

## THE DUTY OF THE HOUR.<sup>1</sup>

Young gentlemen of the Eumenean and Philanthropic Societies: I am here to-day in response not only to your call, but to an imperative sentiment. This is the sense of the value of the young men of the South, and their claims upon every patriot. When I remember how your class has lately striven and died for us—how this seat of learning, like every other shrine of the Muses, was emptied at the call of a bleeding country, I feel that you have earned a claim upon our sympathies and aid, which cannot be refused. Nor was this devotion of our youth the less admirable—in my eyes it is only the more touching—because it has pleased the divine disposer, in his mysterious and awful providence, to deny you that success which you hoped. It has pleased Heaven that you should be so disappointed of your deserved victory, as that fools should say you have bled in vain.

But be assured, that as the afflicted child is ever dearest to the mother's heart, your disasters only cause your country to press you closer to her bosom. Amid her cruel losses, her children alone remain her last, as her most precious possession; and it is only from their energies, their virtues, their fortitude under obloquy and oppression, that she hopes for restoration. We assuredly believe, young gentlemen, that no drop of blood, generously shed in the right, ever wets our mother earth in vain.

The vision of the harvest from this precious seed may tarry, but in the end it will not fail; and we wait for it. The holy struggle may meet with seeming overthrow. But if our immediate hope is denied, amidst the manifold alternatives of Almighty Providence, some other recompense is provided, which will gladden and satisfy the hearts of our children, if not ours, in God's own time and place.

Now that this expectation may not fail, it is needful that you cherish jealously, the virtues and principles which ennoble

1.—Commencement Oration before the students of Davidson College, June, 1868,  
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your cause. Your steadfast and undebauched hearts must be the nurturing soil to preserve the precious seed of martyr blood, during this winter of disaster, to the appointed summer of its resurrection. The urgency, the solemnity of this season of darkness and danger, warn me that it is no mere literary pastime, but a high and serious duty which should occupy this hour. Pardon me, then, for passing to a topic which is fundamental, at once to the dearest hopes, of your country, and of its dead heroes. I would employ this season of communion with my young fellow-citizens, in uttering my earnest warning to them, of a danger and a duty arising out of the misfortunes of our country—a danger most portentous to a thoughtful mind, a duty peculiarly incumbent on educated men.

*This danger may be expressed by the fearful force of conquest and despotism to degrade the spirit of the victims. The correlated duty is that of anxiously preserving our integrity and self-respect.* A graphic English traveller in the East, describes the contrast, so striking to us, between the cowering spirit of the Orientals, and the manly independence of the citizens of free States in Western Europe. These have been raised in commonwealths which avouch and protect the rights of individuals. They are accustomed to claim their chartered liberties as an inviolable heritage. The injuries of power are met by them, with moral indignation and the high purpose of resistance.

But the abject Syrian or Copt is affected no otherwise by Turkish oppressions than by the incursions of nature's resistless forces: the whirlwind or the thunderbolt.

The only emotion excited is that of passive terror. He accepts the foulest wrong as his destiny, and almost his right. He has no other thought than to crouch, and disarm the lash by his submissiveness. And if any sentiment than that of helpless panic, is excited, it is rather admiration of superior power than righteous resentment against wrong. He who is the most ruthless among his masters is in his abject view the greatest.

When we remember the ancestry of these Orientals, we ask with wonder what has wrought this change? These are the children of those Egyptians who under Sesostris, pushed their conquests from Thrace to furthest Ind, beyond the utmost march of Alexander and who, under the Pharaohs, so long con-

tested the empire of the world with the Assyrian. Or they are the descendants of the conquering Saracens, who in later ages made all Europe tremble. Or these Jews who now kiss the sword that slays them are the posterity of the heroes who, under the Macabees, wrested their country from Antiochus, against odds even more fearful than Southern soldiers were wont to breast. Whence, then, the change?

The answer is, this mournful degeneracy is the result of ages of despotism. These base children of noble sires are but living examples of the rule, that not only the agents, but the victims of unrighteous oppression, are usually degraded by their unavenged wrongs: a law which our times renders so significant to us.

Illustrations of the same rule also may be found in the more familiar scenes of domestic life. Few observing men can live to middle life without witnessing sad instances of it. We recall, for instance, some nuptial scene, from the distance of a score of years. We remember how the bridegroom led his adored prize to the altar, elate with proud affection. We recall the modest, trembling happiness of the bride, as she confidently pledged away her heart, her all, to the chosen man whom she trusted with an almost religious faith. Her step, diffident yet proud, the proprieties of her tasteful dress, her spotless purity of person, her sparkling eyes, all bespoke self-respect, aspiration, high hope, and noble love. They revealed the thoughts of generous devotion with which her gentle breast was filled.

