

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

YOUNG MEN OF BOSTON,

ASSOCIATED FOR

MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL IMPROVEMENT,

ON THE

FIFTYSEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

By AMASA WALKER,
PRESIDENT OF THE BOSTON LYCEUM.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN consenting to the publication of the following Address, the author deems it proper to remark, that no one can be more sensible of its imperfections, as a composition, than himself. That it is obnoxious to a great deal of just criticism, he is aware. It was prepared at a very short notice, as the young gentlemen before whom it was delivered well know; and thrown together in such brief intervals of leisure as the pressing ~~of~~ ^{of} vocations of business would allow. He had no time for revision or condensation; and, as it was delivered "with all its imperfections on its head," and received with much kindness, the author now commits it, in the same condition, to the same friendly hands.

The Societies before whom the address was delivered are the following:—

- Boston Young Men's Marine Bible Society.*
- Boston Young Men's Society.*
- Young Men's Society for the Promotion of Literature and Science.*
- Franklin Debating Society.*
- Boston Laboring Young Men's Temperance Society.*
- Lyceum Elocution and Debating Society.*
- Mercantile Library Association.*
- Mechanic Apprentices' Library Association.*
- Boston Lyceum.*
- Young Men's Temperance Society.*
- Mechanics' Lyceum.*

A D D R E S S .

THE return of this day, has brought us to another Anniversary of American Independence, and we have assembled to commemorate the most interesting epoch in the history of man; the birth-day of liberty to a great nation, and destined, we trust, to be the universal jubilee of freedom.

How thrilling, how transporting, are the recollections connected with this hallowed occasion. Around it cluster all the deeds and glory of our fathers; associated with this hour, are all the wondrous events of the American Revolution. The scenes of Bunker Hill, of Saratoga, of Yorktown, come around us; we think of Washington, and Warren, and Putnam; we hear the first notes of defiance as they resounded in the Cradle of Liberty, as they burst forth in the Continental Congress. We think of Adams, and Hancock, and Henry; of those who were wise and prudent in council, of those who were mighty and brave in battle. Our hearts swell with gratitude to that "Supreme Judge of all the world," to whom our fathers appealed in the day of peril; whose merciful providence granted wisdom in the cabinet, and victory in the field.

Fiftyseven years ago this day,

"Our sires declared these states to be
One nation, sovereign, independent, free."

The Declaration was bold and daring. It came from hearts fired with the love of freedom, stung with the wrongs of oppression; from hearts conscious of the justice of their cause, and their own sincere devotion to liberty; confident of the support of their fellow-citizens and the smiles of Heaven. It was not the offspring of heated passions, but of cool, deliberate determination. The spirit that gave it birth, was not the effervescence of temporary excitement. It was the same that sent the pilgrims to Plymouth; the same that sustained them amid the unnumbered sacrifices and sufferings of their early condition. A response to this declaration was found in every heart—a nation rose in arms. It was a fearful struggle; full of danger, full of heroic action, full of glory. “They fought like brave men long and well;” and what our sires declared us, we became. The humbled Britain retired from the shores of liberty, and peace with her thousand blessings, revisited the hills and vales of Columbia, long scathed with the desolations of war.

Grateful would it be to our feelings to dwell on these inspiring themes; to trace these glowing pages of our country's fame; but we forbear. Other employment, other duties claim our attention. We think it not enough to praise and admire; we would emulate illustrious deeds. We deem it, therefore, more in accordance with the true intent, and most important bearing of this anniversary occasion, to inquire whether the work of freedom be accomplished.—Whether the institutions our fathers founded, be perfected and secured. Whether the sons may not show themselves worthy of their sires.

Has the day of noble effort gone by? Must the present be an age of ignoble indolence? Must our tongues be employed only in rehearsing the deeds of other times? No. Thank Heaven! this is no day for pusillanimity and cowardice. The heroes of '76 did much; they burst the chains of political bondage; in blood they laid the deep and

safe foundations of our republic; but the superstructure is to be built by us, the fair proportions of this beautiful edifice are yet to be raised, and the splendid temple of American liberty remains to be completed by the wisdom and labors of this and succeeding generations. *Intelligence and virtue are the two great pillars on which this fabric rests.* So our fathers have told us; so we believe. Whatever shall strengthen these, gives durability and security to the whole structure. If these be rendered firm and immovable, all is safe; if they be not, in vain are all our toils. To perfect these, then, is the object of our highest ambition.

We are assembled as the young men of Boston, associated for intellectual and moral improvement. We think it fit and proper that we should participate in the observance of this anniversary of our national independence. We believe the purposes for which we are connected are congenial to the free institutions of our country; nay, more, that their perpetuity and existence depend wholly upon the success of those measures, for the advancement of which we are embodied.

