

There is, undoubtedly, an opinion prevalent, that intellectual improvement is unfavorable to the imagination, — that the reasoning power cannot be cultivated without impairing it. But such an opinion has no foundation in fact, and is entitled to no more respect than a thousand other notions that are handed down from age to age, and are regarded as true. The enemies of free government tell us, that learning cannot flourish where all are acknowledged free and equal; that learned men cannot grow up except in the sunshine of royal favor; and that religion cannot work its benign effects except on an ignorant community, and under the guidance of an established church. The different relative progress of the sciences and works of imagination can be accounted for without having recourse to the theory above mentioned. A science is nothing more than the combined experiments and discoveries of men in all ages, while a work of imagination is, to a certain extent, the work of a single person. The philosopher can begin where Bacon and Newton left off; but the poet must begin where Homer began.

There is another cause for the prevalence of this opinion, in the erroneous view taken of the works of an uncultivated people. That wild, figurative language, which arises from its barrenness, is often thought to be conclusive evidence of a lively imagination. As civilization advances, that wildness and extravagance disappear; as language becomes more copious and fixed, those bold figures are no longer used. But does it follow, that the imagination is less lively? That that faculty, on which our happiness so essentially depends, is thus impaired by the very means by which our good is promoted? It cannot be. The God of nature, who made "wisdom's ways ways of pleasantness," did never decree that the improvement of the intellectual should darken that faculty which is truly the mind's eye, and through which the past as well as the future, and the absent as well as the present can be scanned. Imagination does not confine itself to earth, but

"Tired of it  
And this diurnal scene, she springs aloft  
Through fields of air, pursues the flying storm,  
Rides on the volleyed lightning through the heavens,  
Or, yoked with whirlwinds and the northern blast,  
Sweeps the long track of day."

Should we grant that intellectual improvement was unfavorable to productions of the imagination, then we should no longer look for the best works of that character among a civilized people, but should seek them among our native Indians, or the Tartars of Siberia. We should apply the same rules to individuals as to nations. The least cultivated minds would be the most imaginative. We should look to them for bolder flights than to Milton, Pope, or Byron; the absurdity of which is seen by the mere statement of it, and the principle is unworthy of serious argument. History as well as common sense refutes it. Who of those bards whose works are as immortal as the spirits which produced them had not a cultivated mind? Which of them did not find their imaginative powers increased by intellectual improvement? Though the age of Homer was an age of comparative darkness, yet the sun of literature must have shone on Greece, or the inspired fountains of poetry would have been frozen up. He never would have sung of the heroism of his countrymen had not their feelings responded to his. He never would have written with that correct taste which all succeeding poets have de-

lighted to imitate, had not reason already under her control the wildness and extravagance of the untutored mind.

Our own age bears ample testimony that intellectual improvement does not destroy genius to produce, nor diminish desire to read works of imagination; for there never was a time when so much fiction is written and read as at the present. Poetry is no longer the language of history and oratory, but it is what it ought to be, the language of imagination, clothing in its various dress human passions and affections. In proof of this we need only refer to that giant mind whose powers have been so successfully employed in the world of fiction, making an almost entire revolution in that department of literature. He has shown that the boldest flights of the imagination are not in the darkness of night, but in the clear sunshine of day; that as civilization advances, and the human mind makes progress, so will all its powers be strengthened, and all its faculties be enlarged. Science offers to us new realms, and the astronomer, as well as the poet, may picture to himself worlds moving round in one harmonious whole far beyond the reach of mortal view.

The obscure and the uncertain may be necessary for a full exercise of the imaginative powers, but of this there will always be enough until the whole field of knowledge is explored. In truth, with the advance of knowledge and science, mystery does not diminish. New wonders are continually unfolding themselves, and as the field of vision is enlarged, other views are presented; there still remains beyond the visible and the certain, the invisible and mysterious.

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### XCV.

#### ORATION.

An Oration is a speech or discourse composed according to the rules of oratory, and spoken in public; or, it may be defined a popular address on some interesting and important subject. The term is now applied chiefly to speeches or discourses pronounced on special occasions, as a funeral oration, an oration on some anniversary, &c., and to academic declamations.