Had one whispered at that hour, that the trusted man would one day make a brutal use of the power she now so confidently gave, she would have resented it as the foulest libel on humanity. Had the prophet added, that she was destined to submit, tamely and basely, to such brutality, she would have repudiated this prediction also with scorn as an equal libel on herself. But we pass over a score of years. We find the same woman sitting in an untidy cabin, with a brood of squalid, neglected children around her knees; her shoulders scantily covered with tawdry calico, her once shining hair now wound like a wisp of hay into a foul knot. She is without aspiration, without hope, without self-respect, almost without shame. What is the explanation? She has been for years a drunkard's wife.

She was wholly innocent of her husband's fall. Long has she endured unprovoked tyranny and abuse. Not seldom has she been the helpless victim of blows from the hand which was sworn to cherish her. Often has she meditated escape from her degrading yoke; but the unanswerable plea of her helpless children arrested her always. She has found herself tied to a bondage where there was neither escape or resistance; and these wrongs, this misery, has at last crushed her down into the degraded woman we see. The truthfulness of this picture will only be denied by those who judge from romance without experience, not from facts.

We need only to look a little at the operations of moral causes on man's nature to find the solution of these cases. We are creatures of imitation and habit. Familiarity with any object accustoms us to its lineaments. The effect of this acquaintanceship to reconcile us to vice, has been expressed by Pope in words too trite to need citation. And the fact that one is the injured object of repeated crimes does not exempt him from this law, but, as will be shown, only subjects him the more surely to it. Not only is every act of oppression a crime, but the seasons of despotism are usually eras of profuse and outbreaking crime. The baleful shadow of the tyrant's throne is the favorite haunt of every unclean bird and beast. And if the oppressing power be the many-headed monster, a tyrant faction, this is only more emphatically true. At such a time the moral atmosphere is foul with evil example. The vision of conscience is darkened and warped. The very air is unhealthy even for the innocent soul.

For the common mind the standard of rectitude is almost overthrown in the guilty confusion. But this is the consideration of least weight. A more momentous one is found in the law of man's sensibilities. The natural reflex of injury or assault upon us is resentment. This instinctive emotion has evidently been designed by our Creator, as the protector of man in this world of injustice. Its function is to energize his powers for self defense. But its nature is active; in exertion is its life. Closely connected with this is the sentiment of moral disapprobation for the wrong character of the act.

This emotion is the necessary correlative to approbation for the right: so that the former cannot be blunted without

equally blunting the latter. The man who has ceased to feel moral indignation for wrong has ceased to feel the claims of virtue. Nor is there a valid reason for your insensibility to evil, in the fact that you yourself are the object of it.

Now when a man is made the helpless victim of frequent wrongs when his misfortunes allow him nothing but passive endurance, resentment and moral indignation give place to simple fear. And this by two sure causes; not only is the very power of sensibility worn away by these repeated and violent abrasions; not only is the nature dulled by the perpetual violences to which it is subjected, but that activity being denied, which is the necessary scope of these sentiments of resistance, they are extinguished in their birth. The soul which first rose against injustice with the quick and keen sense of wrong, and heroic self-defense; at last brutalized by its very injuries, subsides into dull indifference or abject panic. Should it not make the thoughtful patriot shudder to compare the present temper of the people with that of the revolutionary sires, who bequeathed to us the liberties we have forfeited? With how quick and sensitive a jealousy, with what generous disdain did they spurn at the imposition of a tax of a few pence, against their rights as Englishmen; while we seek to reconcile ourselves with a jest or sophism to wrongs a thousand fold as onerous. In the words of Burke, "In other countries the people judge of an ill principle in government only by an actual grievance; here they anticipated the evil, and judged of the pressure of the grievance by the badness of the principle. They augured misgovernment at a distance, and snuffed the reproach of tyranny in every tainted breeze." But we, their miserable children, are compelled to inhabit the very miasm and stench of extreme oppression, until our tainted nostrils almost refuse the office, and leave us unconscious, while stifled by the pollution.

