THE SOCIAL LIFE

AND

NATIONAL SPIRIT OF AMERICA:

AN

ORATION,

Delivered at Great Barrington, July 4, 1849.

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1849.

ORATION.

LADIES, AND FELLOW-CITIZENS!

When I gaze once more on these blue mountains, over which I rambled long ago, and down these green valleys where I followed that silver river in its course to the sea, the days of my boyhood come back again with freshness and beauty, and I feel like a wanderer returned to the home of his fathers.

Wearied with what *now* seem long years of pilgrimage in the old world, where my eye was pained with the sight of the pomp and tyranny of kings, and my ear wounded with the cry of oppressed nations, I had come to pass a few holiday weeks amidst scenes which are associated with all that is bright in the day-dreams of childhood, or touching in a mother's love, or sacred in the graves of my fathers, whose ashes have long mouldered in the warm soil of Berkshire. My heart brought me here, and I cannot express my pleasure nor my gratitude in being greeted to-day, by so many of my early friends; the pressure of whose warm hands assures me that those I was early taught to love have forgotten the follies of the thoughtless boy in the sterner struggles of the man.—And had it not been for the roar of the morning cannon, which proclaimed the breaking of another day of National Jubilee, with the merry chimes of our village church bells, I should almost have forgotten that our great Political Passover had again returned. But for a short time I am bidden by this glorious day to forget the local associations of the scene, in the higher and nobler thoughts that belong to the anniversary of the birth of this nation. I shall give no history of the mighty event this day commemorates, for it was an era of so much importance to the world, that it is almost as universally known

to mankind as the epoch of the coming of the Saviour. I shall pronounce no eulogy on our Fathers of the Revolution, for their names have long stirred the heroism of the world, and their battle fields have become the Thermopylæ of Liberty. And least of all shall I attempt a eulogy on that sacred name which was the rallying cry of American Freedom seventy years ago, and which has gone through the old continent with the shout of awakened millions. The historians of all nations have pronounced WASHINGTON the greatest and the best of men. And if from his empyrean home he can still gaze on the country which now calls him Father, what a spectacle of progress must greet his eye! From three millions we have grown to five and twenty—what were in his time distant military posts in a howling wilderness, are now populous cities—and from the then wild shores of the Hudson the Anglo Saxon Farmer has gone to reap his wheat on the shores of the Pacific. Our lacerated Eagle then scarce flew to the Gulf of Mexico—he has since unfolded his wings over the Mexican Capital, and his shrill scream is now heard to the equator—and with him in his untiring flight have gone the Teachers of Science and the Ministers of Religion.—Wherever the roll of the engine whirls a restless population, the traveler sees churches and school-houses. The Lightning of Heaven has been pressed into the service of our nation. We print Bibles for the Heathen by steam, and send news of crumbling despotisms by telegraph—and to the children of Washington we owe them both.

But I wish to-day to speak of something more important to a nation's power, durability, glory and progress, than railways, acqueducts, canals, or telegraphs.

I shall make a few remarks on the Social Life and the National Spirit of America—what we have been and what we shall be—and how we can best honor our illustrious Fathers, to whom we owe all that we possess. I shall be so brief, too, you can hardly have time to get tired before I have done. And allow me to say that if my address differs in some respects from the stereotyped form of 4th of July Orations, it is not because I like to deviate from the beaten track, or try

to be original. But it has occurred to me, that we have now for about half a century been told that we are "the greatest Nation in all creation," and as there is no special danger of our forgetting the lesson, we can afford, for once, to turn over a new leaf, and look at some great deeds we happen not yet to have performed. Our youthful Republic, filled as it is with life, fire and glory, seems to me like the young man to whom the Savior said, "One thing thou lackest."

We talk in this country, much about the glory of our Heroes and Statesmen, and we expect as Nelson did, that every man will do his duty—and on several occasions I believe even old England will say that we did do our duty pretty effectually. But have we done our duty to these men? It may be answered that to a certain extent we have to the few grey-haired soldiers of that great revolutionary struggle—for just before they dropped into their graves, we gave them an eleventh hour pension. We are all the time talking about what our Fathers have done for us; let us once bravely ask and honestly answer the question what have we done for *them*?

