

1818  
**ORATION,**

DELIVERED,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE CITIZENS OF WASHINGTON,

ON THE

**FORTY-SECOND ANNIVERSARY**

OF

***AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.***

IN THE

**REPRESENTATIVES' CHAMBER,**

IN THE

**City of Washington,**

BY

**ALEXANDER ANDERSON, ESQUIRE.**

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**CITY OF WASHINGTON:**

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**1818.**

## ORATION.

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FELLOW CITIZENS .

Convinced of my inability to do justice to your wishes, nothing but a confidence, that, the same generous spirit which dictated your courtesy would continue to attend me throughout this occasion, could have induced or justified my acceptance of the honor you have conferred. Believe me, it is an honor I shall always appreciate with the most friendly recollection. And, when I see before me the collected beauty and wisdom of the metropolis embellished, as it is, with the refinements of taste and erudition, I willingly throw myself upon your liberality and benevolence.

It has been the custom of other nations to immortalize their achievements, by consecrating them to public observance. On recurring to history, you will find the two most splendid republics, that ever adorned its page, preserved their character as long as they had virtue enough left to celebrate its event. The enjoyment and the commemoration have, uniformly, sunk together in one common grave. That rational enthusiasm, which gives birth to independence, must, necessarily, continue to superinduce life and permanency, or else it will degenerate into a worthless name. Nor is there any thing more inspiring to its principles, than a fixed and annual return to the remembrance of its era. In this way, the mind is more seriously fraught with the traits of its grandeur. The imagination is lighted up by

the sublime picture of a revolution. It wanders through its scenes to denote the passions by which it was distinguished. Virtue is seen struggling with vice; and from national heroism there is an easy transition to the more precisely delineated portraits of personal greatness. Facts are deduced from these combined images, to which the judgment yields, and by which life may be regulated. In short, there is a peculiarity of effect, to which we can only appeal by experience. For we may learn to turn from our backslidings, at an hour like this, when the conscience is awakened by a grateful sense of nationality, to the scenes of a holy war, and the wide desultory shades of political variation, that, since that epoch, have successively taken place of each other.

Nor, at this moment, will the mind pause entirely upon the retrospect. Forever on the wing of experiment and research, it will take its way into futurity, and, among the concealed depths of causes and effects, endeavor to penetrate into the succeeding history of our country. The chapter in which is inscribed the glories of our ancestry, and to which we have recently added a supplement, is not sufficient for the "vast exploring eye" of the patriot to dwell on in content and admiration. To make it truly dear to his heart and lovely to his fancy, he must unceasingly imitate, for it is not possible to transcend, its excellence. He must, at once, strive to follow the good and great example of his Forefathers, and to deserve, at some distant day, the appellation of an equal, by protecting their *household relics*.

To speak in the rigorous language of truth, ours is the earliest and the only distinct model, of a perfectly rational equality in government. It has not been owing, however, to any fault of the human mind. The fears and necessities of men, on which, we are told, are built the stablest foundations of legal connexions, have unfairly been converted into the potent

means of their subserviency to the more powerful. In the primitive ages of creation, liberty was an easy and an almost uninterrupted possession, under a patriarchal dominion. There were no local and contagious compressions of society. Individual authority grew up, rather, as a matter of paternal inheritance, than as a conquered condition, or, in the least, as an accident of power. And, although it has ever been domineering in its sway, even in all times have appeared some faint glimmerings of the spirit of liberty. Nevertheless, I esteem it a correct position, and one I shall attempt to vindicate in this address, that a *gradual social progression* was essential to the production of a just and liberal constitution of government. And I assume it as equally true, that, the consequences *cannot be obviated*. The symptoms of this orderly improvement have been as variable as violent. Revolution has accumulated on revolution, but as often terminated in the rashness of anarchy, or the disappointments of what is inconsiderately termed a rebellion. A few lucid intervals of aristocracy or democracy, like the fierce and evanescent lightning that flashes through a lowering atmosphere, have, now and then, broken in upon the despotisms of the world. But, it has been reserved for us to reason and to act upon the possibility of sustaining a Republic. I acknowledge, it has been conceded, if it were difficult and dangerous to establish, it is even more doubtful and perilous to preserve. The uncontroverted orthodoxy of this axiom, and the fact, that, no such system has ever endured the ravages of years, and the inroads of corruption, are the chief circumstances which have gained plausibility to the doctrines of the enemies of mankind. But those of us who bottom a *different opinion* upon this theory ought to go a little further. We would discern there are no conclusions against us, to be drawn from prior institutions. History has produced no parrallel to our own. All that has existed seems to have been removed to make way for something better.