The twelve societies assembled on this occasion are separate and independent associations, with no bond of union, save that which results from a community of feeling, and similarity of purpose. They are composed of persons of all religious sects, of all political parties, of every grade and profession: the gentleman of leisure, and the man of business; the native Bostonian, and the adopted citizen; all ranks and classes intermingle. We can therefore safely assert that we are not the propagandists of any religious faith, nor the partisans of any political creed. Nor do we profess to be wiser or better than our fellow-citizens. We do not take the attitude of censors or instructors; but feeling our own wants and frailties, we are associated for the purpose of mutual improvement, to make ourselves happier and better, and to exert what influence we may, to promote the welfare of others. We pretend not to be the only laborers

in the wide field of human improvement ; we merely aspire to the honor of being coadjutors in a noble cause, with our superiors and seniors. Our societies are all open to public inspection, and amenable to public opinion. Our objects may be fully and distinctly known ; if our measures are good, they will receive, we trust, the countenance and support of an enlightened community ; if they are bad, we know they will be visited with that indignant frown of public disapprobation, before which nothing can stand.

The societies of which we speak, may be divided into two classes ; those for intellectual improvement, and those for moral influence. These are somewhat necessarily connected, for there is a natural affinity in their objects and purposes.

Through the means of our societies for intellectual improvement, we hope to excite amongst ourselves a relish for rational enjoyments, to bring the social sympathies to the aid of the intellectual faculties, to awaken an interest in those pursuits which are calculated to develop the mental powers, and teach man the energies of his own mind.

Through the influence of our moral and benevolent associations, we hope to elevate the standard of character ; awaken in ourselves and others a becoming sense of the proper destiny, and true dignity of man ; and extend the hand of charity to the destitute and suffering.

Such, in general, are the objects we contemplate. To explain more fully our designs, and the means by which we hope to accomplish the ends in view, we think it proper to describe more minutely our plans and operations. Before doing so, we would however remark, that in the exhibition we propose to give, we wish to impress upon our own hearts a deep conviction of the utility and importance of these associations ; we hope to furnish ourselves with new motives to action, and to inspire in others a desire to cooperate in an enterprise that requires all hearts, and all hands.

Believing that the safety of our liberties depends upon the general dissemination of intelligence, and the universal triumph of virtue ; that these can in no way be so effectually accomplished, as by voluntary associations sincerely devoted to these purposes ; that YOUNG MEN must form and sustain these institutions, or they will never possess the energy and power requisite to accomplish the glorious enterprise, we wish to bring the responsibility home on them, and make them feel, that the great work of preserving and perfecting the free and happy institutions under which we live, devolves on them ; that if recreant to duty, they jeopardize the liberties and happiness of their own country, and of the world. We would have them feel, too, that this, though an arduous, is a delightful task, worthy their noblest aspirations, requiring their strongest energies, their sublimest powers of thought and action.

To furnish the means of INTELLECTUAL IMPROVEMENT to the mass of common mind, is one of the principal objects to which we direct our attention. We deem it essential to the well-being of society, that a general desire should be excited for the acquisition of useful knowledge ; we think it more important that the many should be well informed, than that the few should be learned. We do not, in our various associations, propose to prepare men to act distinguished parts as scholars. We do not expect to produce literary prodigies ; we merely wish and intend to promote a spirit of inquiry, to excite an interest in intellectual pursuits, and teach ourselves the truth, that there are sources of enjoyment and pleasure, other than those of gain, political ambition, or sensual indulgence. We do not wish or expect to elevate any of our members to places of influence and power, but we would do what we can, to qualify each one to act his particular part with propriety, and sustain the various relations of life, in a manner honorable to himself and beneficial to others.

We know the omnipotence of fashion ; we would make it fashionable to engage in literary and scientific pursuits, as an affair of common life. We would have the entire population imbued with a spirit of intellectual improvement ; we believe such a spirit may be generated and sustained ; that it may pervade all classes, and inspire all hearts. . To many this will undoubtedly appear an impracticable scheme, an Utopian project ; but we are satisfied, not only from analogical reasoning, but from actual experiment, on a limited scale, that this may be done ; and that the object is to be attained, principally, through the aid of voluntary associations formed for that purpose.

Man is so formed, his wants are such, that he is continually prone to become sensual, to lose a relish for intellectual enjoyments. The wants of the body press hard. He must be clothed and fed. The demands of fashion and folly are insatiable ; and hence, the mind, that immortal, that transcendently better part, is neglected, is starved. The current of the world sets strongly, we had almost said irresistibly, against the soul ; and man, made by his Creator for high and noble purposes, designed to find his purest and best enjoyments in the exercise and improvement of his mental faculties, is continually borne down the current of sensuality, constantly inclined to mere animalism. Now Lyceums— for under this convenient term we would include all associations of a kindred character, — are intended to counteract these adverse influences, to make man in all the relations of life, all the circumstances in which he may be placed, an intellectual and rational being. The pulpit stands the guardian of christian morals ; our schools are the nurseries of learning to youth ; but what shall keep alive among the great body of the people, a becoming interest in the improvement and cultivation of their minds through their whole lives ? Lyceums. To learned men, whose professions lead them to constant exercise of their mental powers, these humble insti-