We need not go so far to find this startling contrast; we have only to compare our present selves with ourselves a few years ago to find fearful illustrations of the working of these influences. Let us suppose that on the evening of July 21, 1861, I had stood before that panting citizen soldiery, which had just hurled back the onset of our gigantic foe, and that I had denounced to them that seven short years would find them tamely

acquiescing in the unutterable wrongs since heaped upon us: in the insolent violation of every belligerent right, in the sack of their homes, in the insult of their females, in the treacherous arming of their own slaves, in their subjection to them; with what anger and incredulity would they not have repelled me? Let us suppose that I had made the imputation that some day they would consent to survive such infamy: that it would be possible for them to make any other election than that of death, with their faces to the foe, rather than such a fate; would they not have declared it a libel upon the glories of that day, and upon the dead heroes, even then lying with their faces to the sky? But we have consented to live under all this, and are even now persuading ourselves to submit to yet more! Do you remember that unutterable swelling of indignation aroused in us by the first rumor of outrage to Southern women? How that you felt your breasts must rend with anguish unless it were solaced by some deeds of defense and righteous retribution? But we have since had so illstarred a tuition by a multitude of more monstrous wrongs, that the slavish pulse is now scarcely quickened by the story of the foulest iniquities heaped upon a defenseless people. Thus does our own melancholy experience verify the reasonings given.

But, my hearers, this deterioration of the moral sensibilities does not place man above the promptings of selfishness: it rather subjects him more fully to them. We may not expect that the sense of helplessness and fear will reconcile him to suffer with passive fortitude, without a struggle. As well might we look to see the panting stag bear the bit and spur with quietude. The instinct of self-preservation goads the oppressed to attempt some evasion from their miseries; but their only remaining means is that common weapon of the weak against the strong—artifice. Every down-trodden people is impelled almost irresistibly to seek escape from the injustice which can no longer be resisted by force, through the agency of concealments, of duplicity, of lies, of perjuries. The government of the oppressor is therefore a school to train its victims in all the arts of chicanery and meanness. Mark, I pray you, the cruel alternative to which it shuts them up. They must suffer without human help or remedy, evils unrighteous, relentless, almost intolerable; evils which outrage at once their well-being and

their moral sense; or they must yield to temptation and seek deceitful methods of escape. And the only motives to move them to elect suffering rather than dishonor are the power of conscience, the fear of God, and faith in the eventual awards of His justice. What portion of any people may be expected to persevere in this passive heroism without other support?

In answering this question we must not forget the inexpressible seductiveness and plausibility of that temptation. It pleads with the injured victim of wrong, that his oppressors had no moral right to inflict these evils: That their injustice and treachery forfeit all claim upon his conscience: That to deceive them is but paying them as they deserve in their own coin. An embittered hatred, which pleads its excuse from a thousand unprovoked injuries, impels the sufferer by a sting as keen as living fire, to seek the revenge of deception: the only one in his reach. And last, the specious maxim, "That necessity knows no law," completes the triumph of the temptation with the plea, that the endurance of this tyrant's unmitigated will is impossible, and therefore the case justifies the means of evasion.

Now I need hardly pause, before this assembly, to say that all this pretended argument is a guilty sophism. You know that, however plausible it may be, it is grounded in a profane forgetfulness of God, of his holy will, and of his omnipotent government over oppressors and oppressed. You see how it involves that maxim of delusion, of whose advocates the Apostle declared "their damnation is just"; that the end sanctifies the means. At the day when God shall bring him into judgment, no man will dare to obtrude these specious pleas, for his violation of the eternal principles of truth and right—principles on which repose the welfare of all creatures and the honor of God, principles whose sanctity only finds illustrations in the very evils which man experiences from their breach. But none the less do we find anticipations of seduction verified by ten thousand lamentable lapses from honor among our suffering people: in their tampering with ensnaring and oppressive oaths; in the evasion of pecuniary obligations; in the deceitful avowal of pretenses abhorrent at once to the political pride and principles of our country. The facts are too melancholy to be pursued.

Meantime the efficiency of all these seductions is made

more fearful by the causes which hedge our young men up from wholesome activities. There is no longer a career for their individual energies. Scarcely any profession offers a prize worthy of their exertions. If they turn to agriculture, or the pursuits of the merchant or artisan, the ruin of trade and the crushing burden of unequal taxation compel them to labor for a pittance. Hence the danger that they will succumb to an apathetic despair. We see too many of our youth whose fortitude should sustain a fainting, sinking country, sitting down in skeptical doubt to question the control of Divine Providence, or sinking into an indolence which they persuade themselves is inevitable, and seeking a degrading solace in epicurean ease. Take heed, gentlemen, lest these insidious discouragements transmute the sons of the heroes of Manassas and Shiloh, as the despotism of arbitrary rulers has charge, into the modern Roman. In the Eternal city we see the descendants of that race which gave laws and civilization to a conquered world, now in the words of their own sensual poet, "*Porci de grege Epicuri, cute bene curata,*" filling their idleness with the criticism of cooks and singing women. Rather than risk the yielding to this, arise and go forth, sturdy exiles, to carve out a new career on some more propitious soil.