We may search in vain for a counterpart—no where has the mouldering hand of time rested without decay, or the storms of faction played without effect! For where is the crown that has not been shattered? And, as if the conviction should not be resisted, while, too, the monuments of ancient liberty have tumbled into a heap of chaotic and undistinguished fragments, how much more exalted is the new creation that has risen upon their fall! I mean morally and politically.

What then do you conjecture of the progress of society? Do you not suppose, that for ages to come, as it has for ages that are gone, owing to the same natural, self-existent, and inextinguishable power, it will continue with a gorgeous, yet clear, though variant, still purer splendor, to shed its light upon the track of civilization? Who is it can question this? Have you not observed, already, the accelerated graduation of civilization? Not that dim-eyed bloated civilization, whose sickly life is scorched by the noxious blaze of wealth, or which faintly blooms and flowers beneath the rays of royalty, but that which spreads its beauties under the wholesome tree of freedom, and covers within the celestial wing of peace. Look to America! Here, a happy state of renovated existence offers, to my mind, the consequent effects of the progress of society. A society which has had its infancy, its youth, its manhood; and which must, finally, arrive at a point of perfection, on whose pinnacle it will tower in the latter days, with the charms of religion and philosophy encircling and sublimating its transit to eternity.

But let us, casually, enquire of its origin and development. There was Abraham, who was a Patriarch! This was the hour of its infancy! The next most prominent was Solomon, who was a *King!* *Anterior to and from this time*, the human race was smitten with a rod, and, in whatever quarter they planted the standard of their dominion, they, also, raised the altar of *homage* to an ephemeral creature. At once, in Asia, in Africa,

in Europe, and for aught we know, at that very period, in America, the mitre and the sceptre glittered above the humbled head of the peasant! This, perhaps, was the state of youth. Its effervescence had not subsided, its ambition was less restrained, its intellect benighted by the prejudices of ignorance, and, yet, lost amid the impervious and unexplored regions of knowledge. At length, another age, emerging from the dark and dreary wilderness of a mental enthralment, is beheld laying the substrata of a new order, in Athens, in Thebes, in Sparta, in Carthage, and in Rome. Here, we may mark the lineaments of a partial manhood. Unquestionably, this was nearly its epoch. But it was now, that, the most powerful change of all commenced a sort of supernatural operation. An event, upon which depended, in my opinion, not merely, what has followed, but on which depends what is still to come. It was at this peculiar crisis, that Christianity was introduced, as the efficient handmaid to human improvement. The midnight of error, which so shortly succeeded, was like the gloomy moment, that is the omen, and precedes the dawning of day—it foreboded the inevitable, however protracted, graduation of the political Universe. Upon this it is I build my political faith. History maintains it. Indeed, herein, our own experience is satisfactory. And, although I differ on this subject from many, to whom I accord the superior claims of talent and of learning, to me there is ample reason to conclude, that, liberty, which is on the march, the inseparable companion of civilization, and civilization of Christianity, NEVER, NO, NEVER, NEVER CAN RECEDE! It may sometimes halt in the paroxysms of a violent struggle, but it will, sooner or later, recover and pursue its course with a steadier and a loftier step, and, from age to age, the cloven-footed altars of despotism must, one after the other, totter to the earth, till the grand system of rational equality unfolds its banners to the millions that are now unborn.