tutions may be unnecessary ; but to those of us, who are the working men of society, who live by our daily exertions in the various employments of common life, these opportunities are invaluable, indispensable. They enable us in a manner to continue our education through life, and keep up with the march of intelligence. We ought never to relinquish the cultivation of our minds, and the acquisition of knowledge. Yet it was formerly, and is still to a considerable extent, the prevalent idea, that a young person must " finish his education " at a certain age, after which he is not to be required to learn anything else, except the art of making money, and providing for a family. At eighteen or twenty, at farthest, the youth was supposed to have arrived at the very zenith of his mental elevation ; after which, he was expected gradually, as a matter of course, to recede into the torpor and insensibility of old age. Now dissenting entirely from this opinion, we associate together for the purpose of furnishing ourselves with the means of constant intellectual improvement, for creating within and around us, a spirit of inquiry, a fondness for mental exertion. The common mind is the theatre on which we act ; our measures must be adapted to our purposes. We do not, therefore, aspire to propagate the most subtile refinements of philosophy, literature and science ; we only wish to apply the dictates of common sense, to the common affairs of common life. Practical utility is the grand desideratum, — to accomplish the greatest possible good with the means we possess. We wish to change the MORAL CHARACTER of our metropolis. Let us not be misunderstood. We will not slander our own fair city. We believe she stands on as high an elevation as any other in the land. We much doubt whether there be a community on earth, equally large and dense, where virtuous principle and action are more predominant. Yet is it not true, that even here vice finds a shelter, and profligates a home ? Is it not true, that in Boston dangers stand thick

on every side, and temptations are laid in every street, by which multitudes are enticed and destroyed. We know indeed, (thanks to the moral sense of the people,) that vice wears not her once unblushing front; she stalks not now abroad at noon-day; but the monster is still here, in many of her thousand shapes, habited indeed in a better garb, more decent and cautious in external appearance, but not the less malignant and dreadful. We hope by the influence of moral associations, to form among young men a virtuous public sentiment, to render every departure from rectitude unpopular and disgraceful. We would so far establish the reputation of our various societies, that the fact of membership shall be an ample certificate of good character, and honorable standing. This result we anticipate, not by coercion, not by appeals to civil power, but simply and only by furnishing the means of rational amusement, of intellectual culture, of social intercourse; by uniting our efforts in favor of all measures calculated to improve the mind, refine the taste, and purify the heart. We believe all this practicable; we have seen great good already accomplished, and we are animated with the cheering prospects, which we think are dawning on our city, on our country, on the world. We hope to prove by actual demonstration, that great cities are not *necessarily*, as the proverb says, "great sores."

We hope to prove the fallacy of the long received opinion, that in a dense population there must, of course, be greater moral impurity, than among the same number of inhabitants scattered throughout a large extent of territory. We agree with our favorite Cowper in his description.

" ————— Rank abundance breeds
 In gross and pampered cities sloth and lust,
 And wantonness, and gluttonous excess.
 In cities vice is hidden with most ease,
 Or seen with least reproach; and virtue taught
 By frequent lapse, can hope no triumph there,
 Beyond the achievement of successful flight."

But we cannot join the poet in his alternative ; for, however true to life may be this glowing picture, we cannot abandon cities to remediless depravity. We do not believe that "virtue can hope no triumph, but in the achievement of successful flight ;" far otherwise. We believe she may and must make a bold stand. Clad in the panoply of truth, arrayed in the lovely robes of innocence, decked with all the charms of moral beauty, virtue may suffer, but should never fly ; she may be assailed, but can never be vanquished ; her conflict with vice may be long and severe, but her victory is sure. It is alone in fable, that Astrea can be banished from human abodes.

That moral pestilence and death *must* and *will* interminably reign within our cities and large towns, we do not admit. No. We anticipate, and if we do not greatly mistake the indications that gather around us, we perceive the rising of a brighter day, — a day of promise and joy. Whatever their past character may have been, we do confidently predict, that the time is approaching, when our cities will become the great fountains of healthful moral influence, sending forth streams that shall fertilize and bless the land ; shall be not only the favorite abode of literature, science and the arts, but of virtue in her brightest manifestation.

We wish to aid in hastening such a time. We would concentrate our efforts and influence in favor of measures calculated to remove the occasions of mischief, the temptations to evil ; we would create a public sentiment, among young men, especially, favorable to the cause of virtue ; we would render it popular and honorable to be exemplary and discreet in all the walks of life. We do trust we have done something effectual for this object, — we hope to do more. What was the situation of a young man entering on life in this city a few years ago, and what is it now ? Is there not some improvement ? We are certain there is. As an illustration, we will suppose two cases, which we believe are both natural and common.

Some years ago, a blooming lad left the home of his parents for a residence in Boston. His father blessed him, bid him take good heed to his steps, and beware of the temptations of the city. The fond mother wept over her departing child. "Oh, my son," says she, "I tremble for you; *Boston is a dreadful place,*" (and what she said was true,)—"thousands of young men as virtuous as yourself, have been seduced and destroyed. Oh, guard against the first allurements of vice; oh, think of our wretchedness, if our son, our only son, is ruined." The young man deeply felt all his parents uttered; his resolutions were strong and good. He arrived in the city, had no acquaintance save his employer, went to a boarding-house, and there found companions of his own age; they were generous, and kind, and gay. With them he soon became intimate. Assimilation is one of the laws of mind. He assimilated gradually and imperceptibly to his associates. Where they went,—and alas, they went where they ought not,—he went. In the scenes they visited, he participated. He had no prudent friend to caution him. The eye of his master could not be always upon him. The young man saw not the evil; but he had entered on a downward course, had become fascinated with vicious amusements, was led into bad company, became the victim of dissipation; his health, peace, and reputation fled; and a premature and awful grave closed on his loathsome remains, and upon the hopes and happiness of his agonized parents.