We are accused abroad of boasting of our country and its Institutions, of our Statesmen and Military Chieftains, and if we occasionally indulge in such things, it seems to me to be no such killing matter. One would expect however, in visiting our country, to find some proofs of our sincerity, and he naturally looks about him for those lavish displays of a nation's pride, upon monuments erected to the memories of our illustrious dead and their deeds. Let us go to see the monuments to Washington, Franklin, Adams, Hancock, Jefferson, Hamilton, Patrick Henry, Sumpter, Putnam, Decatur, Lawrence, and all the men who would *not* give up the ship, and hardly one can be found if I except that at Baltimore, which after all is not a *national* tribute, and the Statue was made by a foreigner at that—fortunately it is not the work of American genius. After such a survey, the foreigner exclaims in one of our own homely phrases, these people *are all talk and no cider*. With the exception of Bunker Hill, I believe not a single battle-ground is honored by a National Monument, and this is not a *national* structure. Massachusetts

had to build it herself, and although she was able and willing to do it, the tribute of the whole nation should have poured in to raise that noble column. But it is the work of American genius, and in all the world there is not a more touching or appropriate structure. But there is Lexington and Concord, Saratoga, Bennington, Princeton, Monmouth, Yorktown and New Orleans, and I believe not a monument of gratitude or even of pride or triumph, is raised over the dust of the brave men who sleep under their soil. Indeed it might be doubted if such glorious achievements had ever been performed there, were it not for the occasional upturning by a ploughshare of a brave man's bones, or the bayonet or bullet that laid him low.

Laudable efforts are making, not by the Government, which ought to have done it long ago, to erect Monuments to Washington, and I hope they may succeed. But public edifices like those for the most part proposed, and which would answer the purpose about as well, could be had without the trouble and expense of building them. I should be sorry to see so great a name as Washington's associated in a monument with Institutions, Libraries, Debating Societies, &c., *all* dignified by the name of a monument to our great Hero and Father. Almost as soon would I think of changing money in a church, or profaning the altars of God with traffic, as to convert Washington's Monument into such a business like place. Monuments to Washington should never be made the habitations of the living—they should be resorted to, to teach us how to live and how to die, and an eternal Sabbath should be kept around their graves. Let some imposing, but solemn structure be raised over the dust of Washington—single in its purpose, and single in its form. Let it be made of the most durable and massive materials, and let it rise as high as a grateful nation can carry it—without spires or turrets, or windows, or any other littleness to disturb the grandeur and solemnity of its design. Let it, in a word, be in harmony with the character of the man.

Of what form should be his Monument to express the durability of his fame, and at the same time embody and illustrate that solemnity of character so peculiarly his own? Before we

answer the question, we should look for our guidance to those ancient structures which have stood the longest, and will probably descend farthest into coming ages, and at the same time what are the most expressive, and excite the greatest wonder over successive races of men.?

Are they solemn temples, or sumptuous palaces, or massive obelisks, or solid columns, or colossal statues? The learned have spent ages in disputing about the sight of Babylon, with her gorgeous Temples, and Thebes with her hundred brazen Gates. The ruins even of Roman structures reared less than 2000 years ago, have long been preserved with sacred veneration, and the Temples of Greece are mournful heaps. But the Pyramids of Egypt still lift their awful forms over the desert, and have watched the rise and fall of a long succession of Empires. Human knowledge gropes back through dim ages to find the era of their beginning, and Time still strives in vain to overwhelm them. The obelisks lie scattered around the desert or have been carried away by distant travellers, and the Memnon lies prostrate in the dust. The great cities that once stood on the banks of the Nile are leveled with the ocean of sand around them, and almost every vestige of the works of man has passed away on the flowing tide of ages. But the Pyramids still rear themselves vast as ever—stupendous beacons to the traveller from distant countries; piercing the clouds where they catch the first blush of morning that flames on their summits as fair as the Morning of Creation; defying the barbarous hand of the spoiler, and the sweeping desolation of ages. Why were they made? This question we may answer with certainty. They were raised for Monuments—they contained the ashes of the dead.

And where is there in the universe any thing human like them, but the character of Washington? and what Monument could we so appropriately raise to the Father of our Country?