To a mind unaccustomed to survey the scenes of human history, all this may form a subject of curious and doubtful speculation! But no one, who considers the course of events, will arraign deductions founded upon the deepest principles of human nature:—a nature capable of an unknown extension in its attainments; for, the more it is dilated, and acted upon, the more it will receive and perform.

Perchance, as to ourselves, the grudging bigot would start his futile objection. Perhaps, he would say, “*your darling Republic is not safe, whatever may be the logical accuracy of your calculations as to others!*” How heartless the feeling! How brainless the suggestion! What, America! Has she not before her the lights of all antiquity, and around her the guardian spirit of reformation? She may tread onward, fearless of aberration, guided and protected in the glory of her passage, by the Beacon of the past and the Genius of the present! What was it that agitated the investigation of right on this side of the water? Was it a mad devotion to the memory of Peloponnesus? Or to the fame of the triumphs of Roman valor, that extended, not only, over all Italy, but reached to the banks of the Indus? No! Though they may have been accessory to the enlargement of the intellectual energies, and hung out as signals to mankind, by which to steer, they never could, of themselves, have excited, at so distant a recollection, the mighty passion of a revolution. *Modern Europe* may look to them, we must look to *Modern Europe!* We have borrowed from her what she received there, and taken, besides, her own workmanship, without any of its clogs. We took it, not alone to venerate, but to improve. Such has been the gradation.

But do not mistake me as to Europe;—I would not, even, be suspected of bestowing upon a modern heap of groaning tyrannies, the unqualified praise of moral elevation. I could not so much violate my own conscience. I would not so grossly insult your feelings.

However the constitution of man may have elicited its finer qualities on this Continent, and the general condition of society exceeds the most prosperous state that existed at any previous period, to Europe, at present, we advert with the lamentable forebodings of some dreadful concussion. Alas! such appears to have been the destiny of man, that, the amalgamated terrors of vice should gather about the remnants of virtue, preparatory to their awful desolution! So it will be with the enslaved, stipendiary, partitioned Europe. Behold Ireland, at whose name the Patriot, the Saint, the Philosopher, the Orator, and the Poet, kindle with a melancholy admiration, holds out the deplorable testimony of this prophetic truth. For, of all the Isles that encircle, and all the countries that cover that vast tract, Ireland, clinging with an unrivalled martyrdom to the sanctity of her piety, and the purity of her patriotism, is the most durable monument of the effect, and not long hence will be, too, a monument of the fate of oppression and abuse, where reform is rejected by the hand of intolerance and of despotism. All record proves it to be the course of humanity. Recur to our situation in seventy-six, if not as aggravated, at any rate, an additional and irrevocable proof. But, it is true, there was a shorter step to our Revolution. For, the Sovereign of Britain, when he surrendered to the British People the Charter of their rights, resigned to the mercy of America the crown of his successors.

And, here, let us retire a moment from the decadence in Europe, where the hopes of youth and the comforts of age are weighed down by the physical preponderance of prostituted worth, to a contemplation of the ascendancy of that political moderation which has risen amongst us, the proudest mausoleum of the old world, and the dearest possession of the new. In this pleasant prospect, we have great and serious cause of congratulation. Once a colony, now an important empire, we must be sensible of the immediate difference between receiving