A boy of the same character comes to reside in the city at the present time. Shortly after his arrival he becomes acquainted with a member of the "Young Men's Society," and is invited to join their association. It is composed, he is told, of a large number of respectable young men, embodied for the special purpose of promoting friendly intercourse and cultivating useful acquaintance. He accepts the invitation, attends a meeting of the society, and finds per-

haps three hundred young persons like himself assembled. They are spirited and enterprising young men. He listens to their discussions, witnesses the regularity of their procedures, the order of their debates, and the zeal and animation with which they prosecute their measures. There is something pleasing and exciting in all this. The stranger is interested: the society he perceives will be a source of amusement, a place where he may qualify himself for usefulness. His feelings prompt him to give constant attendance at its meetings. He now has a place of innocent recreation. His circle of acquaintance, too, is greatly extended, and in a short time, he is personally known to the whole society. He takes an active part, and soon finds out, what a great many young men for the want of proper opportunity never discover, that he has talents and influence, and can do something. A laudable ambition is excited, and he engages heart and hand in all the philanthropic purposes of the society. Will this young man become vicious? Will he plunge into dissipation? Will he rob his employer to furnish the means of sensual gratification? Should temptation assail him, will not the consideration that he is a member of the "Young Men's Society" deter him from evil? Will not the thought of disgrace in the eyes of his numerous companions and friends, make him hesitate at the perpetration of a crime? We are aware that there is no certain guarantee of virtue; but are not the probabilities in favor of this young man's character, tenfold greater than if thrown a stranger upon society, without these moral influences? We will not speculate on this question. No one, understanding the philosophy of the human mind, the necessary connexion between causes and effects, can hesitate for an answer.

We have named the "Young Men's Society," not because that *alone* is calculated to effect this good; Lyceums, Debating Societies, Library and Literary Associations, and

other similar establishments have a corresponding tendency ; but for the reason, that the specific object of that society is to exert a social influence on young men, and introduce them to all other useful institutions.

In connexion with the subject of moral influence, we should do great injustice to our own personal feelings and to the societies assembled on this occasion, if we did not allude to the active part they have taken in the *temperance cause* ; a cause with whose success the liberties and happiness of this country are identified ; a cause the most glorious that has ever called forth the energies of man ; a moral enterprise the most magnificent the human intellect has ever conceived ; embracing the grandest objects and requiring the greatest efforts of the human mind ; whose past success affords the highest encouragement to philanthropic exertion the world has ever witnessed, and whose final triumph will be the most brilliant moral achievement that man has ever attained.

In *this cause*, twelve hundred young men of Boston have enlisted. They have solemnly pledged themselves to God and their country. Shoulder to shoulder, and heart to heart, they have unalterably resolved to form one phalanx of that mighty army, before whose onward march the unnumbered hosts of intemperance are destined to be vanquished and destroyed. They could wish, indeed, that instead of numbers sufficient to form a regiment, they had enough for a brigade ; instead of twelve hundred rank and file, they had twelve thousand ; and although they can offer to new recruits no other advance pay than a *pledge* of total abstinence ; no other wages than health and happiness ; no other bounty lands than the prospective glory and felicity of our common country ; and no greater rations of grog than a plenty of cold water ; yet such is their confident reliance on the virtue and patriotism of their young fellow-citizens, that they entertain no doubt of the success of enlistments, or the popularity of the service.

Another and important purpose which we have in view, is to furnish ourselves and others with *innocent and rational amusement*. This we believe the mind of man desires and needs. It is a part of his nature, and necessary to keep in complete order the organization of his mental and corporeal system. Amusement of some kind he must and will have. Acting from a belief in this truth, we wish and attempt to make our intellectual pursuits and employments subservient to this purpose, and sources of innocent recreation; to combine the pleasing and exciting, with the useful and entertaining.

The social sympathies are, by the operations of our various associations, brought to bear directly on this point, and we find, that in order to secure the attention of the young, it is not necessary that scenes presented before them for their amusement, should be of a sensual character, appealing to their strongest and most dangerous passions. By no means.

Men are, after all that has been said and sung, more rational beings than they have ever had credit for, and if suitable efforts are made, will be found to relish diversions which shall elevate, instead of degrade, the dignity of their nature. We say, that all immoral and vicious amusements may, and if properly associated and individual efforts are made, will be banished from our community.

Perhaps some may be startled at this declaration, and greatly doubt its correctness. But this is an age of startling propositions. Less than ten years ago, some hair-brained fanatics, as they were then thought, had the hardihood to assert, that men could be born, live, work, play, die and be buried, without the use of alcohol. It was indeed a strange idea; it contradicted all experience, it was in the face and eyes of universal practice and opinion, and yet it has been found true, and become the prevailing sentiment of the public.

No one, we think, need question the correctness of our present proposition. Enough has already been done to justify a belief in its practicability, and we should bear in mind, that no community has ever before been found, where the experiment could be tried with equal prospect of success, for in none has there ever been a greater amount of general intelligence and correct moral sentiment. We are aware that this is an enterprise of great magnitude; but after the favorable indications we have already witnessed, we cannot allow ourselves to doubt of its final triumph.

