people, some dispirited, some almost infatuated, would turn their eyes with confidence and hope? There is one; the man who has held his power with a conscious responsibility, who sits enthroned in a serene, moral elevation, true to principle;

Who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,

is attired
 With sudden brightness, like a man inspired ;
 And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
 In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw.

He steps forward at such a time of unwonted dismay, with a solemn impression of the great interests at stake. He plants himself firmly on the platform of principle. His mind swells with the magnitude of his task. His eloquence is awful and tender. It is the lightning of passion irradiating the truth. He gains the triumph of mind, guided by stern and elevating principle. It is a scene of the highest moral sublimity.

Such men have lived. Such was Chatham,—the man who cultivated that elevated tone of conscience, which became to him the most important element of power, as it is one of the purest and noblest in an orator and a public man. It made his character enforce the truth, and gave him a passport to conviction. Perhaps he was not the most gifted in his time to lead in the British Senate; yet, he held the sceptre of opinion there for thirty years, because his was the eloquence of one who kept in sight the true standard of obligation to the public welfare. Behold the dignity of the English orator, as it was apparent even in the decay of life. He entered the House of Lords, for the last time, on the seventh of April, 1778, leaning on two friends, to speak on the question pending between England and America. He is wrapped in flannel, and looks pale and emaciated. He presents the appearance of a dying man. His voice, which he once wielded with such a magic power, is gone. But attention is arrested by the still undiminished dignity of his figure, and the

penetration of his eye which bespeaks intense excitement of mind. He rises slowly from his seat, lifts his hand, and casts his eyes toward heaven ; and, with low and trembling tone, gives thanks to God that he is able to be there to perform his duty, and to speak on a subject which had so deeply impressed his mind. He is soon warmed with his theme, and pours forth his thoughts with overwhelming power. He is not a being of superior species ; but before the grandeur of his subject, he puts on again, for a few moments, the spirit-stirring, awful power of Chatham. Such a man, also, was our own Fisher Ames, in whom this element of power was manifested in the effect of his last address of any length, in the council of the nation—an effect so overpowering, that it was proposed to arrest action, until the feeling produced had subsided. Such, also, were Henry and Adams, of the revolution. Theirs was the soul erect with integrity and courage, to stand before the spirit of the storm. They stood with a consciousness of right. Confident of the value of great principles then involved in conflict, they inspired confidence in others. Hence it was that they carried conviction to the hearts of the people, and hung that theatre of action with an impressive glory, to which the eyes of distant ages will turn with reverence.

Perilous times probably yet await us, when, so far as human wisdom is our dependence, we shall need such men : men who, amid the action of conflicting passions and principles, can preserve their character, see the truth, and utter it with a commanding power. The day may not be far distant, when the nation, disturbed and rent, would hail, with rapture, the voice of

one who could make himself heard in the noise of the conflict. May a kind Providence forbid such a crisis, or, if it comes, prepare the instrument to meet it!

III. But in presenting the moral elements that should distinguish modern eloquence, we must not lose sight of the character and present condition of man. It is for man that it is to be employed, and it is on him that it is to operate. Consequently, it must flow from a heart in sympathy with man. What is the position from which the orator must regard him? He must look at him with the eye of a philosopher, and with the heart of a brother. He must first study the mysterious elements of our nature, so as to adapt the voice of his spirit to the spirit within us. That voice, being modulated according to our diversified state and relations, will strike a cord in every bosom.

