

OUR DUTY AS YOUNG MEN OF THIS COUNTRY.

—AN—

ADDRESS

—DELIVERED BEFORE THE—

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—OF THE—

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Ladies and Gentlemen of the Cleveland Literary Society :

Appreciating the high compliment paid me by this Society in inviting me to deliver the address upon this occasion, I will now proceed to discuss

OUR DUTY AS YOUNG MEN OF THIS COUNTRY.

No young man who has the love of home and his country burning within his heart can do otherwise than but fully realize the fact that great responsibilities rests upon the young men of this country to-day. It is an undisputed fact, that upon them the future of this country depends. No people, however old or however depressed, ought ever to despair, for it is a rule well established by all history, that no people can be lost or degraded but by their failure to do

their duty. If this principal is true of aged, decreped or a corrupt people, how much more undeniably may it be said that a young, vigorous, uncorrupted people have their destiny in their own hands. True greatness is the result of preseverance and hard labor.

I shall endeavor to consider the best means of securing the dearest objects upon earth—the liberty, the happiness and the honor of our people.

If anything was wanting to inspire us with hope and confidence in ourselves, the history of the past and especially of the last few years furnishes ample grounds for renewed faith. We have beheld our fellow-countrymen, the people of our Southern land, after a long and exhausting war, denuded of all property, in a feeble minority, encompassed by every adverse circumstance, and above all, deprived of thousands of her noble Spartains, emerging from all the surrounding difficulties of their situation and again re-establishing themselves before the country and the world. No parallel to this triumph can be found in human history. If history shall say that the South imprudently rushed on a rash fate and thereby underwent unheard of disaster and suffering, the same history will declare in golden letters that she alone, against every adversity, recovered from her calamities and worked out her own deliverance. As proud as we are and ought to be of our own people—tested in the crucible of suffering and misfortune—there is nothing in our past history to rebuke this just feeling. We have indeed cause to be proud of our Southern forefathers. In American history no brighter names appear than those of Henry, Jefferson, Caswell and a thousand others.

What higher tribute could have been borne to Southern character than John Adams, when he nominated George Washington for the leader of the American army to fight for its independence? What better testimony could be furnished for Southern genius and statesmanship than that Thomas Jefferson was selected to write the Declaration of Independence? What better proof could be given of the justice and wisdom of these opinions than that Washington has become the greatest man upon earth, and that the words

of Jefferson are now the vital fires of popular rights all over the world. From the beginning of our history as a people the South has borne her part in all of it.

When we reflect that of the first seven Presidents five were Southern men; when we remember that Jackson in the South, and Scott in the North, in 1815 led our armies to victory; when we know that Taylor and Scott were the heroes of Mexico, and that Campbell, Shelby, Cleveland and others were the victors at King's Mountain; when we remember that Clay and Calhoun, Benton and Badger shed a luster on the Senate, the purest and noblest that has ever been shed upon that chamber; that Maury laid bare the dangerous secrets of the ocean and the winds, we as Southern youths have a right to be proud of such a history and our arms should be nerved and our motto should be *quod fecit homo faciat*. Then our duty is great my friends because it has to prove worthy of a sublime history in the past—if it falls below that history, infamy ought to be our fate. We can not meet that high duty by vain and cowardly complaints. Complaints are never the weapons of the brave, they are the contemptible refuge of the weak. Nor can we do our duty by indulging hatred to other sections of the country and perpetuating the animosities of war. The glory of a people cannot be built upon hatreds. God will not let discord be the foundation of happiness. Our honor, or fame, our happiness, must rest upon surer foundations—upon the rock of eternal justice and right.

In the dark ages of the world, the wrath of Achilles or the oath-bound hostility of Hannibal to Rome, might be the themes of song and history, but such passions will no more blacken the pages of poetry and eloquence. In their place is the higher Christian virtue, of which Plato never dreamed, to conquer all things by doing right. The enmity of Hannibal to Rome made him miserable, and entailed untold misfortunes upon his country. Let us remember the faults of others only to prove that we are superior to them. Let us manifest to the world that nothing can overcome our supreme sense of right, of justice, of duty in all things and at all times.

Our past is so full of great deeds, of great results, that

we can well be magnanimous. Let us crown our achievements with a brave, most illustrious conquest over the passions and weaknesses that have dishonored less noble people.