a Governor in a state of subjugation, and commissioning a Minister to that very Court from whose maternal bosom we were discarded. We must readily perceive the increased consequence derived, even then, at an uncertain conjuncture of our affairs, from alliances with nations "not afraid of doing right, for fear of doing wrong." In a provincial dependence, it was very humiliating that a princely Dignitary, or some honorable exile of the mother country, "stuck o'er with titles, and hung round with strings," should wield the supreme executive authority. *The royal assent, too, was another odious feature.* But it is a redoubled gratification to us all, that, no matter in what shape the iron-clawed monster of tyranny made his appearance, the people knew how to detect, and when to resist him. A Stamp tax; a Declaration of authority; a Tea tax; and, as it happened to be, a wily, but impolitic discrimination of commercial duties, did not gain the credulous submission of a filial loyalty! Yet it was expected! The English ministry of the day seem to have acted on the illusion of the fantastic theory, that "the human species degenerated in America." Vain and foolish statesmen! To imagine, that, with their professions of kindness staring them in the face, they might play off upon the Patriots the deceits of an artful hypocrisy! Verily, they were too precipitate in their designs! Notwithstanding the energetic aid we had given to the mother country in her conflicts upon our Continent, for which we received her thanks, the accents of peace were not hushed upon her lips before she conceived the wicked project of an unnatural and sanguinary war. In vain had Franklin warned the ministry of attempting to subvert a brave and a free people. They had heard it from him in the language of admonition, that, the Americans voluntarily preferred their own to foreign manufactures; that, they had restricted themselves to the exclusive use of domestic growths! This was the spirit of 65—the spirit of 76—the good old spirit throughout the revolu-

tion! Every class revered it; every man, woman, and child, boasted of it! Happily for us this spirit existed. Their resources were feeble, and they required all the strength of unity, and all the effect of co-operation.

But mark, I beseech you, the predominance of their *social progression* over every difficulty and misfortune. I believe you will meet with a full illustration of the doctrine I have advanced.

For liberty, they forsook the beatitude and avocations of peace. Nor did they pine or sicken at the change! The hut of the poor and the mansion of the rich were, in turns, converted from the seat of the convivial banquet, and the shelter of gray hairs and of innocence, into the soldier's garrison and the scenes of a tumultuous warfare. No longer can the peasant hang upon his plough, and pause in silent delight at the sweet and silvered modulations of the little feathered songster. He can no more enjoy, in secure amazement, the clear and perennial stream, that reflects the perfect image of the verdure that embraces its banks. He must forget, too, the chase, and direct his pursuit to a more formidable object. All the allurements of the country, the deep, still, and meditative solitude that pervades its retreat, is broken in upon, by the peals of the drum, and the shrill-toned echoes of the war horn! Even the wild flowers of the wood deaden upon the eye, and their "delicious breathing odour" palls upon the sense! The home is a desert; the family in a temporary orphanage; and the wife, perhaps, clasping an infant to her breast, trembling and sighing for the next news the passing messenger may bear. Merciful Heaven! How awful is the predestination of thy providence! But thus, it often happens, "evil is permitted that good may come of it." And, how arduous was the trial! The father and the child mingled in the holy cause, and beheld the life pledges of this earth's endearment staked upon the issue. On one hand, they saw the

chains which were forged to fetter them, if they tamely yielded; and, on the other, if they were baffled, their wives, daughters, sisters, and themselves, the protectless victims of a military rage, and of a civil despotism. Oh! How wonderfully did they bear this test of their nature—and how glorious was their triumph! The stormy powers of their spirit had been roused into an incessant and tremendous agitation! Every faculty was awakened from the torpid lethargy in which it had slept, under the lulling intrigue of deceptive promises! But the pressure had been as long as violent, the reaction was, in proportion, as resistless as determinate! A rebellion had been sounded from quarter to quarter, but, in effect, it was the retributive vengeance of a revolution, terribly rolling its fires through the castles and sequestered haunts of affrighted royalty! An enraged, irreconcilable, and oppressed people, had risen in their strength! No menace could intimidate them, no offering could appease them, except its incense smoked from the hallowed altar of liberty. Did they hear to day the sign and the seal of pardon tendered as the price of their service and their desertion? They, unhesitatingly, spurned it, with an indignant valor, that denied, even, to the persecutor the pleasure of reproach, and took from the Spartan the proverb of his virtue! Nor was there any modification of misery, however horrid, they were unfit, or unwilling to endure. Did discomfiture embarrass them? They smiled at the incident, and organized themselves afresh. Did death present itself? They braced to its stroke, as they looked to Heaven with a complacent firmness. What did they care, if commerce stopped and the doors of business closed? On the Ocean, they repaid themselves in the traffic of the spoiler, and the merchant and the customer, together, mounted the cockade and shouldered the musket. At a moment, like this, big with the birth of freedom, what was it to them, if agriculture held but a debilitated pace beneath the pitiless peltings of