Washington's fame we know can never die—it would outlive the Pyramids without a Monument, or a line of eulogy. But a long line of generations is to follow us, and when they come upon the stage for their brief hour, in the sweep of ages,

eneb one to ask that distant Republic whose history will then have grown dim, what Monument of gratitude she left her glorious Deliverer, let them turn to some Pyramidal structure surmounted by a vast Statue to Washington, of everlasting bronze—

"Like some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its base the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

One of the strongest and most wakeful sentiments God has planted in the constitution of man, is a love of being remembered when we are dead. There are few who do not feel, coming up from the bosom with the sigh of life's last emotions a desire to be cherished in the recollections of men. Nothing is so dreadful as to be forgotten, and how common is the request of the dying to have some stone set over his dust to mark where the sleeper lies! It is a natural feeling, and it has been consecrated by the seal of Heaven. No city was ever so gorgeously filled with Monuments as Jerusalem. All the early Nations illustrated their history by public Monuments, for this was perhaps the loftiest feeling of antiquity, and their ruins are now sought eagerly by the traveller who wanders over the plains of Asia. Our country has just turned its attention to the Monuments strewn over our Continent, by primeval generations, and I doubt not the time will come when these Monuments will prove sure and infallible guides in decyphering the history of those ancient races. Indeed we even now consider the monuments left by the primitive Nations the safest and often the only guides to a knowledge of their real civilization. By exploring the ruins of Ninevah, Layard has recently made us familiar with the banqueting halls of Nimrod. But what have we yet reared that would save us from oblivion, should we be blasted like the Nations of Asia, and the tide of ages in their desolations sweep over us? I know of nothing but the Monument at Bunker Hill, and it is the most noble and enduring of modern times.

Pass over the old world, and look at the Monuments and the equestrian and colossal Statues, the Arches, the Tombs and the great structures decreed to illustrious men, and see

what an agency these works have had in promoting civilization and a National Spirit. The enthusiasm and patriotism they have kindled and kept alive, have covered Europe with glory.

So deeply has the power of Monuments and heroic traditions been felt in Europe, it has worked itself into the poetry of all its National Literatures. What so well calculated to stir the blood of an Italian as the scene in the opera *Virginia* where a young Roman gathers a brave band of youth around the tomb of the elder Brutus to make them swear to take the blood of the tyrant. The long oppressed, but never disheartened sons of Italy have again lifted their mangled arms to strike one more blow on the bosoms of their spoilers. Heaven send them victory, and if the French Republic has sent 30,000 men to Rome, to crush the Republic of Brutus, and that Republic must fall by French arms, Heaven send that every Frenchman in Italy be buried under its ruins.

Monuments of all kinds are intended to illustrate noble deeds, and the feelings of the beholder partake of the associations they are designed to awaken. Who can go to the tomb of Washington without coming away a better citizen and a better man? Who that stands over the grave of Marco Bozzaris, would not feel it glorious to die for his country? Who would not be shocked at the thought of blood and injustice while bending over the dust of William Penn? What Christian would not go to the stake if he were led into the Piazza della Santa Maria Novella, where Savanarola was burned, and told he must deny his faith? Who can repress a deep feeling of indignation as he passes in Westminster Abbey, the tomb of Henry VIII., and thinks of his murdered wives and disinherited daughters? What was it but the desire to see the sepulchre of the Savior that launched millions of crusaders on the plains of Asia? Will our Government never learn that there is no safeguard so effectual to our liberty and constitution, as the patriotism of our public men? And when will they learn that patriotism can never be so inflamed among the masses of the people, or its holy fires kept so bright on the National Altar, as by covering the consecrated soil of the nation, and surrounding the Capital with the

Statues and Monuments of illustrious men who have devoted themselves to the glory of their country?

I have sometimes fancied to myself the *environs* of the Capital, as they might be, at Washington, and the feelings of a young American who should walk up an avenue on either side of which stood in colossal bronze, the great Heroes of the Revolution, with Washington at their head. The Senator as he goes to take his seat in the public councils should walk through lines of all the Signers of the Declaration of Independence—a company of men who are already regarded with more veneration than any other perhaps who have ever lived, and they would form such a gallery as has never existed. In the Rotunda let the Statues of the Presidents be placed, and in the most sacred spot should stand alone a colossal bronze Statue to Washington. No other should be near it, unless a few of the greatest Statesmen and Chieftains of that period be grouped around him, as the ancients represented the gods in council at the feet of Jupiter on Mount Olympus. Our Campidaglio should be the most glorious and the most sacred spot on earth, except the spot where the Redeemer died. Here we should gather every trophy of victory and every laurel of triumph. Here at last should be laid to rest the walls of "old Ironsides," and over them should float the banners taken from the enemy at Yorktown. Every relic of those dark but finally triumphant days, should be carefully gathered and preserved with the sacredness with which we preserve the ark of the Constitution. And while we are gathering these trophies and treasures, the *Lares Penates* of the Nation, let us look after our rusty cannon on the Chesapeake and Potomac, or that proud structure may be laid waste again by the despotism from which we wrung our Independence through long years of fraternal blood, and for which England is so slow to forgive us.

