

The rise and progress, the decline and fall of nations compose the most curious, important, and interesting part of history. To trace a mighty empire from its dawn to its greatest splendor, and thence downwards to its last departing day; to observe its most signal occurrences and memorable revolutions, and, in particular, to mark its advances in knowledge, its refinements in manners, and the causes of its declension and ruin, must afford useful lessons of instruction, and ample scope for meditation. Nations, like individuals, arrive at maturity by degrees; their progress is slow and gradual. A great and sudden accession of power is rare, of national knowledge rarer still. In the annals of mankind instances of the former are and then occur; but what history presents us with are instances of the latter? Little, it must be confessed, do we know of the rise of states and empires. How little of ancient date. What can we say of their origin? Accur me for information to the Britons page? The occurrence and Rome, the most

...satisfactory and vain. The [unclear] and [unclear]; they
polished and enlightened states of any [unclear]; they amuse,
retail, if not invent, idle fictions and preposterous fables; they amuse,
they astonish with the achievements of the founders of their states, whom
they represent as divinely inspired, as more than mortal, and nearly
allied to their Gods. It is true, admirably adapted to the national
vanity and finely concordant with heathen mythology. It is true,
which may aid the flight of the poet, but degrade the dignity of
the historian; they may decorate the pages of fiction, but debase those
of truth. The origin of modern nations is to the full as dubious and
obscure. Of England, for instance, what know we prior to, and,
indeed, for several centuries after, the invasion of Caesar. The traditions
of the vulgar, the fables of the druids, the songs of the bards, and the
legends of canonized monarchs, may be clasped together, and are equally worthy
of regard. And yet these are the sources, whence we derive our information of
the early periods in the history of England. Every incident, that tended to gratify
superstitious curiosity; every story, however groundless, that tended to

2. Please and elevate national pride and honor, was seized with avidity and
dwelt upon with rapture. In short, works, which might, perhaps, have
been founded in truth, were so worked up and colored by the penicils of fancy
or of fiction, that though they pleased for awhile, are now justly and
universally reprobated. So wrapped in obscurity or disfigured by fiction is the
origin of nations, as to elude the researches of the most acute and
philosophical historians. The investigation serves no other purpose
than to convince, that ignorance and incivization prevail and
cover the infancy of states; and that it requires a series of years,
perhaps, a series of ages, before they can break through the incumbent
gloom, rise into knowledge, and bask in the sunshine of literature
and truth. An exception, however, to this general position, will readily
occur to every reflecting hearer. The rise and progress of the British
colonies, now United States of America, are familiar to every person,
who is conversant in modern history. The original emigrants brought
over with them much of the arts and sciences, of the morals and virtues,
which prevailed among the parent country. It is praise
to my countrymen, that their migration, to recite the days

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to my own... migration, to recite the...
and difficulties, which they encountered and surmounted, to describe
their enterprise and perseverance, their political establishments and
judicious course, till Great Britain began to encroach upon their civil
liberty, and eventually asserted the unwarrantable and oppressive
power of taxation in all cases whatsoever. These particulars will,
no doubt, form a curious and instructive, if not a splendid, portion
of the American story. At length arrived an era pregnant with
great events. At length arrived the fourth of July, seventeen
hundred, and seventy six, when our fathers arose in their might,
and spoke these United States into political existence. Remained
patriots! Memorable day! Had time permitted, we might attempt to
celebrate the skills of our statesmen, the exploits of our warriors, and the
virtues of our citizens; we might attempt to recal the numerous and
diversified scenes, which were exhibited during the revolutionary
war of America. Some future Addison or Kame shall do
justice to the theme, and emblazon our Warrens, our Montgomeries

our Mercers, and our Greens. But when shall arise a genius equal to
 the portraiture of Washington? — Washington; — the glory of America;
 the man of the age; the wonder of ages to come. Illustrations
 of Washington! thy name shall sublive the wrecks of empires, and
 roll, like the sun, immortal over the wastes of time.