We have thus far briefly and crudely tried to notice our duty in a negative point of view, and will now submit a few thoughts upon our positive, actual duty to our country and to ourselves. We live in a mighty country and a wonderful period, the period of the greatest development since the world began. We are thirteen millions and more of people, occupying seven hundred and fifty thousand square miles of territory, in the most favored portion of the earth. We produce the greatest staple used by the human family, and have a monopoly of its production. The great ocean of commerce, with its belt of gulf streams, encircle our shores. Every fruit, every plant that grows on the globe flourishes in our region. In all the elements of natural, material and physical strength we are unequaled by any other portion of the universe. With this magnificent country under our control, the duty comes up directly before us to develop it. That development can only be secured by work—and if I was called upon to declare in one word our duty, I would without hesitation in the language of a great statesman who has passed away, utter the word, the greatest of all words—work. And by that expression, I mean work of every character, professional, mechanical, agricultural, scientific, artistic, in their broadest sense. It is the great first law of nature, the necessity for human happiness, the staff of human virtue.

I hope the day is not distant when the man who works the most will be known and appreciated as the most honored among us all, for such he deserves to be. I desire to see him rank above the richest, above the oldest, above all. Let work be our watch-word, write it on every banner, enscribe it on every standard. Mental and physical work—labor—the labor that conquers all things, is the first paramount duty of us all. It is the magic charmed link that will restore whatever we may have lost in passing through fiery ordeals, that will enrich and adorn us; that will purify and dignify us. It is the great misty that made Newton and Franklin,

Morse and Washington, Caesar and Napoleon, immortal. It was this that made the entrance of Shakespere, an obscure boy into London, more effectual than Alexander's entrance into Babylon. The time has come when labor must be the title deed to position. It is the foundation of every value that man possesses. That work is the first great law of all achievements is happily verified to-day in the lives of hundreds of our countrymen. Eminent for great virtues, great abilities and great usefulness, they are living examples, standing before us to illustrate this paramount principal of human action. Ask them and they will tell you that the mystery of their success—the inspiration of their genius—the charm of their fame, the foundation of their wealth, the support of their adversity, the safe-guard of their honesty, the enchantment and happiness of their lives, have been work. It is not the magician's wand of genius and fortune, it is the sacred law of work that has made men illustrious, States grand, humanity glorious. Intellectual labor has always been estimated, and has carved the footways to fame. But manual, mechanical labor has never had its fitting compensation. For over four hundred years the world has resounded the praises of Columbus as one of the greatest lights in the tide of time, but the skilled mechanic who fashioned the Neptune, and the hardy sailors who sped the vessels in safety from *Genoa* to *San Salvador*, are never thought of, if they were ever known. While the name of Newton will fill the corridors of time forever, as we traverse the great ocean in most perfect comfort and safety, and tread the decks of the magnificent steamers and enjoy the luxuries of their vast saloons, we forget the skill and labor of the mechanic who has utilized the discovery of Newton, and from rude models has fashioned and constructed the floating palaces. The patient sufferer is grateful to the surgeon whose scientific skill relieves him from pain and saves him from death, but has not one thought for the artisan whose deft hands place it within the power of his benefactor to perform the operations. We behold the maiden in her beauty and the soul is vanquished with her loveliness, and amid our enchantments we forget, as she does, the industri-

ous weavers and spinners, whose tasteful mechanism has contributed the drapery and laces which adorn that sweetest figure. It is the mechanic who builds the plow, who tempers the sword, who gives form and shape and usefulness to the crude thoughts of others.

The history of the British Kings had often been written, said Maucally, but no one had written the history of the British people, which was the more useful to be learned. So we have had histories of our great men and statesmen and of great events, yet the history of our people has never been written. The lives and characters of our great generals who fought so nobly and bravely in the late unpleasantness have been properly emblazoned on histories' pages, but we have not had a history of the thousands of brave knights who wore the gray and who so freely offered up their lives for our liberties and our rights. Let the young men of this country, of the South, reform these wrongs. Justice demands it—policy enforces it and it is our duty to see that it is done. In this country all men are soverings, all men are by law equal, then let us see to it that the honest laborer, whether he be a serf or a king shall receive the rich encomiums which he justly deserves.