Let the young American who may yet be called on to defend even a *Monument to Washington*, from the descendants of our common ancestors, visit the Capital, and walk up such an avenue, and survey such a group, and lay his hands on the ruined timbers of "old Ironsides," and wrap himself in those

flags of victory, and he will need but one blast of the bugle when the crisis comes.

Patriotism is a sentiment as well as a principle, and in its sublimest elevation it becomes a passion. What so well calculated to stir its fires, as a contemplation of the great patriots whose names stand bright on the rolls of their country's history? What can awaken so deep and lasting a recollection of their deeds, as a sight of their Monuments?

One of the highest and purest motives that urge us on to lofty achievements for our country, is to know that our country will cherish our names when we are dead, and not suffer them to die. During the war with Great Britain, an American offered to swim under the water with a bomb of powder and explode it with his own hand under the keel of an English line-of-battle ship. He failed, or a thousand enemies (made such by the folly of their rulers,) would have died with him. It is not for me to say what part a love of fame may have had in his daring attempt, but one thing is certain: few such deeds would ever be done, if their authors were all timely warned that their names would just as soon be forgotten.

Let us see what England has done for her great men. Who even in England, will compare Wellington to Washington? And yet we are obliged to compare what has been done for these men. The spoils of Wellington's victories, the cannon he took from the enemy, his grateful country melted down into a superb Monument, in sight of his own windows, from which he turns his proud eye on the bronze structure as the sunset turns it into gold. They have erected for him many other Monuments in London and throughout the Empire. They could not wait for him to die, to do him justice—they would have him see a Nation's gratitude. The Government elevated him to the highest rank an Englishman can hold, and filled his palaces with gold and silver, and gave him vast estates, and control of her public councils; and when he comes to die, he will be followed to Westminster Abbey with his sovereign for a pall-bearer, and Parliament will appropriate without debate a million of the public treasure to erect him the loftiest Monument in the world.

Look at the superb structure to her great Naval Hero in Trafalgar Square! Tory, Whig, Radical, Chartist, Sans-culotte, pauper, all unite in this noble tribute of gratitude.

Look at her column to the Duke of York. Walk over her battle-grounds: go to the shores of India and her islands in the distant seas; wander through her churches and cathedrals —every where the people or the Government have honored their great men—And she has *her* Campo Santo, her Pantheon, where her illustrious men are solemnly cloistered. Even Packenham has a splendid monumental sepulchre in St. Paul's Cathedral, and one would suppose he died at New-Orleans amidst the shouts of victory, to gaze on the affecting tribute the nation have paid him. Even the ashes of Andre the Spy were brought across the Atlantic by a solemn act of Parliament and entombed by the side of heroes, and over him breathes the marble of a great sculptor.

And where does Hale the American Spy, a loftier and a nobler character, sleep. Nobody appears to know but a few fair women of Connecticut, who are building his monument with their needles—and I need not say that every stitch is to our Government a stitch of shame. When another Commander-in-chief wants another spy, he will be found, in spite of the ungenerous treatment Hale received at our hands, but the man who sends him will have had too much experience of the ingratitude of our country, to tell him as he goes on his errand of death, 'if worse comes to worse, my brave fellow, you will have a grave in your native soil and a monument from your country.'

Courage my countrymen! Bare your breasts to the foeman, for if you fall your grateful government will spend days of dispute in Congress on the propriety of granting your widows and children an humble pittance that will hardly insure them bread, and even rob them of this by act of Congress, if your widow marries. No stone will ever be raised over your bones except by the ploughshare. History may indeed record your merits long after you are dead, but even these may become a matter of dispute if you happen to live, and some contemptible politician discover about election time that the victory was won by another man.