The independence of the United States of
 America has spread over Europe a new face of legislation, of policy,
 and of commerce. It is every day productive of unforeseen and
 momentous consequences. It has given birth to new revolutions, new
 laws, new schemes and experiments of government. A new world in
 morals and in politics has arisen around us. The present may be
 called the age of resolutions. Europe is full of changes, perplexities,
 and characters; every year seems with calamitous vicissitudes.
 The old governments of that continent, which had stood for ages,
 and had grown venerable by time, are shaken to their basis, and
 pressing to their fall. In France, regencies, republics, and cabinets and phenomena,
 are not to

...most potent, that the ... is a
illuminated, but to consume. France, ... is a
monster in ambition, in despotism, in crime. The aspect universal
dominion, and aims to subvert all institutions civil and religious. She
outscandalizes the Danubio, and threatens to demoralize and
enslave the world. God of Heaven! How only know what atrocities
and bloodshed, what ruin, torments and anarchy will ensue, before order can be
restored, and new governments see erected on the ruins of the old. How
will those say to the destroying angel, cease; it is enough.

If the signs of ^{great} nations be void in obscurity, it is
not so with respect to their declension and fall. [These are more certain,
are better known. And although the existence of a state cannot be
prolonged beyond the decree of Heaven, yet its dissolution is generally
effected by secondary causes or natural means. In political as in
animal economy, the seeds of destruction are every where interposed.
Some death-working principle is interwoven in the texture of every
political establishment; its operation is imperceptible but progressive.]

4. like the silent flow of a summer sea, and ceases not till it terminates
in the destruction of the government. It is observable, that when the fate
of a nation is at its crisis, it seldom happens, that some Caesar, or man
of a daring and pre-eminential turn is wanting, to lay hold of the
occasion, and ~~not~~ ^{begin} accelerate the doom. Limited in time, still
more limited in talents and information, an exact enumeration of the
causes, which conduce to the decline and fall of nations, cannot be
expected. The subject is vast as creation. I shall sweep over it in a
cursorious manner, touching a little particularly on such parts, as are most
applicable to republican governments, and the existing crisis of the
United States. [Young students and youth of the present day, born and
reared in the cradle of American independence, let us cherish the spirit,
that gave it birth; let us cling round the constitution of our country,
as the ark of safety and palladium of our liberties. Can we more
acceptably ^{or} ~~and~~ ~~beneficially~~ commemorate the anniversary of our political
existence, than by maintaining and guarding against the causes of division and
ruin, by cementing the national affection and brotherhood, entwining
our interests, and forming a phalanx, which shall

our interests, and, if necessary, we must maintain, all internal factions and external
[Sec.]

In a government, like that of the United States, it is
of primary importance to preserve the balance of power among its
component parts; and as the limits of each are accurately ascertained,
not to suffer one to encroach upon another. The powers of the president,
of the senate, of the house of representatives, and of the judiciary, proceed
alike from the plastic hand of the people, and should move within
the orbit prescribed by the constitution. Every innovation or encroachment
of one department must be at the expense or danger, and,
perhaps, ruin of the others. The instant, that this constitutional
balance is destroyed, the government verges to its fall.

Another danger of an alarming kind ^{to us} results
from the structure of our government. The constitution of the United States
is a complex system, and quite a novelty in the science of politics. We
have sovereignty moving within a sovereignty. Experience has already
verified what some of our distinguished politicians early predicted,

That there could be unceasing efforts on the part of individual states to interfere
 with and control the movements and operations of the national government.
 States have interested and aspiring views in proportion to their wealth, their
 numbers, and importance in the political scale of the union. If the
 constitution is gone, the passion of state ambition or aggrandizement
 will more or less operate, especially if great disparity exist among the
 component members of the confederacy. Read the history of the Grecian
 republics; almost every page is filled with their contests for superiority
 and rule. Now is the Athenian character tarnished by restless ambition,
 and unceasing efforts to reduce the sister states, and have an ~~unwarranted~~
 ascendancy in the councils of Greece. Some men are ~~un~~ unruly
 and ungovernable, unless they rule and govern all. The same observation
 will hold with equal propriety of confederated states.