The great remedy for discords between social classes is to raise all, to bring all up, to degrade none, and when the laws and society do this there will be no cause for discord between our fellow-countrymen.

For many years to come this country must be an agricultural country. The narrow resources of our people will not at present permit other investments. The day is not far distant when every other field of labor and wealth will be utilized. But agriculture is the foundation of all prosperity. No people can be or have ever been permanently prosperous and powerful who were not an agricultural people. The power of Carthage quickly declined. The glory of Venice was short lived. *Genoa* and *Pisa*, with their magnificent palaces and princely estates, and commerce extending to the uttermost limits of the world, and *Amsterdam* with its sturdy artizans and enterprising and far seeing and far reaching merchants, have seen their septer pass

away. England owes her great ascendancy by sea and on land to her agricultural interests. It is this that supports her brave soldiers, that builds her great navies. It is the school of the virtues. From this source has come, and always will be drawn, the great and good men of every country. This then being an established fact, it would be well for us to devote to this field much of our country's genius, her energy and her affections. Let us make this fair land of ours, inherited from illustrious forefathers a garden of peace, of happiness and religious liberty. Let us grapple our hearts to this beautiful country by developing, by adorning, by utilizing it with our labor. Let each one of us feel that we put a laurel in the wreath of our country whenever we add a flower, a fruit, a grass or a grain to the production of it.

I have endeavored to show that it is our duty, to respect and then to cultivate and practice Agricultural and Mechanical Arts. With them and perhaps before them is the great duty of Education. With freemen it is the first of all duties, for without intelligence free government is a failure. Knowledge is power, the highest power on earth. As ignorance is an element of weakness, so knowledge is an element of great strength. Every resource of our country must be invoked to this great work. In proportion as we are poor must be our effort to enrich the minds of our people. It was education that enabled the Germans to defeat France. It is this that makes England to-day dictate to her neighbors. It is this that gives every nation its position, every individual his rank. It is this that takes hold of the young man with a friendly and affectionate grasp, leads him gently through the green pastures and along the delightful paths of knowledge, points out to him the road to usefulness, raises him as with a powerful lever to the pinnacle of greatness and goodness, fits him for all the duties of this life, and furnishes the means to prepare for a full fruition of the life which is to come. Educate yourselves my friends and thus perform your first great duty to yourself and your country. Let us see to it that this blessing is extended as much as possible to our countrymen. Let this country ever take care of the educating of her people, and the recipients of this noble gift will

in after years hold in sweet remembrance of their wise and noble benefactors.

Another duty that we owe to ourselves and to our country is the study of history and especially the history of our own country. When some Athenian youths inquired of Socrates, How they should become distinguished patriots and useful citizens? the Philosopher pointed them to the history of their country. There is blended with the history of our country an originality of feature, a national importance, which should make an American, above all others, blush not to know it. Where, let me ask, can we find anything more ennobling to life, or better calculated to fill us with its deep dependency. Where can we more truly study man in his various situations of virtue and of vice; in prosperity or adversity, in his successful designs or in his broken hopes?

Where finally can we more lively feel the numerous and awful responsibilities, which the great Directing Hand has placed upon us. History, says a fine writer of antiquity, is that gift of Divine Providence, which rescues the actions of heroes from oblivion and consigns them over to immortality. Another writer has called it "the transcript of creation, the rival of time, the repository of great and glorious actions, witness of the past, example and pattern of the present and the oracle of ages yet to come." We should study the history of our country because it is glorious. In infancy we have seen her, like a young giant, crushing the monster that would destroy her. In later life shaking off her heavy burdens, through the bloody toil of her children. And they were not every day men who were the actors in this drama, a few such spirits are met with in an age. They diffuse their virtuous light, like stars scattered over the darkness of Heaven. Let us watch them in their happy elevation. Let us gather from their course, their brighter virtues, and, if to their immortal spirits, it be permitted, to look down from that Heaven of which they dreamed, may it be to shed upon our path, the same light of purity and peace which they now enjoy.