The term oration is derived from the Latin *oro*, to beg or entreat, and properly signifies that which is said by way of entreaty.

A speech is in general that which is addressed in a formal manner to one person or more. A harangue is a noisy, tumultuous speech, addressed to many; an oration is a sol-

em speech for any purpose. An address is any thing spoken or written from one person or party to another.

A regular oration consists of six parts, namely:

1. The exordium or introduction, which is designed to gain the attention and good will of the hearers, and render them open to persuasion.
2. The stating or division of the subject, in which is expressed what the object of the speaker is, or what he designs to prove or to refute, what doctrine he intends to inculcate, &c.
3. The narration or explication of facts or opinions connected with the subject.
4. The reasoning or arguments.
5. The pathetic part in which an attempt is made to interest the feelings of the hearers.
6. The conclusion, in which a general review may be made of what has been previously said; and the inferences drawn from the arguments may be distinctly stated.

It is by no means necessary that all of these parts should be included in an oration. Much depends on the nature of the subject, and what the speaker has in view. But in listening to a performance of this kind, it is expected that the mind will be informed, the reasoning powers exercised, the imagination excited, and the taste improved. The subject should be one which requires a statement and elucidation of interesting facts and principles; a course of calm, dignified, and persuasive reasoning. At the same time, it should allow of fine writing. There should be opportunity for description and pathos, for historical and classical allusions and illustrations, and for comprehensive and ennobling views. It should admit also of unity of plan. The style should be elevated and elegant, the form of expression manly and dignified, and at the same time characterized by force and vivacity. The ornament should be of a high kind — such as ennobles and exalts the subject. Diffuseness is likewise desirable.

#### Example 1st.

#### OF AN ENGLISH ORATION.\*

##### Public Station.

One of the happiest, as well as most useful, improvements which the social system has received, since the earliest congregation of savage life, is the *division of labor*. While it insures to us the greatest profit at the least cost, and enables the labor of each to contribute most effectually to the advantage of the whole, it introduces among men such a variety of classes and conditions — it parts out the business of life into so many and various lots, as may satisfy each peculiar bias, imprinted by nature on the minds of individuals. The great world has many mansions. In one, there are the tools of industry and the bread of care; in another, the insignia of power — the diadem, the mitre, and all the aching luxury

\* On taking the First Degree.

of thrones, in a third, is hung up the unfading laurel of the Muse, which as "it plucks all gaze its way," lets us not behold the cold neglect and starving penury which too often await it; — one looketh out upon the green fields, with their blossoms, their full ears, their bending branches; and another looketh out upon the broad sea, with its tall ships and its cunning merchandise; — all these, and many more, are wide open before us, and it requires but our own *volition*, to decide where we will enter in and abide.

Among the manifold professions and employments of life, however there is much else, beside natural bias, to influence a man's choice. The unyielding necessity of gaining a livelihood, binding upon most of us, is ample security that no one of them will be left vacant. Industry, like wealth, will find its own level. A deficiency in any of its channels will create a demand; and self-interest will ever be at hand, to supply it. But this is not all. We are all, more or less, the slaves of passion. The cold and calculating dictates of prudence are often overruled by the more specious and flattering whispers of pride. The path of reason is too straight-forward and dull for our eager ambition. We cannot bide to toil slowly up her steep and thorny way, for the quiet possession of scanty bread. The echoes of the silver trumpet have reached our ear, and we sigh that it may sound out our own name. The imperial purple has caught our eye, and the plain vestments of an honorable sufficiency seem too mean and common for our wear!

Perhaps there is no prospect, which the imagination can present, so alluring to the mind of a young man as that of public life. The mere fact of being a theme of public interest, and of being exalted by the voice of popular favor to a station above one's fellows, — is of itself a boon, than which, it would seem, the most ardent ambition could desire none greater. But this is but the beginning of good things, — but the portal to the high places of fame. It is in the exercise of this trust, that the full harvest of glory is to be reaped. *Our* mind is to counsel, — *our* voice to direct, — *our* arm to govern all; — the sceptre of power is to be handled, — her royal robes put on — and *we* are to be the gaze of every eye. These are the rich privileges which our eager fancy holds out to us as the rewards of office; and it is not to be wondered at, that the coldest ambition should kindle at the view. It is no longer a strange thing, that popular favor should be courted and public station sought diligently after. It is man's nature to look upward — "*ut aquila, caelum versus*," — how then can he but long for this highest heaven of human glory?