Among the means which we employ for the attainment of our desired objects, that of enlisting the sympathies and assistance of the *female mind*, is not the least prominent and effective. In most, if not all our institutions, provision is made for the introduction of ladies to all the public meetings for lectures, debates or exhibitions.

“We hold the truth to be self-evident,” that females are endowed with intellectual faculties; that they have a natural taste for rational amusements; that if opportunity be afforded, will participate in them with as much eagerness and pleasure as the other sex. This doctrine we know has not long been believed; or if admitted in theory, has not been practised. To scenes of splendor and gayety, to the temples of folly and fashion, ladies have for centuries been invited as companions; but from the halls of science, from entertainments of a purely intellectual nature, they have, in past times, been carefully excluded, by the lords of creation; whether from a belief in the maxim of despots, that “the more ignorance the more peace,” or from a mistaken apprehension, that the female mind was too weak to grasp the truths of science, too depraved to enjoy the charms of literature, or too trifling and frivolous to be interested in rational pursuits, we will not determine. Certain, however, we are of the fact; and we regard it as one of the most valuable discoveries of modern days, that ladies, to all intents and

purposes, have *heads*, as well as *hearts*; intellectual powers, as well as tender sensibilities; and that both these may be enlisted in the cause of virtue and knowledge with great facility and success. The application of this principle has contributed more than any one thing to the universal popularity and general establishment of Lyceums in every section of the United States, and will do more than any other towards producing all those happy effects, which the friends of those institutions so fondly and ardently anticipate.

To inspire among young men a spirit of *mental independence* is one of the objects of our ambition. The true foundation of freedom is in the individual mind. Man must be free from the tyranny of vicious habits, of sensual appetites, free from superstition, from a slavish deference to the opinions of others. He should in all matters, whether political, moral or religious, think for himself, and never allow others to think for him. Till this time arrives, man will never enjoy that peaceful freedom, for which his Creator designed him. Is there not in all communities a want of this spirit? Is not the number small, who dare to think, who venture to have an opinion, till they know the opinion of the world, till they find out with much certainty, what is *popular*? Can anything be more servile and degrading? Is there aught that better fits men for slaves? Of all the characteristics of our times, there is none of which we should be more heartily ashamed, than this; none, for the reformation of which we should strive more earnestly. The habit of acting independently, and from a conviction of truth, like all other good habits, should be acquired early. The natural ingenuousness of youth predisposes them to this. They are ardent, they act from feeling. The sordid lessons of cold-hearted selfishness they have not learned; have not acquired those sentiments of prudence, falsely so called, which prompt a man to inquire, not whether what he is about to do is right, but whether it will be popular and

safe. The non-committal policy, young men are not generally disposed to adopt. It is in accordance with this natural characteristic of youth, that we find they have always been foremost in every struggle for liberty.

Who were most active in raising the spirit of rebellion and resistance in the American colonies, against the aggressions and encroachments of British power? Young men. — Who first dared to assail the despotism of Charles the Tenth? The boys, ay, “the rash boys” of the Polytechnic School. — Who first raised the standard of liberty in Poland? The young men attached to the military academy of Warsaw. — Now we wish to seize upon this well known trait of youthful character and wield it in the cause of truth. We would cultivate this feeling, instead of suppressing it; we would direct it to useful and noble ends; would preserve it in all its freshness and vigor, and make it a settled principle of the soul; and, we would inculcate the doctrine, to use the beautiful language of Channing, “that conscience, the voice of God in every heart, is to be listened to above all other guides and lords; that there is a sovereign within us, clothed with more awful powers and rights than any outward king; and that he alone is worthy the name of man, who gives himself up solemnly, deliberately, to obey this internal guide through peril and in death. This is the spirit of freedom; for no man is wholly and immutably free, but he who has broken every outward yoke, that he may obey his own deliberate conscience. This is the lesson to be taught alike in republics and despotisms. As yet, it has but dawned on the world. Its full application remains to be developed.”

Of all the errors of mankind, perhaps none has contributed more to aggravate and multiply their miseries, than the false estimate that has always been placed on *human greatness*. “Though phrase absurd, to call a villain great,” men have been called great, who were not good, and received the applause of their fellow-beings, while rioting on the happi-

ness of the world. None have been so much lauded, as those who have done the most mischief.

Strange perversity this! that to deserve the admiration and applause of his fellow-beings, man must become a murderer, a destroyer, scattering desolation and death around him; but so it has always been! Look at the world's past history. Who are its heroes? Who occupy the highest niche in the temple of fame? Whose deeds inspire the poet's song, the muse's lyre? The oppressors of mankind. Nor are these strange phenomena to be found only in the history of by-gone times. The present age has afforded the most striking illustration of this strange infatuation. Who has been the idol of the nineteenth century? Who has received from the present generation more applause than any other man? Whose mad career of military glory has excited the highest admiration, and drawn forth the warmest panegyric? He who drenched all Europe in blood; he who devastated her fairest fields; pillaged her finest cities, and sent five millions of her inhabitants, mostly young men, to a soldier's grave. Shame on the spirit of the age, — shame on the discernment and taste of our times; — well may we join in the opinion “that a mournful obtuseness of moral feeling exists in regard to the crimes of military and political life.” “The wrong doing of public men has never drawn on them that sincere, hearty abhorrence which visits private vice.”