Tyrants have said that Republics are ungrateful—ours is, but others have not been A Greek or Roman soldier never drew on the helmet to rush upon the foe of his republic without thinking of the glory in which his country would embalm his name. If the Roman soldier fell in battle, the Republic took care to see that his family did not want—if he came back from his wars victorious, he retired in his old age to a little farm the Republic gave him as a reward for his patriotism, and passed his last days in peace. None of the citizens of those ancient Republics ever rendered any signal service to their country without receiving some proof of its gratitude. It was so with those glorious Republics of the middle ages. Many of the most stupendous palaces which now adorn Venice, Genoa, Bologna, Florence, Pisa and Rome, were built by those Republics for their illustrious citizens.

Why is it that our battle-fields have no monuments—why have no tombs been erected to our heroes and statesmen—why have the greatest public benefactors of this nation, its patriots, inventors, projectors, explorers in science, and authors of genius, lived and died in poverty—why are they treated with neglect while living, and oblivion when dead?

There is but one reason, and I fear it lies too deep to be easily eradicated. It is because our Halls of Legislation are filled with corrupt and intriguing politicians, when statesmen and educated men should be there. It is because the great mass of our population are toiling out their souls in the never ceasing struggle for the *almighty dollar*. They have no time left for leisure or reflection, to think of the claims of patriotism, art, genius, or even the better life to come. All their solicitudes and all their time are bestowed upon the coarsest and most besotting of all pursuits ever yet followed, the heaping of dollars together, and generally the more they get the less good it does them or any body else. I am severe you will say. I hope I am—I intend to be so.

The amount of money I may have at my bankers, the number of dishes set on my table, the kind of carriage I ride in, or if I ride in none at all, have very little to do with my true interests as a man or a citizen. These are only accidents;

adjuncts, circumstances, which have no necessary relation to my great interests for this world or the world to come. They have little to do with the good I am to confer on my fellow-men, or the glory I am to shed over my country. Allen's and Stark's and Putnam's grand-children may ride in carriages, but their country only asks of them to show themselves the men their father's were, who, at best, rode on horse-back, and more probably a-foot. In the young days of the Roman Republic, a plain old farmer was the man in whom the hopes of that glorious people on the shores of the Tiber, were treasured up.

In one respect, we have made a beginning in the right way—we have made some provision for popular education, and we have many noble institutions of Learning. But Science alone cannot teach man the highest wisdom. He may be learned and great, and yet not be happy. He may be rich and never reckon among his possessions what those who have it esteem worth more than gold. It is not enough for man to embark on the rapid whirl of excited life that bears the American on—to be free, to be educated in college, to be surrounded with luxury, and hold a great deal of bank stock. There is something worth more than equipages, and railroads and even *Liberty*. There is an inner life, the life of the soul, for which all else was made, and all else is to the soul, only what the winds, waves and ship are to the voyager, when the voyage is done. His wants are few and simple, and he only hopes to reach his port in safety. There is a moral life worth more than the life of the body, and for which the body was given. It lives in thought and feeling; in all those high and generous emotions which sometimes thrill the bosom of every man. They soften the heart when we contemplate the generous and the beautiful—they elevate the soul when we gaze on the great and the lofty—they start the tear when the heart is full. Where these are not the fruits of wealth and learning, and rural leisure, they are only a curse. I would rather be the simple Swiss peasant, with no wish or hope to wander beyond my native valley, and have my free heart, and warm bosom, and gay and sweet communings with the playing-brook, and the

wild flower and the valley-bird and the mountain-sunset, and never know till I die that the earth goes round the sun, than to crowd my *heart* with science.

And yet this is the life we know so little of in America! When a glimpse of it shines out from from the Books, they know not what it is, and for want of a better name they call it transcendentalism—when it peeps out from a cottage covered with woodbine, all nestled in green, where its gifted habitant lives and loves God and man, and nature—its owner is pitied as a man who has *no business.*

If I have a word of censure to utter against our exclusively business spirit that toils out life in the struggle for gold, and which measures public prosperity by the number of railroads and canals—a spirit that loses sight of the quiet hour of reflection in manhood, a green and peaceful old age, and the life to come, (and I have much to say against a spirit so uncivilized and irreligious,) I shall now as I always have, except the noble state on whose soil we stand, and particularly the County of Berkshire. It is almost the only place in America where there is a quiet life—where the intellectual and the spiritual have won a victory over the lower propensities of man, and where in the Drawing-Room and the Farm House alike, the spirit of leisure, reflection, intelligence, taste, and contentment reigns. There is many a green valley in this neighborhood with its shining river, and its white church embowered in trees, shut out from the bustle of busy life, an emblem of the quiet life it fits the worshipper for—the tiny white Town House where the citizens go to transact public business, instead of desecrating a christian temple with the vulgarities of the demagogue—the peaceful rural cemetery away by itself, where the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep—the long avenue of venerable elms planted by former generations, casting their cool shadows over half the dwellings of the village—some green hill rising up in the midst of the valley, with an Academy at its foot—some oft frequented grove of sylvan beauty, where village hinds and maidens go to pass a sunset hour—the gardens, the walks, the hills and the valleys, and above all the beautiful spirit of the people