But let us strip off the gilded veil of fancy, and look in upon the condition of office when the pomp and parade are over, and the robes are thrown aside. And here, it were a superfluous task to inquire into the comparative happiness and ease of public station. It needs not the eloquent philosophy of the wronged Duke, to tell us, that a life of even undeserved exile is sweeter far than that of painted pomp, — "the inhospitable woods more free from peril than the envious court," — "the icy fang and churlish chiding of the winter's wind," more trusty counsellors than the fawning flattery of court-sycophants. Nor need we the touching examples of Wolsey, of Buckingham, of Mary, and all that host of splendid misery which history supplies, to warn us how sore and galling a burden is "too much honor." We have heard with our ears — our fathers have told us — many of us are in the immediate, sad experience that place and greatness, though fair without, and full of temptation. —

are, like the apples of Asphaltum, but ashes to the taste; and when with drawn from the excitements of busy life, and left alone to reflection, we are all ready enough to exclaim with the poet:—

" 'Tis better to be lowly born,  
And range with humble livers in content,  
Than to be perked up in a glist'ring grief,  
Or wear a golden sorrow."

But this is one of those fireside reflections which are apt to escape us, in the bustle of out-of-door life. Vain hope with all its specious and most plausible cheats, bids us not take upon trust so sad a truth. Ambition, which we strive in vain to "fling away," whispers us, that it is nobler to bide the worst, so *honor* be the stake. To serve one's country, is at least a glorious martyrdom, and we are proud to suffer it. Were such the motive of those who enter the lists of public life, were honor conferred in exact proportion to merit, and trust squared with integrity, this were a sentiment worthy the extremest limit of indulgence. A nobler vocation no one can have,—a more glorious sacrifice was never made,—than to toil and suffer for the public good. Our country's call, as it were the voice of Fate crying out to us, should make "each petty artery in this body, as hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve!" But is it from pure and disinterested patriotism, that so many are daily clothed in the white robe of candidacy? Can we pretend, even in this land of promise, that public honors are never capriciously, nay, are never unjustly, bestowed? We have not, indeed, here, that long line of titled aristocracy, "*state-statues* only," whose rank, dating from the cradle, can be founded, at most, only on a *predestinarian* estimate of future worth! We acknowledge neither "Divine right," nor "original compact," as a claim to supremacy. Much less need we fear that the wise, the virtuous, and the learned should be banished from *our* land, as from Sparta of old, in very fear lest, by the unrestrained exertion of their *pernicious weapons*, they should work out for themselves an extravagant and dangerous influence. The wise, the learned, the good, stand here indeed their chance with the rest; and it is a triumph worthy all rejoicings when they struggle into power. But how often do we see those noble natures,—who, seeking merit rather than fame, would scorn to "flatter Neptune for his trident, or Jove for his power to thunder,"—cheated of their rightful inheritance of glory! It cannot be denied, though with shame we confess it, that learning, genius, and virtue, will strive for popular favor, but at fearful and perilous odds, against the supple knee, the flattering tongue, the cringing soul.

What, then, is there in office for which men are thus eagerly striving? What is this highest prize of contention, in pursuit of which, happiness is counted as nothing, and merit is content to be pitted against hypocrisy and intrigue? It is CALLED Power. There are few more ludicrous mistakes, which this erring world exhibits, than those of a false and o'erleaping ambition. The redoubted Knight of la Mancha, though unequalled in story, is not alone in real life. We may, almost daily, behold the brazen basin of the barber, borne proudly along, in all its *soapy lustre*, as if 'twere really the golden helmet of Mambrino! In most countries, we may see crowds, and even in our own *practical land* not a few of those dabblers in the pettiness of fame, whose official importance would serve only to remind us of that pretty device of *Æsop*,—a fly on the axle of a chariot, striving to exclaim "what a dust do I raise!" The