Great and unlimited extent of dominion is a
 source of danger, and generally prebodes approaching dissolution. This was
 in some measure the case of the Roman republic. It sunk beneath its own
 burden, was crushed by its own weight. It was aimed at universal
 dominion, and perished by its own ambition.

and...; seized upon all... the destroying
Others, they destroyed themselves. Such policy... the fall of France.
It is... that nations would grow wise by the example of others, and learn, that
to... rapid success of victories and conquests, and great and sudden
and, enlargement of power and dominion and power, generally indicate a great
event, and sudden declension and ruin.
... (It is folly in the extreme to believe and act
upon the professions, and not the conduct of nations. In this way Italy and
Switzerland have been revolutionized and subjugated by France. In this way,
we aim to beguile and destroy the United States. But actions, not words,
speak the truth of sincerity, and will be regarded by a wise people, who are attentive
to their interests, and solicitous to preserve their liberties, to maintain their
independence, and to exercise exclusively the right of self-government.
Professions may deceive and lead astray, but into a state of impotence
they cannot; but facts cannot err. They afford decisive indications of
character, and enable us to form a true estimate of men and things.
Friendship among nations, abstracted from interest, is such "stuff as

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dreams are made of? Nations, like individuals, may smile and smile, and
"be villains." ^{or} France, for that exact title? Has not this been
their invariable policy? How shall a foe so subtle and vindictive,
so full of wiles and poison, be successfully met and repelled? By arms
Resist and live. ^{or} France, thy enmity may be direful; but thy
wrestling lullaby of friendship, affection, and fraternity is the
inclusive song of death.

The doctrines of Epicurus had pernicious
influence on the genius and morals of the Romans toward the close of the
republic. In the present age, the fathers of free thinkers, deists, ^{from}
French philosophers, atheists, and illuminists, have conducted to the corruption and
degradation of morals. What can be expected from ^{a nation of} men, who look upon virtue
as romantic or nominal, and religion as superstition or a life? Men, who
proclaim, there is no God; men, who see inscriptions on ^{the} tombs, death is
an eternal sleep. ^{the} Virtue is the only solid and permanent cement of
society, and lies at the foundation of all order and good government. ^{the}
Roman religion; and ^{the} monarchy must ensue. Roman religion,
and ^{the} proud philosophy, in the de-

and then — ; but will respect the consequences. Look abroad
Lo! she rolls on the splendid orb of illuminated philosophy and
blends at every pore.

Luxury is a sure precursor of political slavery and
death. Luxury perverts the genius, corrupts the morality, breaks the spirit of
a people, and sets them for slaves.

"Luxury sheds a rose, obscures, sheds unheeded banes!"

What rapid progress have luxury and illuminated philosophy made in
America? We tread close in the heels of our brethren in Europe. We
imitate them in dress, in manners, in equipage, in sentiments, in morals,
in principles. Rome's age of wisdom is the latter Bible of many;
Moscow, and Pottraize their apostles; the French directory their guide,
France their adopted and better country. Infatuated Americans, why
renounce your country, your religion, and your God. Oh shame, what
is thy blush? Is this the way to continue independent, and to render the
1st of July immortal in memory and song?

Different governments admit of different modes
verified was some of our arrangements

occasional attacks; their vulnerable points, however, are quickly discovered
and assailed. In monarchies, the ministers and favorites of the king
are the persons, to whom attention is paid, and on whom pecuniary
large sums are occasionally bestowed. Members of the legislature, factious
and disappointed spirits, demagogues and leaders of the people, are the
objects of temptation, and the persons to be tampered with and gained in
a republican government. Greece affords many sad examples, how far the
orator and leader of the people were operated upon by bribery and corruption.
The gold of Philip did more to effect his purposes against the liberties of
Athens, than the promise of his arms. Gold bought and insouled to him
within the Athenian demagogues and orators, who harangued, flattered,
and abused the people to their ruin. All demagogues are tyrants in
their hearts; they seduce and delude, misrepresent and deceive, in order
to rule and govern the people. A single leader of a mob is a tyrant on
a small scale; enlarge his sphere of action, and soon he is in the range of a
tyrant; and he rises into a despot of the first magnitude. So true is
the observation of an ingenious writer, that a mob is a tyrant and ungovernable
as it is its own duke, and that a mob is a tyrant and ungovernable
as it is its own duke, and that a mob is a tyrant and ungovernable