But I speak of the spirit which pervades almost every other portion of this country—We cut down the old forests, which are almost the only sacred things in America, for our churches are often turned into Town Houses and our homes for the dead are opened for pasturage, and we build churches that look just like cotton Factories, and we get a Railroad, and yet after all, it is doubtful if we find so much to make us wise and good as the pioneer finds in his solitary life in the green old woods.

I well know that nations as well as Individuals have a career to run from infancy to age, and that a certain analogy may be traced in the history of their developments. We are still in the flush and vigor of youth, when all is fire and impetuosity. We have not yet reached the age of thought—we have not yet found leisure for reflection. But we are emerging from the dusty heat of the race course, and coming out on the sloping hill-side where the air is pure and the landscape smiling. A few have already learned the great secret of happiness—the object and the charm of life. It is singular too, that many of this class are the very men who have been the victims of the American spirit—business men who were diverted from study in youth by the golden dreams that enthrall so many of the choicest minds in the country. They entered the contest—they mingled in the heat and fury, and they were at last compelled to leave the field, exhausted, worn down, tired out, sad too with the thought that the charm of life was broken. Some of them are able to retire on ample fortunes, but too generally is it the case that the American never abandons his business till his business abandons him: and so far has this spirit overcome the better sense of our citizens, it is even considered dangerous for a man to retire from active life—every body says he will die! And I believe there is some truth in it too—but how sad a commentary does it offer on our system of life—a system which turns man so thoroughly into a machine that reflection kills him. And the poor victim of toil is obliged to toil on, and work himself into the grave to keep out of it, through that very period of life nature has consecrated to the hallowed pleasures of

retirement and reflection. It is a dreadful spectacle to see the poor victims overtasked muscles still strained in the counting-house and along the marts of commerce, when he should have long ago fled to some quiet retreat among the green fields and dashing waters, and still woods, and magical gardens, to survey the journey of life he had travelled, and pass a green old age of tranquility in getting ready for the beautiful life to come. A still sadder sight and more often met with, is such a man in the evil hour, when the fever of gain drove him into one more speculation that swept him to ruin. He is too old to begin life again at the bottom of the hill, and he retires to the bosom of his destitute family—to die. They have been brought up in luxury, which is certain now to make them still more wretched, and they live to mourn over the folly of a father who had not given up the hazards and the cares of business when he had amassed wealth enough to make them as happy as money ever can make us. But the greater proportion left business with but a fraction of what they might have retired on, had the fatal charm been sooner broken. With proper economy they could still be independent, and with a small farm to cultivate, they found sources of pleasure in nature, society, work, books and reflection, they never dreamed of before. In Europe, where every thing else is done so badly, they understand the economy of social life far better than ourselves. Her scholars study more intensely, and accomplish far more, and live far longer than our own. Her professional men run a longer and a brighter career. Her commercial men amass greater fortunes, and lead a life of less toil. Her women live in society, and seem never to grow old for they are always young with cheerfulness. Why is this?

If the enigma were to be solved by a single word, I should say *amusement*. Every European, even the slave classes, (I do not include England, which is the paradise of the rich and the hell of the poor,) has his hour or moment of diversion, of relaxation, of *dolce far niente*, all of which is as necessary to perfect health of body and mind, as sleep, or food, or rest. The merchant goes from his counting-house at 2, reposes in

his private cabinet or library, dines at 4, rides out with his family and devotes the evening to society and amusement. The scholar, the professor, the artist, the clergyman, all abandon their occupations after a certain hour of the day, and till the next morning all thought, all talk, all solicitude about business is banished. For the rest of the day they are men of leisure and of society. A walk, a ride, a soiree, an opera, an innocent game, a concert, any thing that makes life bright and the heart glad.