truth is, that in these times, and especially in our own land, the *power*, which office of itself confers, is most specious and shadowy. Even in the Old World, little else is retained, save the name, the show, the ceremony of power. In the most arbitrary governments of modern times, the popular feeling is respected and obeyed, though it be not directly, and in terms appealed to. But with us, the very boast of our liberty is, that the people are supreme. They indeed do delegate certain of their number, to manage for them their great estate of sovereignty:—but this delegated authority is divided off into so many branches, and so entirely checked by the mutual action of these branches upon each other, that the power of *individual* office is a mere name and a shade. Our governors are in fact but public servants—a most honorable, indeed, and praiseworthy *service*, but containing so much more of burden and care, than of *power*, that we might almost apply to them the old Greek proverb,—"*none in the land are so much slaves, as its masters.*"

But if public station do not actually *confer* power upon its possessor, it *at least*, affords him the most favorable opportunity for gaining it. If office be not greatness, it *surely* must be the highest vantage-ground for achieving greatness. It was the answer of the Delphic oracle to Cicero, says Plutarch, when he inquired how he should attain to the highest earthly glory,—"*by making his own genius, and not the will of the people, the guide of his life.*" To enter into an elaborate discussion of this great question, would far exceed our spare and strict allowance of time; but it may well be doubted, whether that close subjection to popular will, that contracted servitude to party, that unyielding bondage to public opinion, which public officers must necessarily undergo, be not far, very far, from the pure and perfect air of liberty, in which genius exults and thrives. It seems, too, a nobler, as well as freer, task to promote the mental improvement, than the physical welfare, of our race,—to govern *minds*, than to govern men.

I know that history, an honorable mention in whose pages is, perhaps, the proudest reward which mortal merit can aspire to, has hitherto devoted her exclusive praise to those who have led the armies or guided the councils of their nations. It hath now been the diary of princes, and now the "*field-book of conquerors,*" and full rarely hath even the name of a private man, however splendid his talents or exalted his virtues, been deemed worthy of its notice. But the liberty, which has been here worked out, is not confined to the mere form and ceremony of government,—it not only pervades the whole atmosphere, but penetrates the very life-breath, and purifies the very heart's core of society,—and we may confidently hope, that the *Free Historian of Free America*, pampered in no court, pensioned by no crown, will pen with the golden pen of Truth,—that *her* history may be, as all history *ought* to be,—philosophy pure, uncompromising philosophy, "*teaching by examples,*"—a history, where crimes may be mentioned only to be condemned,—where virtue, genius, merit, may stand out in their own unfading beauty, the admiration and the model of the world! We would not, indeed, withhold their merited tribute of praise, their proud recompense of glory, from the "*patriots who have toiled and in their country's cause bled nobly.*" The sweet lyre, the sculptured marble, shall have their names in holy keeping! But *they* are not alone *patriots*. This proud title of *patriotism* is no narrow distinction of birth or of fortune. Whoever promotes, or labors to promote, the interest and welfare of his country, be his means never so

small, his vocation never so humble, is a patriot. They are patriots who obey and defend, as well as they who make the laws. They are patriots who strive, as they are able, to advance in the land the great cause of religion, of justice, of public improvement. Every good man is a patriot! They were patriots, whose names shall hereafter be mentioned as the founders and benefactors of this venerable institution. *He*\* is a patriot, and worthy a patriot's praise, whose wonted presence at the head of our University, on this high festival of letters, we may no longer look for. If the youth of our land be its hope and its promise, as their fathers are its strength and its support, — surely he shall have rendered a goodly and an acceptable service to his country, who by his diligence, his instructions, his example, has trained up so many to her duties and her honor. We would yield him, then, the glory of a patriot, as well as the affectionate thanks of grateful hearts, for all that he has done and suffered in the cause of education. His is a glory, "*cui neque profuit quisquam laudando, neque vituperando quisquam nocuit.*" May he live long, to see this ancient abode of science, — the fond object of his care and love, — increased in usefulness and power; standing in all the strength of sound wisdom, in all the majesty of virtue, in all the beauty of holiness, a blessing to the children, and an honor to the fathers of our land; and on its brightest tablet of record, among its best defenders, shall his name and his praise be ever inscribed. May his years to come be full of comfort, and his end — peace!