Man is to be studied in all the phases of his nature, however transient they may be; under all the influences to which he is subjected in the growth of his being, whether favorable or adverse to the attainment of a healthy maturity; but especially in what may be considered the fixed and uniform elements of his nature. "He is fearfully and wonderfully made." The material and immaterial are most intimately connected, an example of relations and reciprocal influence without a parallel. A body of dust, fashioned to be the organ in its different senses, of an invisible, indestructible spirit—a spirit which takes man out of the order of the brute, and associates him with the angelic. He unites in himself the elements of heaven and of earth, of matter and of spirit, so as to claim

relationship to God, and sympathy with the worm. That spirit is to be studied in all the laws of its action, its progress and its destiny. It is to be studied in its origin, in its mysterious language, in the depths of its emotions, and in its uplifting hopes. On that spirit is impressed the law of immortality. As revelation brings to it the doctrine of its eternal existence, it embraces it as that which satisfactorily answers its inward voice and gratifies its anxious searchings. It is not the metempsychosis of Pythagoras, which embodies the spirit again in some earthly form. It is the immortality of a moral and accountable being, embosoming the soul in the joys or sorrows of a future and changeless state. This is one feature of character in which man is to be regarded with sympathy, by one who would reach the heart; he should look at him with the eye of a christian philosopher. He should understand and sympathize with his nature, as it is passing through a singular and varied discipline in this world—as it has received a high and solemn investment in relation to the future, and is unfolding itself to receive impressions which it will never lose. The heathen orators could not be influenced by such an estimate of man. They could sympathize with him as an aspirant for the Chief Good, under some one of the diversified forms in which the Grecian sages conceived it. But what can you find in all the lessons of Epicurus and Plato, of Cicero and Seneca, that could raise man to the solemn dignity which his revealed immortality throws around him. The eloquence of the ancients was indeed inspired by a sympathy with man, not merely in his political relations,

in the value of a good name, and in his rights as a citizen, but also as a child of the gods, as improvable by discipline for the present life, and awaiting some mysterious and uncertain destiny. But as they had not in themselves the conclusions of reason or of faith, as to the doctrine of a coming existence, so those whom they addressed could not be considered in that exalted relation. But now that man possesses the certainty of such a destiny, his future being affects the whole bearing of the present. The idea of his immortality, not only throws over his life for to-day, the gravest importance, but it is essentially interwoven with the springs of action by which he is moved, and with the hopes that light up his path. Address him, while you wholly lose sight of this, and you fail to turn to your advantage the highest sympathies and aspirations of his nature. You may move the passions which are sensual and earth-born, but he feels that you have not taken the true measurement of his being; that you have not sympathized with the reachings of his spirit, nor drawn upon those sources of power which are best fitted to move him.

But the orator must estimate and feel with man, not only as the christian philosopher, but as a brother. He must not only breathe in sympathy with him, in the progressive and deathless powers of his nature, but in all his present infirmities and miseries. The world opens itself at this moment, in a most impressive aspect. The extended scene is light and shade, mostly the latter. But the grand object of interest in the scene to every beholder, is *man*. He is everywhere coming up to the notice of his fellows. He is present-

ed in situations strongly contrasted, in rapid alternations, as carrying forward an eventful history, now sinking in the ruins of great designs, and dashing fondest hopes, and now dreaming golden dreams, that must soon vanish. There, he is passive, dead, not conscious of the latent germ of greatness within him, and here he is sleeplessly active. In the midst of the scene, we are planted on an elevation. We are brought nearer to our race, as a whole, and get a more complete view of its condition. We look over separating walls, trace bonds of union before unseen, and find ourselves bending forward with the token of recognition, to distant portions of our fellow-men. Our position is one for communication with mind, on the grandest scale. Our commission is to speak to all, and on behalf of all. The eloquence of the senate-chamber betokens the fact, that the ear of every nation of the earth is at the door. Who can fail to speak without man in all varieties of his condition present to his view. Contemplate the scene for a moment. In his deep degradation, man is a creature of sorrow. Call witnesses from every clime. Walk over the battle fields, fattened with the blood of brothers. Count the desolations of war, whether waged in all the rude brutality of the savage, or in the system and glitter of refined nations. It is still the resort of nations—the scourge which spreads itself over hill and valley, crippling human enterprise, and making havoc of all that is dear to man. The battle-axe, raised by the arm which cupidity has nerved, is still at the work of death. Human skill is still taxed to improve the instruments of war, for a more finished execution of their office. The sword is yet the ar-