“Nations have seemed to court aggression and bondage by their stupid, insane admiration of successful tyrants. — The wrongs from which men have suffered most in body and mind, are yet unpunished. True, we censure the aspiring and the usurping; but these reproaches are as yet, little more than unmeaning common places; they are not inward, solemn, burning convictions, breaking from the indignant soul with a tone of reality, before which guilt would cower. The true moral feeling in regard to the crimes of public men is yet to be created.”

Heroes will cease to war, when men cease to praise. — The love of approbation is an organ pretty fully developed on the heads of most men, especially the ambitious. Let but the world's opinion be changed; let its note be altered; let its deep groans, and unmingled execrations assail the ear of the despot and oppressor, and soon no such character will be found. Men should be esteemed, and receive the approbation of their fellow-citizens, just in proportion to the interest they manifest in the welfare of their race. No matter what their station; no matter what their profession, whether mechanics or merchants, men of genius or science, in civil or in military life; if they manifest feelings of philanthropy, if they show that the improvement of mankind lies near their hearts, and influences their conduct, if they are willing to sacrifice and suffer in the cause of virtue, and for the advancement of the public good; if they fill up life with usefulness, and unite their sympathies with the great brotherhood of mankind, they deserve and should receive the approbation of all; while, on the other hand, those who manifest no motive but that of personal ambition, no feelings but those of self-aggrandizement, passing through life reckless of the happiness of others — no matter what their talents, acquirements or station, the love and admiration of their fellow-men they should never receive. The want of philanthropy should, in public estimation, be a damning sin, for which no brilliancy of genius, no splendor of achievement, can atone. When such a public sentiment is formed, and formed it will be, where, think you, will be the tyrant, the cold-hearted miser, the profligate demagogue, the unprincipled intriguer? Where? Driven out of being; among the things lost on earth, and certainly not found in Heaven.

We have said that such a time will come. To hasten the period is one of the objects for which we would strive. — Indications are not wanting to convince us that the desired change has begun. We believe that the feelings and opin-

ions of the people of this nation are changing, and that the time is hastening, when whoever presents successful claims to the attention of our citizens, must show that he has the love of man in his heart. We regard as an indication of this, the respect and affection exhibited towards the lamented Spurzheim. Such were worthy of the citizens of Boston, and honorable to human nature. Whence those sincere and cordial expressions of admiration and esteem? Whence those universal manifestations of love and gratitude? Whence those tears of sorrow at his death? Were they for Spurzheim the philosopher, the phrenologist? No, they were for Spurzheim the philanthropist, the friend of man.

The feeling of which we speak is evidently advancing on the other side of the Atlantic. Public opinion in England begins to brand with infamy and consign to disgrace those who lend themselves as the willing instruments of oppression, sustain unjust monopolies, array themselves against the progress of liberty, and oppose the march of popular principles. The exhibition of this spirit augurs well for the freedom of England, for the liberties of Europe; let it but spread, and every throne will be shaken to its centre, the rod of the oppressor will be broken, and the oppressed go free. For ourselves, we confess we have no affection for the foes of our race, of whatever kind or calibre; we have no praise to bestow on those who fatten on the spoils of human happiness, however bright the halo of false glory that surrounds their brows. A Washington, a La Fayette, or a Howard, we can love; for they loved mankind; but for the Russian Autocrat, the hero of Waterloo*, or the exiled king

* However brilliant may have been the military achievements of the Duke of Wellington, the part he acted as Premier, in opposing all measures calculated to relieve his suffering countrymen from the wrongs and oppressions under which they have so long groaned, was in the highest degree shameful. He has drawn upon himself the just indignation of *the people* of Great Britain, and of every friend of liberty through the world, and has been driven into a disgraceful retirement, from which it is to be hoped he will never emerge.

of France, *et id genus omne*, we have no admiration, no praise, no sympathy.

In this connexion, we must be allowed a remark or two, in relation to the omnipotence of public opinion. This is just beginning to be felt and acknowledged. In olden times, men relied on the sword, as the only instrument of power; in later days they have looked to civil and ecclesiastical establishments as the means of controlling the destinies of mankind; but more modern discoveries show us, there is behind the throne, a power greater than the throne itself. In other words, that there is a power, superior to all the artificial arrangements of society, before whose resistless influence nothing can stand. That power is public opinion. How important, then, the universal prevalence of intelligence and virtue! Enlightened public sentiment is the true philosopher's stone of the moral and political world; it changes all the impure and grosser metals into gold. All efforts, therefore, honestly and wisely directed towards the formation of such a sentiment, are praiseworthy. The man who labors in this vocation, however humble, deserves encouragement. Impressed with this belief, it is one of the prominent purposes of all our associations, to influence and direct public sentiment aright, in regard to all those particular objects, to which, as societies, we devote our chief attention.