It is one of the peculiar features of our republican government, that the floors of office, — which have hitherto been rarely entered, but by those who could produce the passports of high birth or princely patronage, — are here thrown open to all. The natural consequence is, that all are eager to rush in. Imagination has pictured to us this exclusive abode, abundant in all the luxury and splendor of Oriental magnificence; and the prince of Abyssinia felt not more longings, — and, I venture to say *tried not more expedients*, to gain a knowledge and a view of the outer world of man, than we to gain admittance into this favored palace of the Blest. We do not fear, with the enemies of liberty, that this "political ambition" will always prove a canker in the hearts, or engender corruption in the minds of our people, — warring against the interests of literature, and bringing down upon us either the darkness of anarchy or the more gloomy light of despotism. We neither feel, nor feign, any such idle apprehensions. We have seen the flood-gates of ocean suddenly unbarred, and though the dashing waves leaped never so violently in devouring all they met, — it was but for a moment; the waters flowed again into their channel, and the sea was still. But though this temporary evil will ultimately be its own cure, it is well that all means should be employed to diminish its immediate violence. The storm has not yet ceased — we may, even now, see it, in all the strength of its rage, fearfully agitating our land. The holy ark of our liberties is, even now, tossed on its angry bosom! It is time that men's eyes were opened to reason. It is time that they looked upon office as it really is; like the other professions of life, a place of honorable labor, conferring on its possessor no absolute superiority, — no exclusive privilege, — no peculiar blessedness; — an elevation where one's failings, as well as excellences, are displayed to a dangerous advantage. We would render to the rulers and counsellors of our land all the respect

\* Dr. Kirkland, who had recently retired from the University.

and homage that are their due; but we will not yield up to them the sole possession of that *power* — the only power worth having — the highest power of man — a power which angels from all their glory might stoop to enjoy — the *power* of doing good to mankind — of serving one's country — of improving our race — of ennobling our age! *This* is the power which all may possess — which requires no passport but of Heaven. *This* is the promotion which "cometh neither from the East, from the West, nor yet from the South." *Mind* asks not the seal of office for a sanction of its dictates, "*nec sumit aut ponit securus arbitrio popularis aura.*" Its course will on, the way it takes, "cracking ten thousand curbs of more strong link asunder," than the slender impediments of artificial society. It will *speak out*, wherever it exists, in tones than which God's thunder is not more audible!

To this power and this greatness let us aspire. Let the education and improvement of mind be the first object of our ambition. Let not the great harvest of our literature lie longer unreaped. Our dizzy mountain-peaks — our green hills — our fertile vales — our thundering cataracts — our pleasant streams, were never made for sealed lips. Our firm hands, our brave hearts, our bright eyes, though eloquent in silence, deserve not a mute lyre. The fair brow of Liberty looks bald and naked without the laurel of the Muse!

### Example 2.

#### THE UTILITARIAN SYSTEM.\*

"Cui Bono."

The spirit of the present strongly demands the *useful* in all its objects of pursuit; there is little reason to fear that men will neglect their interests, so far as their judgment enables them to perceive them; for little occupies general attention that does not return some plausible answer to the question, "Of what use is it? what advantage arises from it?" The wild visions conjured up by the heated imaginations of other times, are all viewed through this correcting medium, and stripped of all their bright and deceptive colors, are stamped with that value only to which their utility entitles them. The lance of chivalry rusts in obscurity and neglect, while the ploughshare is bright with honorable use; the venerable castle, moss-covered and shattered by the storms of a thousand years, is of small consequence, as it stands beside the smart, new-built manufactory, its neighbor, whence some of the conveniences and comforts of life are constantly flowing; the mountain, though it be the highest peak of the Alps, or Andes, cloud-capt, and snow-crowned, towering sublime over the domains beneath, the theme of poets, and the resting-place of the imagination, is thought little of in comparison with the dark and gloomy mine at its base, whence are drawn the ore for manufacture, or the coal with which it is prepared.