gument of the mightier nation, to compel the weaker to gratify its lust, and submit to its unrighteous terms of international commerce. The thunder of the conflict still reaches our ears. It is even now suggested as a doctrine worthy of the political creed, that war is a health-giving process to the body politic. In other words, if a nation will neglect moral restraints, foster those passions which make her commercially and politically too large and lofty for her limits, she has the best resort, when the crisis approaches, in the exercise and expenditure of war. The despot's arm still rests on millions, with crushing weight. Human rights are sported with. The rod of the oppressor is not broken. There is a despotism which is grinding many of the spirits of our race. There is a degrading slavery of mind. What precious hopes that belong to man as his birth-right, never dawn upon him! Under all this, do you say, man does not feel? I hear the voice of suffering humanity respond, 'Do I not feel?' Does the tyrant's power, like the look of Medusa, turn all its victims into stone? The soil of the earth is wet with the tears of the sufferers. Their plaintive cry comes from every quarter, and fills the air. It is the voice of six hundred millions of unilluminated minds. It comes across the whole earth, rising higher and waxing louder, as successive millions join their note of wailing.

This view of the condition of man, suggests the characteristic of that eloquence which is adapted to this age. Shall it reach no further in sympathy with man than his political relations and his local interests, as the owner of the soil? Shall it lack the stirring note, inspired by true benevolence to a suffering race? Shall

it look above the degraded multitude, and not enlist its energies for their elevation? When men ask bread, shall we give them a stone? This must not be. Eloquence is appointed to a high and holy service. The energies of society are now in that posture which invite it to take them in charge, and direct them to the improvement of man. There is a cord strung in the bosoms of men, waiting for its magic touch. The developments of the age must create such an eloquence. They already open to it a field of achievement, in which it may gather a glory richer than all its ancient fame.

Then will modern eloquence take a more sublime position than it ever occupied in its pristine strength. The injured were then to be defended. The oppressed were to be relieved. Political rights in jeopardy, were to be protected. But when Cicero rose in defence of his client, of a decree of the state, of his own official acts, or to plead the cause of his country in any of her perils, strong as were his human or patriotic sympathies, he could not give us an example of that eloquence which derives inspiration from correct views of the moral nature and condition of man. I say nothing of the power of the ancient orator, in the field which he occupied, compared with that of the modern. It may have been greater. But the elements of moral power and grandeur, as they are now furnished by a fraternal estimate of man, are greatly in advance. Is there a position equal in the sources of its inspiration to that which the christian orator occupies, who rises to plead for hundreds of millions, whose paths of darkness and woe meet at the grave, and whom the light and love of

christianity alone, can elevate and purify? Here eloquence has already begun to strike her highest, sweetest notes. The eloquence of the senate and of the bar, cannot exclude this element of power, where the rights and interests of man are brought for investigation. I point you to the scene which recently transpired in the hall of our National Judiciary. It has no parallel of modern date. Not simply because the lives and fortunes of twenty or thirty individuals were immediately at stake; but because great principles, involved in that cause, were put to a new and important test. The voice of that sage, that undissembled patriot, that orator, I will not hesitate to say, that most remarkable man of this age, as it there pleaded for humanity, justice, freedom and truth, will not die, until it is lost in the loud acclaim of an emancipated world.

IV. But I am admonished at once to introduce to your attention, one other element of the orator's character, *the love of truth*.

This branch of the subject associates itself with the present condition of the public mind. With some peculiar interest, the inquiry is raised, What is truth? What is truth, in politics, in morals, in theology? This is not to say that just so far as this inquiry is on the lips of the multitude, it is a sign that they appreciate the intrinsic value of truth. It is before some minds as an unseen, hoped-for good, rather than a well defined object. There is, we must believe, to a great extent, a consciousness of the want of something which men hope for, in truth. They are indeed moving in the noise and stir of life. The deepest cur-

rents of thought run in the low grounds of sense and passion. The patience, calmness, and singleness of mind, requisite alike for the investigation and perception of truth, are not extensively found. But the spirit of man makes known its wants. Under the most alarming perversion of its energies, and the most oppressive usurpations of error, it often indicates a sense of departure from the standard.