fortune, while yet, here and there, detached bands of men might be seen, alternately, tilling the ground, and, led by some daring hero, lending an occasional aid to their courageous comrades? What was it to them, if vicissitude sported in the contest? Their purpose was fixed; their trust unbroken; bearing aloft the shield and the weapon of their rights, they pressed forward to conquest or to death:—

“ Fortune her *smiles* may variously dispose,  
 And these be happy called, unhappy those;  
 But Heaven’s just balance equal will appear,  
 While those are placed in *hope*, and these in *fear*;  
 Not present good or ill, the joy or curse,  
 But future views of better or of worse.”

*Now*, it is very easy for us all, that the tempest is over, and there is no hidden wrath to dread, to proclaim the course, the only course, it was safe for our fathers to take. But then, the path of security appeared to be the certain conductor to destruction. For, even then, the timid faltered at the report of every defeat, although, from its consequences, the resolute counted on imperishable victory! And, it is not a little surprising, the *politicians of England*, who chose to discriminate between right and wrong, between the difference of an insurrection and a revolution, between a child writhing in a mother’s arms and a full grown youth parrying the murderous blow of a parent, predicted, from the successful triumphs of the English, the total loss of their power. So predicted Chatham, and Fox, and Burke! They disregarded the pomp and brag of the minions of a king! They permitted themselves to think like men! The example should not be lost upon you. Treasure it as a lesson of how impossible it is for slaves to subdue freemen, if they are resolved to be free, and how natural it is to doubt, but *how miserable a thing is fear!* I am aware, it may be said, our fathers had the arm of France on one side, and the countenance of Holland on the

other. But their confidence rested on a broader and a deeper base. If we are indebted to France, whose lively and elastic constitution is imbued with the vigor and the texture of every people, we are far more indebted for the conservation of our privileges, to that "rock of our salvation"—the old Confederacy. I will agree, the *bare name* of France was an acquisition to us! It might be asserted, in a figurative sense, that she had been bred in Europe, amid the schools of national law, and took from the precedents, which surrounded her, the unshaken right of welcoming a new member into the family of nations. I will go further, and concede to the Warrior she sent us the well earned laurel that enfibres and flourishes beneath his silver locks! Yet more—if upon our Patriarch Washington we bestow the glory of the Founder of a magnificent Republic, to his friend and coadjutor La Fayette we will give the almost equally glorious appellation of the Philanthropist of the world.

I feel the very mention of these things to have incited a quicker pulse in my heart. Perhaps, the reflection of how rapid has been the lapse of time, that every year has carried with it a few of our trusty Veterans, that, ere many suns shall set, they must all fade from our longing view, has imparted to me an emotion, which, I confess, is irrepressible. Yes, Fathers of the Revolution, we have mourned our Washington, and we have but few of you left from whom we can now catch the light of his lamp! May the God of Heaven long preserve you, and the remainder of your days be cheered by the consolation of the honors that now thicken round your declining heads, and the "solace of that anticipation" which dwells upon the gratitude and reverence of posterity.

Could I be sensible it was necessary to submit to you a proof of our love, I would recount the battles of the late war, and the exploits of our Youth. But even here we must hail the gracious interference of Providence, that permitted you to abide amongst us until

you had taught us the precepts you had acquired, by directing us how to receive experience. Still it may be said without exultation, that, we have not been obstinate in persisting against your counsel, or backward in the duty your wisdom assigned us. Nor is it singly, in a fitful instance of bravery, we have shewn our respect for your lives. Or, indeed, that we could evince a settled determination to preserve the institutions you have toiled, so laboriously, to establish. No! Whatever the unthinking may believe of the every day notions of patriotism, it never can consist in professions of one sort and practices of another. That is not a love of country, or an adherence to your sentiments, which clings to the parchment and throws away the moral character of the constitution. Whenever we adopt your constitution to justify our authority, we must take care that the first object of its exercise is the utility of our fellow citizens, and, that, *the intention is to promote the great principles of their civil polity.* This should never be lost sight of. We flatter ourselves such has been our course. For it must be acceded, that, the very obligation under which you have placed us, compels us to be attentive to the right, as well as the policy, of succouring the soldier of affliction, who befriends the cause of freedom.