All things are estimated, not at the price set upon them by the children of poetry and romance, but according to their immediate subserviency in rendering comfortable the condition of the great majority of mankind. And shall any one say that there is not much true philosophy in this valuation? Shall any one sigh over the tendency of the age to look with a dispassionate eye on those wild schemes, and false ideas of honor and

\* On taking the First Degree.

greatness, which in former times caused such a waste of human life and means? Shall any one for this denounce the times as forgetful of all that constitutes excellence or happiness? Shall it be said that this spirit necessarily smothers all the nobler parts of man's nature, and reduces him to a mere pains-taking, money-getting animal? That it is incapable of being turned and guided into any good course, and of forming the groundwork of a better state of things than the world has ever yet seen? Such desponding minds, — such prophets of evil, must have got their ideas of the *summum bonum* from tales of chivalry and romance, from the dreams and longings of a heated imagination, from any thing, in fact, rather than a comparison of the sources of happiness in the present and any former time. Should such an examination be made, that which appears so bright and enchanting when viewed from a distance, will hardly bear a close inspection. Strip these bright visions of all the radiance thrown around them by the charms of an elegant literature, and how meagre do they stand before us, in all the harsh outline of a rude and unpolished nature; the violent passions and harsh impulses of men stand forth, divested of that softening influence thrown upon them by a refined civilization. The courage of the warrior will shrink to the level of mere animal violence; the beauty of the ladies will pall upon the imagination, when it is considered how uninteresting must have been their minds from the want of all those graces and refinements which a more enlightened age only can impart; while through out all classes the powers of the intellect were but imperfectly developed, and give us no very exalted idea of man and his powers. Let these things be but once thought of in such an abstract way, separated from all the bright associations that are usually wound about them, and the most enthusiastic admirer of antiquity will hardly wish that his lot had been cast in any of those periods that once seemed so delightful.

But though the present estimate of utility be on the whole so correct, is there nothing in it that may be cause of disgust to those of delicate feelings, and at the same time injurious to our truest, best-defined interests? None but the most unhesitating, indiscriminating panegyrist would attempt to deny it. In their endeavors to reduce every thing to the standard of the useful, many have overstepped the limit. In their zeal to do away with all old follies, they cast off with them some of those virtues which are peculiar to no age or state of society, but whose seat is deep in the human heart, and whose free exercise is indispensable to the prosperous continuance of any state or order of things; connecting these with the really worthless objects, with which they are so often associated, with the intention of eradicating all the useless weeds from the soil of humanity, they ruthlessly tear up some of the most beautiful flowers in the gardens of the heart; they crush those buds that would expand, and blossom, and bear good fruit; that would exalt and purify, and refine life, and go far to realize man's imagined perfections.

We may see some signs of such a spirit, in that tone of superior wisdom that would repress all the outbreakings of enthusiasm, and damp the ardor of the grateful heart in its admiration of the beautiful and noble, with a sarcastic and self-conceited manner of asking the question, What use? And if the object of this harsh ridicule cannot show some direct and visible operation of the ideas and sentiments he admires, it warns him to be advised by experience, and to have done with all such foolish and romantic notions, which will only impede his successful progress in the world; that is, drop all that characterizes the man of feeling and sentiment, and retain nothing but the most esteemed maxims of a self-wise and selfish experience. Such a spirit would look upon this fair earth merely as one great farm, intended only to maintain its numberless denizens by its productive powers; it would grudge every acre not devoted to this purpose; it would look with an invidious eye upon lakes and mountains as useless incumbrances; in the pleasant light of heaven, and the blowing of its breezes, it would recog-

nize only the means to promote vegetation, and bring the harvest to maturity; men it would regard as mere instruments in these great operations as bound to their country, and to each other, by no stronger ties, no better feelings than a low and selfish interest; to it all else seems superfluous: all the glorious and beautiful, and all the touching and delicate, of the natural and moral world, are unvalued and uncared for. Though this false estimate be but too common, the mind that has not been subjected to it must revolt at its dictates. What! must all the refreshing gardens and pleasant walks of life be shut, all its delightful prospects obstructed, and all the gushing streams of the heart be sealed up! Could any one urge this in serious argument, no more concise and appropriate answer could be given him, than the decision of the Creator himself upon the works of his hand, — that they are *good, all good*.