There is abundant and cheering evidence, that under the present wide diffusion of light, man begins to recognize truth as a glorious attainment. He begins to appreciate more correctly, the value of the powers with which he is endowed, and their adaptation to be exercised in the discovery of truth. In this country, there cannot be an imposition by force, of any creed, whether in politics or religion. The people understand that it is their birth-right to think and decide for themselves. There is a jealousy of intellectual tyranny. The voice of the popular will has gone forth against that monarchy of mind which admits no right to question its decrees, which enforces opinions at its own discretion, and with an authority which it is treason to resist.

But while this state of things is in accordance with the dignity and prerogatives of man, and the only state that promises high improvement, it is perilous. It is not mind, caged and fettered, and fed at the will of a master; when cut off from every fostering influence, its vigor and its glory must fade away. It is mind without any artificial bonds or enclosures, enjoying the full range of the field of knowledge, thought and action. Hence, it is accessible to every influence,

whether nurturing or destructive. It may acquire an indomitable energy, and at length be prepared, in a reckless independence, to laugh at the laws of wisdom, as well as the anathemas of a tyrant; to break over the safeguards of principle, as well as the fortress of ignorance and prejudice. Free in movement, it seeks to imitate the eagle in his flight; but I see it turning away from the sun of truth, and then losing itself in a trackless region of fancy and elegant emptiness. Follow that mind as it bounds into a sphere of which no chart is made, and for which it can give you no points of calculation, until it is enveloped in mist. While it seems to you to have embosomed itself in clouds and darkness, it professes to have light within, which the uninitiated cannot perceive. Yet you are strongly inclined to believe that its vision is such, that it puts light for darkness, and darkness for light.

It may be supposed, that the refined and studious alone, are in danger of such erratic flights; yet the mass of common mind may be drawn a certain distance in their train. They may not transport the multitude into the field of their fancied visions, yet they may send back some of the fruits of their search, commended to the general taste, by their novelty, and the fragrance of that paradise of the imagination. But few may be initiated as the Priests of these mysteries, to wear the Urim and the Thummim, yet they may gather crowds into the outer court of the temple of their devotion, who will blindly receive the lessons of their dictation.

Various are the perils to which mind, free and untrammelled, is exposed. It is ready for the touch of

the enchanter. It waits for the overflow of passion. It is beset at critical moments with superior prejudices. The speculations of the visionary can charm it to the embrace of the wildest dogmas, while the rhapsody of the political demagogue may kindle it into feverish and unbridled action. Then,

Mind on its own axis restlessly revolves,
Yet no where finds the cheering light of truth.

Soon it is out of its orbit. It is careering its way, loosed from those laws which keep the balance of its powers, in a land untraversed by the light. But great as are the perils of our position, we would not change it. We would have no frame-work built around us, within which we should be forced to stay. We would have no gibbets erected, to frighten us into submission to the opinions of any set of men. We would have no standing army, to crush rebellion against a political system that may be in vogue. Least of all, would we have the seat of a man infallible set up among us, who shall take under his charge our very thoughts, and release us from obligation to the God who made us. We have no sympathy with that state of things in which the sources of religious truth are for the few, and the voice of the teacher, whatever it may utter, is with authority. We have no sympathy with that system which has reigned in Europe with mighty sway, involving in it all the terror of the secular arm. The church made concession to political power, as her Master, for the use of the sword, and then constituted herself "sovereign of souls for both worlds." We ask for no transfer of such a system to

our soil, though baptized on its way at a venerable fount of science, and clad in cathedral glory. We should tremble, if compelled to think the coming of that day probable, when there shall be teachers of religious opinions backed up by the secular power; who array their system in the solemn garb which shall captivate alike the ignorant multitude and the learned recluse. And this not simply because the Waldenses, the Lollards, and the Huguenots rise before us, to give us warning:—not simply because we recall, with horror and shame, the edicts of Councils and Emperors, prohibiting the books of the Reformers, and shutting down darkness on the common mind: but because truth is precious—the legacy of heaven, to which every man is a lawful heir.