Our constant aim, fellow citizens, should be an equality among men, as well with others, as with ourselves. Upon this fundamental maxim “hangs all the law and the prophets” of our history. Nor, is it in any other mode, we can ever discharge to our ancestors a ponderous debt of affection and obedience. In fact, it is a kind of indiminishable, irredeemable debt, that will be entailed upon the thousandth and the thousandth generation.

In all the circumstances, either immediately or abstractedly connected with this memorable period, I am persuaded that you must concur with me in opinion, that, at every stage, they bear an invariable testimony

to the principles of *social progression*. Notwithstanding, it is a philosophy, I will allow, that is much questioned. The *objection*, I think, requires *no refutation*. It is the interest of the monopolist, it is the business of Kings to condemn it! And all this is quite natural! It would shut out from the one the possibility of his monopoly, and take from the other the pleasures of his Court, and the enjoyment of his throne! Who is it cannot see, when it begins to mature, where the pride and paraphernalia of the political bigot are swollen and decked with the patronage of sinecures, and the plunder of his subjects, how it will strip him of his borrowed greatness, and lay him level with the sons of men? Who is it cannot tell, every resistance will be futile, and every delusion unsuccessful? For where is the vice, that, of itself, is not overgrown? Or the ambition, whose satiety does not pall upon the intellect, as well as the appetite, and leave it destitute of energy, or so far exhausted, its schemes partake of the weakness of its fatuity, and the wildness of its vision? But, you are ready to rejoin with the inquiry, setting aside ourselves, where is this *social progression*? Where is its illustration? I am free to admit, no people, in their descent, have been more fortunate than the American; I do not allude to the quibbling and senseless distinctions of blood, but to the science it brought us, the arts it conferred, the principles it transplanted. Yet, look to France! Is there no evidence there? Or do you suppose her present calm will be an after blessing? Look to the state of England, itself, at this very moment! England, from whom the brightest beams of literature have sparkled, and its widest plane of elevations started at a touch—Look to her! And, although I disapprove the idea, that, her *debt* or her *vice* will ever entirely destroy her relative respectability in the scale of nations, her existing temporalities have but two alternatives, *ruin* or *reform*. Is not Ireland her own jealous and much injured Vassal? Has she not

suspended, in a tremulous anxiety of suspicion, her *own habeus corpus*, and devoted to the mercenary informer the victim of his enmity? Yes—and liberty! liberty! liberty, the people must and will have! Does it signify whether it is Athenian, or Spartan, or Roman? Perhaps, it will be cast in the medium between the licentiousness of the former French mobocracy, and the sturdy though high-trained aristocracy of Scotland. But, where is Spain? Had she not an ameliorated constitution, when the gallant Cortez surrendered her to the merciless cruelty of an infatuated monarch? *She came poor but faithful into his hands—she has sunk debased and wretched beneath his feet.* Can she long remain where she is? Her finances consumed, her Garay, like the Neckar of Louis, if not already doomed to exile, held, no doubt, as a mere propitiatory sacrifice to the chagrin of his master, when desolation yawns upon his throne! I say it without fear of contradiction, that, revolutionized, she will revive to better days, and take her destined station on the scale of *social progression!*

But, should we not turn our eyes nearer home? I flatter myself the invitation is not disagreeable. For, we must all accord in principle, however we may disagree in settling minor points of prudence. A judiciously regulated neutrality is, indisputably, the wisest policy on our part; and yet it would be extraordinary, if we did not sometimes differ, as to its extent, or its duration.