Such is the life the experience of 2000 years has taught the old world: and although in making its way into our social system it must battle against the giant spirit of business and gain on one side, and the narrow spirit of sectarian bigotry on the other, yet it is appearing among us. An influence has gone forth from the lives and voices and books of such men as Allston, Channing, Everett, Webster, Prescott, Longfellow, Follen, Briggs, Story, Sparks, Emerson, Bryant, Halleck, Headly, Cooper, Irving, Willis, Miss Sedgwick, Mrs. Sigourney, and I might mention an hundred others—an influence which is making its healing way through the feverish veins of society. It is already strongly developed in the change of hours of business and the arrangements of commerce—in the general flocking from heated and polluted cities to the still country villages and farm houses, rather than to the fashionable *spas*, those haunts of the *nouveau riche*, who affect gentility in proportion as they get money—in a relaxation of that narrow selfishness which branded a love for social and intellectual amusements as impiety and sin—in a growing contempt for speculations, and respect for farming, that noblest of all pursuits—in a wide and general diffusion of a love and patronage of the fine arts—in a taste for horticulture, landscape gardening, and the life of a villa, with its repose and elegant and noble amusements—in a better *taste for architecture and fountains, and pleasure-grounds, for rural cemeteries and monuments*—in the vast increase of the numbers of our countrymen going to Europe and coming back American still—in the *cultivation of a home feeling and national spirit*—in our *literature*, our *celebrations* and our *jubilees*, in a single word, in the developement of

that love for society, for those liberal and elegant pursuits and pleasures which constitute the great and only charm of the social life of Europe.

But how has it been in times past, and to how great an extent even now does this spirit prevail? And how far have the State and general Governments fallen behind the people? Two points which borrow their force best from illustration.

The two greatest painters America ever had have been offered commissions when they were too old to execute them. I need not say I allude to Allston and Vanderlyn. As early as 1811 Allston's "Dead Man raised by Elisha's bones," gained from the British Institution where he entered into competition with the best painters in Europe, a prize of 200 guineas. He was honored by the greatest men in Europe as the first of living artists, and his great works are still there in private and public galleries. While he was in the full glow of creative genius, Congress seemed to be as unconscious of his merits as of a man unborn. But they discovered their mistake, as is generally the case with that body, when too late to correct it. He was offered a valuable commission by the Government when too late to accept it, and he declined it I am told, in an eloquent and affecting letter to the Secretary of State—a document which will one day be pointed to by the historian, as a sarcasm too bitter for any country but our own—a country which produces many great artists, but starves them all out of it; a practice more cruel than the vulture, for she only *devours* her young. It was so with Vanderlyn, who gained the Napoleon medals from the Louvre. He indeed executed his work, but it is not what it would have been, if he had done it before his eye grew dim and his hand trembled.

When the great Thorvalsden went home to Copenhagen to die, after his myriad creations of grandeur and beauty, he was received with the thunder of cannon along the coast, and gala festas bespoke the general enthusiasm. He was greeted back to his country with the honors decreed to a Roman victor, and became the companion of his sovereign. When he died the king conducted his funeral; he followed

him to the grave uncovered, as chief mourner, attended by all his court, and with his own hands helped lay the great sculptor in his tomb. There were public demonstrations of grief, and the court and the nation went into mourning. As great a man was Washington Allston. When he died, the friends who had not only appreciated his genius, but showed their sympathy in a more substantial way, gathered around him, and their example was followed by a numerous funeral train as is always the case when too late to do any good—and there he lies for aught I know, without a monument, or the hope of one worthy of a genius, who when taste is improved, and a love of art developed in our country, will gather thousands to the spot where he lies, and the foreigner who looks around for the collossal pile over his dust, will in its absence, turn to the artists of the nation, as he points to his resting-place, and say,

"In yonder grave your Druid lies."

Allston was appreciated by the few; but any one who should have suggested that his death was a public calamity, that called for demonstrations of national sorrow, like those exhibited by the Danes of that ice-bound coast to their Thorvalsden, would not unlikely have met the reply, "why a body would have supposed that the President of the United States was dead." Ages will roll by, and the wild flower grow over the grave of the great Poet-Painter, and a long succession of Presidents will come, and men enough will be found without hunting for them, to fill the post, but ages may go by before the successor of Allston appears.

But our children will one day build the sepulchres of the Prophets, though their Fathers killed them.