But, to such contemners of all that soars above their own limited vision, the use of argument seems altogether superfluous; there are certain epithets to which no definite meaning is attached, but which, when applied with a certain manner of sarcasm or ridicule, do more to injure their object, than the most direct and severe crimination: there is a vagueness about them that gives the imagination room to conjure up a thousand bad qualities, and apply them to whatever is the subject of obloquy. Of this nature is the epithet *romantic*, so frequently and indiscriminately applied to all the impulses which fill the breasts of those who have not lost all the warmth and generosity given them by nature; who are excited with a noble ardor at the mention of great examples of virtue or heroism; who can see and feel the sublime and beautiful in nature and in character; who can kindle with love, swell with pity, or weep in sympathy with another's woes; they are told that all these things *will not do in the world*; that they are only found in silly novels; in fact, that they are all together too romantic. The tendency of this spirit is to make the young distrust their own feelings, and anxious to suppress every word and action that might come within the reach of this far-sweeping romantic; restraint and affected indifference become but too fashionable, even among those who are formed for better things; their fetters, early and long-worn, at length cease to gall, and the man of a once warm heart and strong affections, becomes a frigid and unimpassioned thing, whose impulses are all of the lowest, commonest description. But is it *really so*? Is there any danger in giving way to any of those emotions which are so enchanting in the page of poetry or romance? Are they really incompatible with those necessary duties which are allotted to most men in the common routine of life and occupation? Must we risk all those bright visions of life, enlivened and ennobled by the exercise of those finer feelings we love so to dwell upon? In fine, are they all of *no use*? Let the anxious inquirer look around, and mark the operation of some of those sentiments so harshly condemned as romantic and useless.

Is that feeling *useless* which entwines a love of his native land with every fibre of a man's heart? Which makes him look upon her mountains and plains, her rivers and lakes, or her rock-bound, sea-washed coast, with an indescribable, and almost superstitious veneration? Shall all those associations which make a man look upon his country as something more than so much land inhabited by so many proprietors, whom convenience has led to form themselves into an organized, political body, be laughed at, as the relic of a bygone, barbarous age; as too *romantic* to be indulged even for a moment? Shall that enthusiasm which leads the traveller, weary of wandering, and longing for home, on beholding the rocks and cliffs of his native shore, to exclaim with rapturous joy, — "This is my own, my native land," — be ridiculed as the expression of nothing but a mawkish, and false sensibility? On the contrary, is not such a feeling the foundation of that true and real *patriotism*, which makes a man lay down wealth and comfort, and pour forth blood like water for his country's good? Has it not been the all-pervading sentiment in those martyrs and patriots whom history and

fiction equally delight in honoring? Should we make Thermopylæ and Marathon familiar as household words, had there not been some stronger impulse in the breasts of the heroes who fought there than the mere desire to save their lands and property from unjust spoliation? Interest, or fiction, may, for a time, excite men to action in behalf of their country; but, to arouse the undying flame of patriotism, to make such lovers of their country as time has shown, the "caritas ipsius soli," the clinging to all the marks written in memory by affection, the scenes of our youth, the monuments and undying history of our ancestors, our hearthstones, and objects of domestic affection, must all work together in a manner none the less effective, because it cannot be reduced to the cold and exact rules of statesmen or philosophers.

Is that love *useless* which exalts so high in man's judgment the worth of the fairer, softer portion of his race; that takes away so much of the harsh and low from his character, and makes him see every thing in a warmer purer light. Or are any of those other tender feelings, which purify his character, and make him somewhat like the divine original? Equally harsh and false is that estimate that would say so; which would divest life of so much that softens its hard and rugged track; which would stop all those fountains gushing fresh from the heart, which sweeten and quicken the otherwise insipid and sluggish course of duties and labors. And yet such a disposition is but too common; it hears with incredulity of the existence of virtuous enthusiasm, or ardent love; or, if it cannot doubt their existence, it shows its contempt for them by a freezing interrogatory as to their advantage; it would confine all such romantic feelings to the pages of the poet or novelist, who, it thinks, first gave them birth, and insists, that however well they may do to "point a moral, or adorn a tale," they will *never do in real life*.

If such were real life, if none of the holiest and best affections could be indulged with safety, well might the gloomy views of those be entertained, who look upon the pleasant world as a succession of empty nothings, and all our boasted improvements and advancements as only tending to render them lighter and more empty, and to remove us farther from all that makes life worth the having.