Let me ask, then, what must we have, with Heaven's blessing, to throw its protecting influence over us? I answer, an intellect trained to the defence, and imbued with the love of truth. As the people hang on the lips of the orator, to learn principles of action, and lessons of duty, let him hold the standard of truth before his own mind and theirs. He may carry the multitude in favor of false theories, blinding them by the influence of selfish passions or temporary interests, to which he makes his appeal; but, in so doing, he has abused freedom of opinion, and the power of persuasion. He is not the man,

Who, from truth's central point, serenely views
The compass of his argument, ——

and is not satisfied, unless his argument leads other minds to that central point. Eloquence has here a choice field for action. With a devotion to truth,

which triumphs over all distinctions, she may gather for herself the richest laurels, by stepping forth, clad in her simple dress, and uttering only the language which pure passion and attachment to principle dictate; thus bringing mind to that broad ground on which it can move and shine in its native majesty. I claim for eloquence this sacred appointment. We are admonished to arise and protest against the diversion of her power from this holy design. She is the guardian angel of truth. She has put on her armor, and placed herself by its side. She asks no nobler cause in which to wield her weapons. She asks no achievement of higher honor, than that of winning the enemies of truth to its embrace. When any employ her arm against the bulwarks of our precious faith, I hear the voice of the genius of the Reformation, blended with the impressive tones of Puritan history, uttering a loud and indignant rebuke. She has taken her stand by the altars of our fathers, to defend the principles in which they died. I see her there in all her dignity and grace. She is inspired with new energy, as she reads the lessons of truth written upon the heavens and the earth—as she catches its voice, which is gone out into all the world—as she reads its fairer lines, on the tablet of inspiration—and then surveys the sleeping dust of the martyrs of liberty and religion. Then I see her bend, and leave her vow of consecration at the altar of truth.

In this attempt to delineate the characteristics of an eloquence, worthy of your cultivation, I have opened to you an immense source of power. I have not desired to invade the province of the teacher. Let it be

my humble and grateful privilege to commend to you the moral grace and beauty which will give the orator the most important post of action. The right development of mental energy impresses the most noble features upon an age. It regulates the moral elements of society, checks the devices of a sleepless ambition, moderates the daring of the bold, and defeats the policy of the cunning. It makes the best selection of objects to be attained, and of the means to be employed in their attainment. But the whole history of mental enterprise, gives us warning of perverting influences. They often reach us unconsciously, corrupting our motives, and bending our purpose.

You, Gentlemen, will desire to appropriate your energies and your acquisitions for the welfare of your race. You stand at the opening of that day referred to in the prophetic language of Milton, "When the Prince of the Kings of the earth shall come forth out of his royal chambers, put on the visible robes of his imperial majesty, take up that unlimited sceptre which the Almighty Father hath bequeathed him, and all creatures shall sigh to be renewed." In performing your part in the work to be achieved, enthrone eloquence in its noblest sway over mind. Identify it with the preservation of all that we have gained, and with the attainments yet to be made, in the intellectual and moral improvement of society. The subjection of mind to arbitrary will, is done away. Birth and wealth have yielded their sway. *They* will gain the glorious conquests of the future, who plant themselves on the foundations of truth, and who make a true estimate of the relations and destiny of man. Look to the past, it

is to eloquence, enriched and hallowed by the moral virtues, that the progress of truth is mainly indebted. Take up the work, amid the scenes of high interest in this age, which are fitted to inspire your resolution. Bring to it the sublime devotion of learning, intellect, and religion. Be yours the strength everywhere exerted to elevate man,—a strength which cannot be shaken by error or passion, and which shall ever increase, folding in, as it grows, the purest affections and purposes, with that knowledge which industry will secure, to crown, at last, a mind matured for disencumbered action. Until then, you cannot ask a better destiny on earth, than to go forth

Active and firm, to fight the bloodless fight
Of science, freedom, and the truth of Christ.

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