But, barely as a justification of the theory I have laid down I might challenge any one to answer, what will be the probable result of the struggles in South America? At this instant, if we are rightly informed, the Patriots constitute a formidable Power, while some Provinces are wholly independent. Even while I speak, the shouts of victory are yet quivering upon their lips! In Chili, the royal flag has fallen, and not a vestige of its domination is left! Another Confederate is added



to an invincible union! They may now triumphantly demand of the foreigner, "if such a people were formed for slaves?" What their administration of justice is we do not precisely know: But an American, in addressing his friend in this country, says, *it reminds him of the seat of his ancestors!* Glorious news! Do they so early begin to gather the fruits of liberty! Ah! a republican simplicity, before even the color of the royal robe is forgotten! Oh! daughters of the South! Your tears shall be dried, and your broken hearts will be healed! They may now touch the standard of liberty, and call their persons sacred! And shall not South America, too, have her Washington, her Franklin, her Adams, her Henry, and her Jefferson? Will no Conscript Fathers preside in her last and eventful council? I hope so! I trust in God there will! I believe she will be wise and cautious as to the form of her government. This much is certain, she has had her despotism, and witnessed the violence of its panic and the horror of its catastrophe. It would be a strange conclusion, if, too, with her own bitter experience and our example looking her in the face, after fighting through the straits of tyranny and reclaiming her buried rights, she should relapse into a baser communion with profligacy, and lend her treasures to the prodigal profusions of ambition. But of this, can there exist the least scepticism? I argue, if the Patriots fail, it will be a fleeting calamity, and the oldest amongst us will live to see the effects of *social progression*, striding every obstacle to the attainment of that point where independence would repose and reason be satisfied. Must not this be the ultimatum? How can it be averted? In no way! If South America could commence a revolution, and defy for years the strained and now straitened resources of the mother country, she is more likely to give law to Spain than to receive her yoke. **The Old One** may exert every nerve, distend every

vessel of her body—it will not all do—repulsed, disconcerted, and disgraced, she must fall back, puny and powerless, into the *convulsive grasp* of her own miseries! As to that worn and festered government, the stale and degraded memento of the Castilian name, is it requisite to adduce to you another fact? Need I recite what her Financier avows, that, the very table of the King must be cleared of the *rubbish* which crowns his feasts, but impoverishes the treasury? When he entered the vacant and solitary vaults of the Exchequer, he had too solid a judgment not to discover how blind and silly was the practice of clapping up a batch of inert and useless appendages, to hang like drawcancers upon its breast. Of course, he recommended economy. And how did it come? For once, a Minister, more desirous of honorable renown than a lean and paltry power, dared to breathe the truth into the royal ear. *Sire*, said he, *your resources are scanty, and your expenses must be lessened; not only of the household, but of the army! Yea of the marine itself!* The army! The marine! Is it possible! why, the bigotted Ferdinand himself admitted the necessity, but dreaded the trial! And yet, Spain, with her army reduced, with her sea-port barriers stripped of the few little ragged sails that still flutter in the wind, would conquer America! I protest it is impossible! I repeat it, if South America wills to be free, her cruel mother cannot enchain her to the block! She will snap the fetters that encompass her limbs, and dismember the Legions that are deputed her Executioners.

Let me ask you, fellow citizens, if, after all this, you have any scruple of the theory of *social advancement*? I am induced to think you have not. To confirm this impression, let us, in the sequel, return to a summary consideration of our own country. Here the proof is final and irrefragable. *It is all upon one side, there is none upon the other.* Understand me; I do not mean to disturb the predilections of any sect, or the politics of

any creed. I have studiously avoided these subjects, and, for this purpose, many others, which are very interesting. I speak of the *social advancement* of our country in *the abstract*! I refer to *that*, as the base on which all her success rests! I refer to her condition as a Colony, her league as a Confederacy, and, lastly, her maturity as a Republic. Some of you recollect the first; all of you are acquainted with the last gradation.