Such a feeling of discontent, as it is particularly apt to seize upon minds most delicately tuned by nature, must have an injurious effect upon the age, which has been represented as, on the whole, so discriminating as to what is truly good and useful; since it withdraws from exerting a healthful influence those whose natural impulses would cause them to promote its best interests; but, disgusted by the false, utilitarian spirit just dwelt upon, their minds sink into a morbid and repining state, which questions if there be any thing pleasant, or excellent, contents itself with railing at all around, and nursing its own misanthropic feelings.

How, then, shall we answer that cold and sarcastic temper, which, in a. the confidence of superior wisdom, thinks to crush all the generous impulses of an ardent nature, the aspirations of genius, or the buddings of an unfeigned love, or strong attachment, by a withering manner of asking the question, *Of what use are all these?* We might answer with another question; *Of what use is the pleasant light of the sun?* For, not more groping, cold, and melancholy, would be an eternal, sunless night, than life without one ray of those warmer feelings to illumine its dark and tortuous paths, to gild the points of all the sterner, harsher duties, and cast a warm flush of happiness over all its varying scenes. We might tell them, that, banish these, and the world would be a desert of so harsh and uninteresting an aspect, that the most stoical patience could not endure it long; and, if their unsympathizing minds could not comprehend how this might be, we might tell them that to the feelings they so much despise they are indebted for the continuance of that state of things which appears to them so profitable and excellent. That they are the great corner-stones on which society

is founded, the bonds that maintain its union; that, but for some of the enthusiasm they so much condemn, civilization would long since have stopped in its progress, the arts and knowledge would have remained undeveloped, and all that tends to exalt and refine man's condition would still have slumbered. If they cannot be induced by this to acknowledge that there are any others but their own beaten highways of life, they must remain in ignorance of all its better part, forfeit all the enjoyments which accrue to those who can rightly estimate its blessings, and plod on in the way they have chosen for themselves;—while, to those who have an undimmed perception of the good and lovely, life spreads itself out like a verdant flowery field, its paths enlivened by the bordering green, the gemming dewdrops not yet dashed from its flowerets, and all beyond a vista of gladness and beauty. Happy those who choose this better portion, and enjoy that *real life* which those only can have, who, in all their estimates of use, are guided by that true philosophy, which, while it hastens the step of improvement, does not prevent the coöperation of our best nature!

### Example 3.

#### Public Opinion.\*

On the return of this ancient anniversary, on this academical jubilee, which borrows all its lustre from the countenance of a great community, I am naturally led to the contemplation of the power of a community. It is public favor which has raised a humble grammar school into the greatest collegiate establishment in our land. And we who are come up this day to make our last obeisance to our venerable parent, cannot consider without interest, that power out of which she sprang, and that power upon whose character our own fortunes must so much depend.

But the growth of a literary seminary is but an exhibition in miniature of that force of which I speak. Compared with some of its greater manifestations, it is the application of the force of steam to the cutting of diamonds, or the enchasing of plate. It is on the spacious stage of history, where ages are the time, and nations the actors, that I find the just examples of the power of public opinion emblazoned. What is the great lesson we learn from the records of our race? What but this? That the true sovereign of the world, the only monarch who is never deposed, and never abridged of his prerogative,

"Who sits on no precarious throne,  
Nor borrows leave to be,"

is Public Opinion.

What is a throne? What is a legislature? What is a Congress? What is a constitution? Mere pipes, mere mouth pieces, for the expression of Public Opinion. The moment they cease to give it vent, the moment they resist and set up for original powers, it breaks in pieces these venerable forms, as Daniel broke the gilded images of Babylonish idolatry, and holds up the fragments before the startled nations, with the same dreadful irony,—*"Lo, these be the gods ye worship."*

One would think, from what has sometimes been advanced, on great authority, that Public Opinion was a new power. I am confident that it is a mistake. Public Opinion is no new creation, no stranger in the world, no child of its old age. It has mingled in the public affairs since man first exchanged his cave in the woods for the arts and alliances of civilized life.

Born in the primeval conventions of uncouth savages, its infant fingers trace that social contract to which the proud monarchies of the Old World

\* On taking the first degree.