It has been made my duty by my appointed pursuits to examine the history of previous conquests; and it is my deliberate conviction that no civilized people have ever been subjected to an ordeal of oppression so charged as ours with all the elements of degradation. I have explained how the unrighteousness of the despotism becomes a potent influence for temptation. We experience a domination, the iniquity of which is declared by every patriot of every previous party, and constantly avowed by the very men that impose it up to the day, when their reason was swept away by the torrent of revenge and the lust of domination. Our people have been violently thrust down from the proudest ancestral traditions, and highest freedom boasted by any commonwealth on earth, to the deepest humiliations and most grinding exactions. They have been overpowered, not by manly force, but by filthy lucre, which bribed the proletarians of the whole world to crush us. We stooped our banners, not like the conquered Gaul and Briton to one who knew how, *debellare superbos, forcere victis*; but to a rabble who are not ashamed to

confess that their fourfold numbers and tenfold resources were unable to subdue us, until they had armed against us all the mercenaries of Europe and our own poor slaves besides. And to crown all, the favorite project is to subject us, not to the conqueror only, but to these alien serfs, to be invested with our plundered franchises. Thus are our people robbed not only of their possessions and rights, but of their dearest point of honor. Now, every one experienced of human nature knows that when you break down the chosen point of honor, the man is degraded to a brute unless he is sustained by the vital grace of God. Thus it appears that the influences and temptations by which conquest depraves its victims are now applied to our people in their most malignant efficacy. The lesson which we should learn from this fact is that we should be watchful in an equal degree to preserve our own rectitude and honor.

For, young gentlemen, as the true dishonor of defeat lies only in this deterioration of spirit, so it is the direst wrong which the injustice of the conqueror can inflict. A brave people may, for a time, be overpowered by brute force, and be neither dishonored nor destroyed. Its life is not in the outward organization of its institutions. It may be stripped of these and clothe itself in some diverse garb, in which it may resume its growth. But if the spirit of independence and honor be lost among the people, this is the death of the common weal: a death on which there waits no resurrection. Dread, then, this degradation of spirit as worse than defeat, than subjugation, than poverty, than hardship, than prison, than death.

The law on which I have commented has ever appeared to me the most awful and obscure of all those which regulate the divine providence over men and nations. That the ruthless wrong-doer should be depraved in his own soul by his crimes, that he should find a part of his just penalty in the disorders and remorse infused in his own nature by his acts; this is a dispensation as adorably righteous as it is terrible. But that not only guilty agent, but guiltless victim should, by a law, almost natural, find his moral being broken down; that a necessity which his will had no agency in procuring should subject his heart to an ordeal so usually disastrous:—this is indeed fearful. “Clouds and darkness” here surround him. Yet “justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne.” One thing I clearly

infer hence, that he has ordained the virtuous man's life in this wicked world, to be often a battle, in which he may be called "to resist unto blood, striving against sin." We learn from these mournful histories how it may be our duty to surrender life, rather than conscience and moral independence. Man's first duty to himself is the preservation of his own virtue. His prime duty to his God may be said to be the same. For how shall the depraved creature fulfill that "chief end," glorifying God? With no little seeming then was it argued of old, that a dishonored life was no life indeed; so that the imposition of unavoidable degradation of soul was equivalent to the Maker's decree dismissing us out of the scene of defiled existence. Here is the most plausible excuse of that antique self-sacrifice, by which the heroic souls of the Pagan world claimed the privilege of escaping subjugation, and defying the oppressor by a voluntary grave. For they knew not the only power by which the inward stain of oppression can be countervailed. They had never heard of gospel grace; of regeneration and adoption; of a hope anchored beyond the grave; of a reward in glory ennobling all suffering and endurance for conscience sake. Let us not, however, palliate the error of those who thus retired from life's battle without the word of supreme command of the Captain. But from this danger of the soul's subjugation along with that of the body, we may infer the duty and privilege of preferring the surrender of life to the desertion of duty. It is yours, young gentlemen, to boast among the alumni of your college, more than one illustrious instance of this fate, which may prove so enviable compared with ours. First among these, I am reminded of one, whose youthful face, then ruddy as that of the hero of Bethlehem, is filed in the memories of my first visit here, General Ramseur. Nowhere, in the rich record of Southern chivalry, can there be found the name of one who more deliberately resolved for death rather than forfeiture of duty and honor. Twice within a few weeks, at Winchester and Fisher's Hill, his command had yielded to numbers, in spite of his most strenuous and daring exertion. On the morning of the battle of Belle Plain, which began so gloriously for the Confederates, while marshalling his troops for the strife, he exhorted them to stand to their colors, and calmly declared that if they had any value for his life they would henceforward be