The influence of associations like ours, formed upon popular principles, is peculiarly calculated to *obliterate those distinctions of caste* which exist in all communities, and, unless common fame be a great liar, are found especially in Boston. The advantages these societies afford to young men of all classes to elevate their condition are so great, that if properly improved, there cannot long be those marked distinctions which have hitherto prevailed, operating as a barrier to general improvement, and as the bane of social intercourse. This tendency is a truly republican one, and is a matter of just complacency. The greater and

more perfect the community of interest, and equality of condition, that exist among any people, the more secures the enjoyment of equal rights, and equal liberties. No one class can oppress the rest, unless possessed of superior power and advantages. If no one possesses this pre-eminence, all are safe. The proposition is a plain one. We will only further remark in relation to this, that any approximation towards aristocratic distinctions in society is to be deprecated, as both unbecoming and injurious.

We are not of the number of those, who delight in raising spectres of ruin; we have little feeling in common with such as indulge in gloomy forebodings, and utter melancholy predictions concerning the future destiny of our beloved country. We would rather inspire in the public mind a well grounded confidence in the stability of our free institutions, and a firm assurance of their ultimate perfection. — Our views do not harmonize with those, who in the prospective of our country's fortunes, perceive the certain indications of decay and death; quite the reverse. A glorious and enchanting prospect opens on our eyes as we cast them down the vista of the future; and although we well know, that not only the liberty and happiness of a great nation, but of the world, are suspended on this first grand experiment of self-government, we feel that they are safe. As a nation, we are fast rising in the scale of morals; intelligence is every day becoming more widely diffused, and the spirit of improvement in all that contributes to the perfection of human society, is abroad in vigorous and efficient action. — We are aware, indeed, that the glorious work is only begun, but we anticipate its final and triumphant completion, with all the assurance of a perfect faith; we would engage in it not with the excitement of fear, but the stimulus of hope. We know there are many who will differ from us in this view we take of our country's prospects. They fancy they clearly perceive in the bitter animosities of party strife, and

the unblushing depravity of party leaders, sure and fatal indications of the corruption, and premature dissolution of our republican government. It is undoubtedly true, that there never existed at any previous period of our country's history, so much political intrigue, and party management, as at the present time. Men are bought and sold, assigned, and transferred, with surprising convenience and facility, while political somersets are but the diversions of the day. The science of party tactics has arrived at a high degree of perfection, and under the direction of those able professors, which are found in all political parties, the beauties and advantages of the system, certainly bid fair to be very fully developed. Now, it may be asked, is there not great danger in all this? If there were no counteracting influence, if there were no check to these evils, no power sufficient to correct these abuses, they would probably eventually corrupt our government, and overturn our liberties. Fortunately there is a power which can say to the angry surges of profligacy, "hitherto shall ye come and no farther." That power is the elective franchise, which a virtuous and intelligent people can wield with irresistible energy and effect; which they will thus wield whenever they feel the practical evils of such abuses. Hitherto the people have never realized the effects of the mischief, consequently have never been incited to action. They have, indeed, seen the despicable game of party shuffling, they have witnessed the paltry scramble for office, but they have not felt their own liberties endangered by all this. The great and important interests of the nation have not been sacrificed, therefore the people have not been aroused; but let these abuses become more flagrant, let them encroach directly on the rights of the community, and the people will awake, and at a blow crush the heartless monster of unprincipled ambition; they will then feel the necessity of adopting the principle, that moral integrity is an indispensable

qualification for civil office ; and will cease to bestow their suffrage on the candidates of a party, without regard to private character.

The time will come, we trust soon, when those who have trampled on the laws, will not be thought best qualified to sustain the laws, — when those who have insulted the moral sense of the community, will not be thought the safest guardians of public virtue.

There is another respect in which we think our associations are productive of much good. We allude to the influence they exert in forming in the minds of men a correct estimate in relation to the value of wealth, and the purposes to which it should be devoted. It has often been charged upon us as a community, that we are an avaricious, money getting, money loving people ; that gain is the great end of life ; the sovereign good, in comparison with which all other considerations are as nothing. Now whether this charge in its full extent be true or false, we think no one will deny, that public sentiment in this particular, is susceptible of much improvement.

The love of acquisition is a strong and universal feeling of the human heart, implanted by Deity for wise and useful purposes. If regulated by sound reason and good moral principle, it contributes greatly to our happiness and well-being. Left undisciplined and unrestrained, it becomes a most degrading and miserable passion, corroding every social, benevolent, and humane sensibility. The young man who early forms a connexion with associations like those to which we allude, acquires a relish for other enjoyments than those of money making. He imbibes a taste for reading, for information, for scientific research. He learns to feel an interest in the welfare of others. His sympathies expand, until his own happiness is in some measure identified with the universal happiness of mankind. He is now in no danger of becoming miserly and worshipping

mammon. Nor will he be likely to act the part of a spend-thrift, reckless of the acquisition and proper use of wealth. He will feel the great importance of obtaining property, that he may spend it in doing good ; that he may be independent of others for the necessities and conveniences of life ; and have security against the wants and helplessness of age ; but he will have no unquenchable thirst for gold. He will be moderate in his desires, economical in his habits. If successful, he will early leave the arena of business to other and more needy aspirants ; will be prepared to enjoy his competency, and use it for the good of others.