A member announced to the members
money, that had, in one year, been expended by the administration of their
government in secret services, and in bribery and corruption, principally
among foreign states. The sum was immense, it amounted to many
millions, and far exceeded the national debt of America. What was
done? The order of the day was called. French republicans rely on
their virtue, repose upon the purity of their intentions; and believe, it is
principles in the political affairs of the terrible republic, that the
end sanctifies the means. Alas! this is the age of reason, of philosophy,
of illumination, of perfectibility. An ounce of honesty and common
sense is worth them all.

Parties, it is said, grow up naturally out of free
governments, and are necessary to their existence. It may be so; but
they often prove their ruin. Parties, to be safe, must be temperate;
to be useful, their views must be pure and constitutional. If they
disorder and dissension, alienate the affections of the people from the govern-
ment, generate insurrections, and abet the insidious schemes of foreign
powers against the interests, dignity, and independence of their country, what

Annihilation can be brought to the majority of the crime? The danger to
 republics is imminent when parties act under the patronage and
 guidance of foreign nations. The interference of foreign powers in the
 internal arrangements and politics of a country is disgraceful to
 national dignity and dangerous to national independence. Of the truth
 of this position, the history of the present day affords exhibits many
 striking and dreadful proofs. Look at Holland, at Italy, at Venice,
 at Switzerland. Foreign influence, fomented in intestine parties and
 commotions, rendered them an easy conquest to France. France
 subdued them by her arms, intrigues, and principles more than by her
 arms. But why go abroad? Look at home? Look at the United States
 France, while loud in the her professions of friendship, fraternity, and
 regard, was creating and fomenting parties in the bosom of our country,
 treacherously undermining our rights, and endeavoring to render us
 tributaries and slaves. Her principles, intrigues, and influence had
 nearly ^{ruined} ~~ruined~~ ^{ruined} our ^{independence} ~~independence~~, ^{and party} ~~and party~~ ^{confidence} ~~confidence~~
 our government. ^{What} ~~What~~ ^{was} ~~was~~ ^{the} ~~the ^{result} ~~result~~ ^{of} ~~of~~ ^{her} ~~her~~ ^{policy} ~~policy~~ ^{and} ~~and~~ ^{treachery} ~~treachery~~
^{and} ~~and~~ ^{deceit} ~~deceit~~. What a moment for us~~

free, if we be factually true to our country and not wanting to ourselves.
But if we are to be swayed by foreign politics, and guided by foreign
councils; if we are to be cut ~~up~~^{up} into parties, who attack themselves
to foreign nations, with a great bordering of frenzy; if our young and
tender bark is to be the sport of every breeze, that blows; then the
heat of fourth of July I will keep in the safe and silent shade,
will muse upon the splendor of our days, and at the going down
of the sun will sigh and say, Americans! Your spirit of independence
is gone, and with it the genius of freedom has fled! Americans!
Your sword of glory is set, ye deformed, yes, ye deserve to be slaves.
And is this to be thy destiny, O my country? Is this to be our
 doom, O youth of America? No— Let us unitedly arise, oppose
the sacred altar of American liberty, and swear eternal enmity
to factions, intestine broils, foreign politics, intrigue, and influence.
Let us reverence ourselves. A maxim equally true in private, in
public, and in national life. Write in letters of gold, and hang

7.
up the tablet in the American hall of legislation, that self-govern-
-ment and self-respect constitute the only basis of national
prosperity and honor. They are the life-blood of the body
politic. Statesmen, legislators, rulers, and fathers of our
country, act up to the principle of self-government, and self-
-respect, and then our country's interests and glory will never be
sacrificed or tarnished. Then the Hydra faction dies. Then
foreign influence curls her face and retires. Then we shall
move with one will, shall be animated with one soul, shall unite
with one arm. Then the American character shall blaze
high on the rolls of fame, and increase in honor with
increase of years. Then hail the fourth of July, seventeenth
hundred, and seventy six; it shall live in grateful memory,
and be celebrated till time shall be no more.