staunch; for he was resolved never to participate with them in another flight from their foes. It was with this deliberate purpose he joined battle. But as the bravest are ever the most gentle, this stern resolve did not exclude the thought of the domestic tie, which his country's call had sundered almost as soon as it was bound around his heart, and of the infant which had never received its father's kiss. His courage was only reinforced by these remembrances. For, as he began the onset, in the second movement of the tragedy, he exclaimed to the officers near him, "Now, gentlemen, let us so fight to-day as to finish this campaign; I want to see my first born." After performing his whole duty during the changeful day, he saw all the line upon his left giving way. With his own command he strove to stem the torrent of enemies; and when they, too, broke in panic he refused to flee with them, but busied himself in rallying a few determined spirits like himself. When the last fugitive left the field they saw him with a handful, breasting the whole pursuing host, until, according to his pledge, he fell with his face to the foe. Let this example inspire you to *endure* as he *fought*, and you will be secure against all the degradations of defeat.

This degradation, then, does not necessarily accompany our prostrate condition. Divine Providence often makes the furnace of persecution the place of cleansing for individual saints. Why may it not be so for a Christian people? Why may not a race of men come forth from their trials, like the gold seven times refined in the fire, with their pride chastened, and yet their virtues purified? This can be from the only cause which sanctifies the sufferings of the Christian, the inworkings of the grace of God. Nothing is more true than that the natural effect of mere pain is not to purify, but to harden the sinful heart of man, exasperating at once its evils and its miseries. The cleansing Word and Spirit of God alone interpret its sufferings to it and convert them into healthful medicines of its faults. So it is the power of true Christianity, and that alone, which can minister to us as a people the wholesome uses of adversity. The salvation of the life of the Southern society must be found by taking the Word of God as our constant guide. But it may be asked: To what course of action should this spirit of unyielding integrity prompt us? The answer from

those infallible oracles is easy. While you refrain from the suggestion of revenge and despair, and give place as of necessity to inexorable force, resolve to abate nothing, to concede nothing of righteous conviction. Truckle to no falsehood and conceal no true principle; but ever assert *the right* with such means of endurance, self-sacrifice and passive fortitude as the dispensation of Providence has left you. If wholesale wrongs must be perpetrated, if wholesale rights must be trampled on, let our assailants do the whole work and incur the whole guilt. Resolve that no losses, nor threats, nor penalties, shall ever make you yield one jot or tittle of the true or just in principle, or submit to personal dishonor. And let us remember, young gentlemen, that while events, the success of ruthless power, the overthrow of innocence may greatly modify the *expedient*, they have no concern whatever in determining the *right*. The death of a beloved child may determine its mother to bury its decaying body out of sight, even to hide in the wintry earth that which before she cherished in her bosom; but its death will never make the true mother repudiate its relation of paternity to it, or deny its memory, or to acquiesce in any slander upon its filial loveliness. You must decide, then, each one for himself, what things must be conceded to the necessities of new events, and what things must be disclaimed as contaminating to the unconquered soul. May I not safely advise, that, in making these decisions you should always refer them to that standard of judgment which we held before our disasters, as the truer, and worthier one; rather than to that standard to which we are seduced by their humiliations? Judge then from the same principles (however new their special applications) from which you would have judged in happier years when your souls were inspired by the glorious traditions of your free forefathers, and saw the truth in the clear light of your conscious manhood; not as men would have you judge, from hearts debauched by defeat, and clouded with shame and despair.

We are a beaten, conquered people, gentlemen, and yet if we are true to ourselves, we have no cause for humiliation, however much for deep sorrow. It is only the atheist who adopts success as the criterion of right. It is not a new thing in the history of men that God appoints to the brave and true the stern task of contending and falling in a righteous quarrel.