Having encouraged a few of our systems of labor and discussed briefly the proper means, as we take it, to secure

the intelligence of our people, there are still other considerations that claim our attention, all of which may be expressed in the term *character*. For wealth and power and education by themselves are not sufficient for the true development of a people. There must be *moral character*. It is that character which has and I hope is still destined to distinguish our Southern people. Its value cannot be exaggerated. The honor of a people is their greatest security. Of all their possessions, it alone is imperishable. It was the life of the Greek States—the soul of the Roman republic—the spirit of English liberty and grandeur. It made Rome the mistress of the world. “Punic Faith” destroyed Carthage before Hannibal retreated from the Alps or Scipio invaded Africa. Not numbers, nor treasures, nor palaces, made Sparta or gave her an immortal name, but it was Spartan integrity and Spartan courage that gave her the power of an Empire. The three hundred Greeks are perished in Thermopylae, but their example gave character to the Spartans that made her invincible. What makes Spain and Turkey and modern Italy for years, and we may say now merely words in the family of nations? The want of character. As a part, then of this grand country, filled with historic glories that will never die, if we will hold the place of our fathers we must take care, above all things, of our character—our honor. The fortunes of war destroyed our material wealth, blighted our lands but our greatest treasure—*Our Honor*—is untouched—aye, brightened. In all else we have lost—in that we are the victors. The honor which our fathers left is still ours, brightened from the furnace through which we have passed. In a history of two thousand years, Southern honor is without one eclipse. No unholy passions stains the annals of her states—the book of her life records no instance of dishonor. Broken faith, violated promises, cruel conduct, unworthy cupidity, moral and social depravity, no where mar her progress. She stands before the eyes of the world to-day with her garments as white as vestals, her courage untarnished, her virtue without a blot, her soul without a shadow. It is for us and our duty my friends to take care of that character, to brighten that

image, to strengthen and polish that majestic and beautiful column. It is worthy of our love, our devotion, our idolatry. Let us put incense on its altars. Let that character be preserved—illustrate it, magnify it, exalt it—and this country is safe. Though she may be in rags, princes and potentates will kneel at her shrine. What an opportunity for usefulness—what a field for glory young gentlemen, this duty presents to us. Properly discharged, it will vindicate our countrymen who died for it. It will shed undying luster upon us. It will pour radiant light upon our children. And in pursuit of this hallowed duty let me say that I am impressed most of all with one idea and that is care for the mothers and daughters of this land. It is a solemn duty that we owe them. I believe that of all the ways and means of beautifying, improving and making this country happy the best and surest is justice to her women. They are the tender but sacred vessels in which are carried the virtues and hopes of the human family. That was no absurd fiction of the noble Romans who instituted the vestal virgins to keep burning forever the fires of Roman liberty. That liberty never expired until that noblest sisterhood was dragged down and corrupted. Roman liberty was triumphant and Roman government pure until *Marius*, Pompey, and Cæsar, bartered their wives and sisters and daughters for office and gold. So, too, the fires of our liberty will never go out if they are kept alive by the virtues of pure women. All nations and ages, and races, have invariably represented the virtues by the image of a woman. The God of war was Mars, a rude man; the God of eloquence, Apollo, the type of manhood; the God of the wine cup, Bacchus; but the virtues are all women. Beauty and plenty and wisdom and majesty, were all women.

The great spring of human life must be kept pure and holy, or the mighty stream that flows from it will be corrupt. Let us endeavor, as the first and surest means of elevating, purifying, ennobling our people to place the mothers and daughters so high in our opinions and affections, so high in the estimation of mankind that impunity can never approach them. This will be better than temples of Jupiter or Janus—better than gold or precious stones.

It was the legislation and teaching of a fond Christian mother which made Washington, and with that name are bound up all the dearest political hopes of men. From woman was descended that other being, whose name is still dearer to human ears, and only through her was Christ, our Savior, the Redeemer of the world, connected with man. And if by her indiscretion as a politician she lost us Eden and made us heirs of death, she gave to the world the Conqueror of the grave; and as a mother and a sister, when man assigns her her proper stations and prepares her for it, she will atone for her former folly, produce to the world a race of Washingtons, and herself guided by the glorious doctrines of Jesus Christ, led us back through him, to paradise. I utter not mere formal compliments my friends, but great truths, which once realized will make this country the noblest land the sun shines upon. If I could, in the humility of an enchanted soul, implore of Benignant Father the greatest blessing for this beloved land of ours, it would be to vouchsafe to the noble women of this country the highest and largest influence that can be exercised in society.