We have seen the man of gray hairs retire from business. He was rich ; “an incarnation of fat dividends.” He retired, because he was admonished that the evening of life had come, and custom required it. He sought happiness in the stillness and quiet of the country. His beautiful villa was surrounded with all the charms and luxuries that wealth could purchase : — but was he happy ? No ; he was truly a wretched man. He had retired from happiness, as well as from business. His mind had been through life so completely engrossed in the pursuit of gain ; his habits, by long continued, undivided attention to one object, so firmly fixed, they could not be changed ; they had become a part and parcel of the man, and unless employed in their favorite avocation, their possessor must be wretched. He had no taste for literature of any sort, for he had not cultivated such a taste ; he had none for science, save the science of numbers ; he cared little for the news of the day, except the rise and fall of stocks ; nor had he any feelings of interest in the great and benevolent undertakings of the age ; in short, he had nothing to amuse and stimulate his mind, nothing to think of but money.

Having thus glanced at a few of the many objects we propose to accomplish by the aid of our various associations, we would add that our plans terminate not with Boston ; they

embrace our whole land. We would have our influence felt throughout all the cities and towns of the United States. Already have we seen societies formed on the same models and for the same purposes springing up in New York, Philadelphia, and other cities of the Atlantic, in Cincinnati, Louisville, and other large towns of the West.

The sceptre of political power has indeed long since departed from New England, but her moral influence still predominates and sways the destinies of this great nation. — We make not this remark at random ; observation has fully convinced us of the fact. Nor do we say this to move a spirit of vanity and self-complacency. We make the assertion because we believe it true ; because we wish to bring down on the minds of all a deep and thrilling sense of the responsibility under which we act. It is not the welfare of New England, but the Union ; not the interests of a part, but the whole. Our objects extend as far as the moral and intellectual wants of man. Our labors will be completed, when nothing in the mental or physical condition of our race remains to be improved. We have enough then to do ; an enterprise sufficient to excite the energies and demand the united labors of all ; enough for ourselves, enough for those who shall come after us. Nor are our projects the wild dreams of visionary enthusiasts. Stupendous as they may be, they are yet perfectly feasible. Associations are the labor-saving machinery of the moral, intellectual and political world. They produce the most wonderful results ; the greatest possible effects, with the least possible labor. The ingenuity and industry of one man may invent and put in motion a machine of this sort, that shall perform the labor of thousands of isolated individuals. We have seen this done. Some ten years ago an individual conceived the plan of forming associations for the mental elevation of the people of this country. He wished to produce effects on millions of minds scattered throughout the widely extended territory

of this Union. — He wished to affect the popular literature, and the common schools throughout the whole land. Was not the scheme vast? Was it not impracticable? Was it not the romantic vision of a distempered mind? What could one man do towards accomplishing such extensive results? Let the history of the national, state, county, and town Lyceums, answer the question. Let the manual labor schools and the multitude of similar establishments springing up from Maine to Georgia, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, answer the question. And let us all realize the astonishing fact, that the persevering energies of one man, enlisted with enthusiasm in a cause which commends itself to the good sense and kind feelings of his fellow-citizens, may move this whole empire, and produce results that shall influence the welfare of his country to the latest generation.

This is only one of the many instances we might adduce in proof of our present position. Look abroad not only in America but through Europe; contemplate the splendid schemes of benevolent enterprise that are fast revolutionizing the world. Think how simple yet grand the vast machinery; how humble the origin; yet how exalted the office and destiny of these mighty associations. No matter how small and obscure the beginning, if our measures commend themselves to the wise and good; if we enter on our labors with sincere devotion of heart; if we persevere with untiring assiduity, we may rest assured of ultimate success.

Let us then, my friends, in view of the ample encouragement afforded by the history of the past, go forward with all the confidence of hope; with all the ardor and zeal which a belief in the utility and importance of our labors can inspire.

Our cause is one. Under whatever banner, in whatever division of the great army we move, we are aiming at the same grand and general result, the universal triumph of reason and virtue. In perfect harmony then, let us advance.

The field is before us, vast as the wants of man, wide as the world; and while we bear in mind that the better part of valor is discretion, let us bring to the undertaking all the fire and energy of youthful zeal; let us prosecute our labors in the cheering hope, that we shall contribute our part towards hastening that happy era, when it shall not be necessary to license seven hundred persons *in Boston*, to distribute liquid poison daily, "for the public good"; when every moral nuisance shall be removed, and the cities of our land be no longer the abode of pestilence and death; when a public sentiment shall be formed, before whose healthful and omnipotent influence, vice and profligacy shall be banished from all places of honor and trust; when mental culture shall be the absorbing object of youthful ambition, and intellectual emulation be their *esprit du corps*; when the taste of the community shall not require vicious and degrading amusements, nor coarse and vulgar appeals to their passions; when WOMAN shall stand forth in all her innate moral and intellectual beauty, enjoying that silent, graceful, yet commanding influence, to which, even in the most refined and elevated society, she has never been permitted to attain; when the love of acquiring wealth shall be universally blended with a disposition to use it for the general good; when the interests and feelings of our citizens shall be so united and harmonious that no lines of invidious distinction can be drawn; when all shall enjoy equal advantages, as well as equal rights; AND WHEN THE FREE INSTITUTIONS OF OUR HAPPY LAND SHALL FIRMLY REST ON THE IMPERISHABLE FOUNDATION OF UNIVERSAL INTELLIGENCE, AND PUBLIC VIRTUE.