Would you find the grandest of all names upon the roll of time? You must seek them among this "noble army of martyrs," whose faith in God and the right was stronger than death and defeat. Let the besotted fools say that our dead have fallen in a "lost cause." Let abandoned defamers and pulpit buffoons say that theirs are "dishonored graves." I see them lie in their glory with an illustrious company: with the magnanimous Prince Jonathan, on Mount Gilboa, and the good king Josiah in the vale of Megiddo; with Demosthenes and Philopoemen; with Hannibal, the pillar of Carthage; with Brutus and Cato; with the British Queen, Boadicea; with the Teuton Herman; with Harold, the Saxon, on Hastings field; with Wallace, with Kosciusko; with one grander than all, our own Jackson. We have no need, sirs, to be ashamed of our dead; let us see to it that they be not ashamed of us. They have won the happier fate, "taken away from the evil to come, they have entered into peace; they rest in their beds, each one walking in their uprightness." To us they have bequeathed the sterner trial of asserting, by our unshaken fortitude under overthrow, the principles which they baptized with their blood. Let the same spirit which nerved them to do, nerve us to endure for the right; and they will not disdain our companionship on the rolls of fame. Before I end, let me invoke the aid of the gentler sex, whose sympathizing presence I see gracing our solemnities. The high mission of woman in society has been often and justly argued. But never before was the welfare of a people so dependent on their mothers, wives and sisters, as now and here. I freely declare that under God my chief hope for my prostrate country is in their women. Early in the war, when the stream of our noblest blood began to flow so liberally in battle, I said to an honored citizen of my State, that it was so uniformly our best men who were made the sacrifice there was reason to fear that the staple and pith of the people of the South would be permanently depreciated. His reply was: "There is no danger of this while the women of the South are what they are. Be assured the mothers will not permit the offspring of such martyrs to depreciate."

But since, this river of generous blood, has swelled into a flood. What is worse, the remnant of the survivors, few, subjugated, disheartened, almost despairing and, alas, dishonored,

because they have not disdained life, on such terms as are left us; are subjected to every influence from without, which can be malignantly devised to sap the foundations of their manhood and degrade them into fit materials for slaves. If our women do not sustain them they will sink. Unless the spirits which rule and cheer their homes can reanimate their self-respect, confirm their resolve, and sustain their personal honor, they will at length become the base serfs their enemies desire. Outside their homes, everything conspires to depress, to tempt, to seduce them. Do they advert to their business affairs? They see before them only loss, embarrassment, and prospective destitution. To the politics of their country? They witness a scheme of domination and mercenary subserviency where the sacrifice of honor is the uniform condition of success. Only within their homes is there, beneath the skies, one ray of light or warmth to prevent their freezing into despair.

*There*, in your homes, is your domain. *There you* rule with the sceptre of affection, and not our conquerors. We beseech you, wield that gentle empire in behalf of the principles, the patriotism, the religion, which we inherited from our mothers. Teach our ruder sex that only by a deathless love to these can woman's dear love be deserved or won. Him who is true to these crown with your favor. Let the wretch who betrays them be exiled forever from the paradise of your arms. Then shall we be saved, saved from a degradation fouler than the grave. Be it yours to nurse with more than a vestal's watchfulness, the sacred flame of our virtue now so smothered. Your task is unobtrusive; it is performed in the privacy of home, and by the gentle touches of daily love. But it is the noblest work which mortal can perform, for it furnishes the polished stones, with which the temple of our liberties must be repaired. We have seen men building a lofty pile of sculptured marble, where columns with polished shafts pointed to the skies, and domes reared their arches on high, like mimic heavens. They swung the massive blocks into their places on the walls with cranes and cables, with shout and outcries, and hugh creaking of the ponderous machinery. But these were not the true artisans: they were but rude laborers. The true artists, whose priceless cunning was to give immortal beauty to the pile, and teach the dead stones to breathe majesty and grace were not there. None

saw or heard their labors. In distant and quiet workrooms, where no eye watched them, and no shout gave signal of their motions, they plied their patient chisels slowly with gentle touches, evoking the forms of beauty which lay hid in the blocks before them. Such is your work; the home and fireside are the scenes of your industry. But the materials which you shape are the souls of men, which are to compose the fabric of our church and state. The politician, the professional man, is but the cheap, rude, day laborer, who moves and lifts the finished block to its place. You are the true artists, who endue it with fitness and beauty; and therefore yours is the nobler task.