In our hands is the duty of preserving the fair name of this country, her institutions and her people. Let us first, foremost and ever guard, as we would our hearts, her honor—her very honor. Let no breath sully its brightest lustre.—Let it be our love to advance and add to its glory, and never rest until its splendor is radiant over the earth. Let us strive to make it like the shield of Achilles, seven-fold strong, seventy-fold brilliant, a full circle of virtue. And to this holliest, but nobliest of all patriotic duties all classes and sexes, and conditions of our people should feel interested. The aged, the young, the male and the female, the learned professions, the scholars, the artisans, the laborer all should ever have at mind our character, our honor, our fame, to watch it with sacred vigils, and to hand it down with tender devotion to our children. And I invoke the Great Father of us all, in His wisdom and goodness, to give to us to so live that not one jot or title of that honor shall be lost in our hands. That honor—the jewel, the life, the soul of this country, must be

loved and defended; it must be cherished and cultivated by true men and true women as the children of Israel guarded and watched the Ark of the Covenant.

The greatest English historian tells us that Isaac, the petty King of Cyprus, when chained, imprisoned and degraded by the Lion Chief of the Crusades, complained that his fetters were of of base material. The grand warrior, in his irony for such ignoble mockery, at once directed that the iron bands should be removed and that shackles of silver should be bound upon his limbs. The little tyrant rejoiced in the sarcastic infamy of the chane. It is said that Lamartine, the beautiful artist of French tragedy, writes that when the Duke D'Enghien, the delicate representative of the declining monarchy of France, was arrested by order of the First Napoleon and confined in the tower of Vincennes, this figure of royal pageantry bore his imprisonment, his perils, his insults with composure, until he discovered that his supper was served to him in plates of pewter, and the appetite of Majesty was only revived when old service of silver was, by the hand of charity, placed on his table. To the great heart of the South how contemptible, how despicable, how inexpressibly infamous, would have been, in our adversities, such forms of consolation. No! Our fellow-countrymen with zealous and burning hearts, realized that defeat—calamity, sorrow—were but the ordeals of virtue, and that the fires that burned our homes and our hearts, should only temper and brighten our patriotism and honor. As the long and intense fires under the earth are said, in their extreme flames, to bring forth the dazzling diamonds, so it has happened and will happen, that in the white heat and agony of the burning coals through which this beautiful land of ours has passed, not only have our chains—our badges of wrong and humiliation, melted from our forms, but all over the ashes and through the bleak beds of our misfortunes and sufferings, are seen in imperishable brightness, the gems, the diamonds, the precious jewels of our virtue. They are, indeed imperishable. I, for one, would not give our virtues, shining in the darkness of our sorrows, for all the crown jewels of the Kings and Queens of the world. In our hearts, gentlemen, let us

cherish, love and preserve them. Let us say to him who should dare to insult them, that they cannot and shall not be obliterated. The Gothes and Vandals overran the best portions of Southern Europe. They burned and demolished, despoiled and robbed the temples of Athens and strove to extinguish the fairest forms of human art. But in after ages, the descendants of those same barbarians, enlightened by the civilization of the conquered, returned to these ruins and there gathered up the fragments of the Doric, the Corinthian architecture. And so in all coming time, if the young men will do their duty, will happen that the examples of our virtues will live, and that the lovers of the brave, the just, the true and the beautiful, the devotees of liberty, the votaries of constitutional government, the pilgrims to shrines of social and personal purity, will come to our altars to find the noblest and loveliest of what is best in the history of human government and society. And now gentlemen, I have in a scattering way, attempted to speak of a few of the many duties that we owe to ourselves and our country, but before I close let me say that we should look into our hearts and commence there the exalted work that we have been speaking of. Our hearts are the altars upon which must burn the fires of our country's liberty and honor. These altars are no longer made of stone and brass. They are composed of immortal emotions and thought. As the best means of preserving our country's honor, let us watch and guard our own; it is the immediate jewels of our souls.

Let the lives of each of us be a record for our country and humanity, and next to and as part of our duty to our God, let us preserve our own characters—always remembering that honor is the armor of the true gentlemen. Keep yours as bright as the diamond, and the jewels, the hearts that adorn your breasts will be the shields that will defend them.