It is hardly necessary to remind you, that, our common and our statute laws were, at one time, entirely, those of England, except as to some indifferent local regulations. The piles of unmeaning precedents and decisions of Westminster overloaded our benches, and perverted the policy of a self-action in an enlightened Judiciary. A few years, and they have been swept away. I will venture to pronounce the Profession consents, the coarser trash has been removed, and the finer materials retained. So as to this particular, the burthens of our courts have been lightened, and the complexity of legal learning almost completely disentangled. Undoubtedly, it is a very important point to be gained. For the habits of our citizens demand the most simplified thesis of their civil and criminal codes.

Again—You may mark the coercive springs which operate in the hands of the people, upon the deliberations of congress, at every subsequent session. Is it not very plain, that, great and abundant changes are, alternately, beating at the public heart? No sooner are the sources of justice confirmed, than they set about to amplify its waters, and to conduct them to the causes of universal want. If there were errors in the system, which was new modelled, that were at first overlooked, but have since become so enormous they require correction, the remedy is carefully applied, in the conciliating temper of equity, and enforced by the coolest dictates of a more ripened and prevalent judgment. Here is to be seen the practical and consistent *will* of a *representative*

*government*, working with the happiest aptitude to general and substantial benefit.

By the inclusion of every incipient advantage we could derive from observation, or comprehend by study, we are virtually prepared for an introduction of the similar principles, measures and improvements, a longer association may beget. The soundness of this argument has been tested by the suffrage of the people. Whenever they have felt the necessity of complaint or reform, how suddenly have you heard it echoed within the walls of this house! Nor can they ever have a servant, who, in the temerity of a *desparado*, will dare to cast back into their teeth, a petition, or a proposition, or a measure, if you please, to which, with one accord, they have given their sober sanction. Do they call for indemnification? It must be granted. Do they cry aloud for retaliation on a foreign government, for the insult and injury of a citizen? it must be attempted. Is he imprisoned? He must be retrieved. Do they require a constitutional change? It must be made. Are their fortunes driven at the unascertained and *loose limits* of *private* and *public immunities*? *They must undergo the re-examination and re-correction of reform.* In every department of their institutions, civil and military, even from the construction of the most trivial law, to the *now justly* mutilated, but vital character of a *treaty making power*, we will find them in our own day touching the *defect* with an efficient remedy, and, beyond the natural extent of our lives, they will continue to alter and amend, when it is proper, to suit a wiser and a more prosperous order of things.

It would be trespassing too deeply on your patience to enter at large into a subject of this sort, that is almost inexhaustable, from the variety of incidents attached to it, and growing out of its investigation. But, from the view I have presented, you see what is, and must ever be, the not less peculiar than enviable lot of our political state. In fine, you have nothing to

**fear—neither the turpitude of a demagogue, nor the ambition of a tyrant! Your Representation can never become rotten, nor your Executive infallible! The arts of election may be put in motion, but no man can ever resort to a management, by bribery and barter, that will at all produce any material change in the result. No! Your soil, your arts, and your commerce, are teeming upon you every comfort, and you have scarcely a temptation left! Your constitution has opened to you, alike, the roads to distinction, and the means to success are invigorated by the apprehension and abhorrence of vice! Or if this fails, your laws are so well pointed, and your Press so ably directed, the ignominy of detection and punishment would frighten the oldest offender from the perpetration of his crimes!**

**Go on in your course! Your fellow men will join you! They will assist you to intertwine the chaplet of the revolution patriot, with the kindred branch of its wreath!—And, if agriculture can endow—if commerce can enrich—if science can maintain a *social progression*, and I think it is demonstrated that it can, you will have your sister, South America, by one hand, and, at some remote era, the now morally palsied hand of Europe will be stretching forth to you the olive of her friendship, as a proof of her redemption, and her admiration of your Republic.**