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ADDRESS OF THE

**Hon. Kenneth Rayner,**

*To the Graduating Class at West Point.*

I am aware that apology does not suit the occasion, and yet I owe it to myself to say, that my fears, lest I may fail to meet your expectation, are in proportion to the short notice I have had to prepare for this imposing ceremonial. Yes, imposing I repeat it is—such it must be to you, in all its associations, and such, I assure you, it will ever be with me. This day is the anniversary of the battle of Bunker Hill, and on this day you lay aside the *prætexta* for the *toga virilis*—a ceremony so impressive to the Roman youth—a ceremony honored as a public observance, in the forum or the capital. The scenes through which you have passed, with so much credit to yourselves and pride to your friends and countrymen, were not designed to be a mere idle and amusing ceremony. The rigid examination to which you have lately been subjected in the elements of science and of arts, was not for the purpose of torturing you, or of amusing those, who, under the stern dictates of duty, have made this last trial of your fitness for those services which your country expects at your hands. The severe and trying ordeal through which you have lately passed—since you have passed through it unscathed—should rather be to you a source of rejoicing, since it affords to you an evidence of the high appreciation in which your country holds the services, requiring qualifications such as you have exhibited. And then again, what heartfelt gratification it must afford those who have superintended your instruction, to see their labors crowned with success—whilst at the same time, their duty to their country, that has confided this great trust to them, has been amply fulfilled. The same may be said in regard to physical training, which constitutes so considerable a portion of your instruction here. It is not designed for mere holiday sport, but for development of physical strength and vigor, and especially for the practical application of those great principles in nature, which lie at the foundation of all science. These exercises may appear trivial to some, but he has read history to but little purpose, who does not know that the physical education of youth has ever constituted an important element of the greatness and power of nations! Xenophon informs us that it was owing to the early training of the Persian youth in the management of the horse, that their unrivalled cavalry became the terror of surrounding nations. Another historian informs us that the Scythian ambassador, who laughed in derision when he first witnessed the gymnastic exercises for the Athenian youths, was forcibly reminded by his Athenian companion that it was to this early training youth that the Greeks were enabled to resist the combined efforts of the barbarian world. The young Alexander, when manœuvring his phalanx of Macedonian boys, was already laying the foundation of that career of glory that ultimately carried him in triumph to the Indus; and the young Napoleon, when engaged in his mimic warfare at the school of Brienne, was maturing in embryo those mighty combinations, and strategic operations, at which the world so long stood aghast. In barbarous nations where there is no mental culture, physical training is the only element of strength. It is this that renders the Bedouin of the desert, and the Camanche of the prairies, so terrible in irregular warfare; whilst they are utterly powerless against charging squadrons and impenetrable squares. It was the combination of these two elements of strength, mental cultivation and physical discipline, which developed those peculiar traits in the Grecian character, that have never, perhaps, been equalled since. Their warriors, statesmen, philosophers and poets, thronged to the Olympic games as well to complete in the lists, as to honor these athletæ by their presence; and the crown of victory thus obtained, was equally prized with that of the battle field or with the honors of the forum, the academy or the porch. It is the combination of mental and physical discipline, that constitutes the peculiar excellence of this institution, and you, gentlemen, have now reached that period in life, when reflection and experience cannot fail to teach you how to appreciate the self-denial on the one hand, and that self-reliance on the other, which you may have regarded in the early part of your course as the hard and cruel exactions of unrelenting discipline. Often, no doubt, have you wondered, when mounting guard in inclement weather, when performing in barracks those duties which in domestic life pertain to menial hands, when partaking of that plain and substantial fare, which experience has proven to be most promotive of physical vigor and conducive to health, when debarred the privilege of roaming at pleasure amid this scenery of beauty and grandeur that surrounds you, so tempting to the buoyant heart of youth, that the requirements of that rigid etiquette, so indispensable to military discipline—often, I say, have you doubtless wondered why you should be debarred from those enjoyments known to the *sons of luxury* and of ease. But the benefit of all this severe discipline now begins to dawn upon your minds; and when you are hereafter brought in rude contact with the world and to the discharge of those manly duties which your country expects of you, you will appreciate its value in its full force. You will then see that not only has "adversity its uses," to use an idea of the great English bard, but that, being taught the duties incident to adversity in the days of prosperity, better enables us to bear the burdens and adapt ourselves to the exigencies of fortune, should adversity and its trials afterwards beset us in our journey along the pathway of life. You will then be the better enabled to appreciate the trials and difficulty of those to whom your country entrusted your education; how they have viewed with pride and pleasure your proficiency and good conduct, and how their hearts have been rent with pain in being compelled to visit with their disapprobation your aberrations from the line of duty. Instead of looking on them as hard task-masters, you will wonder at their generous forbearance, and your hearts will swell with gratitude and affection for those men, who laid the superstructure of your usefulness and your fame, upon such a solid and enduring foundation. (Immense applause by the cadets.) And when, hereafter, in the discharge of your professional duties, whether in the military service of your country, or in the pursuits of civil life, you shall be subjected to hardship and endurance, whether bivouacking on the enemy's country, or defending our own flag on our own soil—whether exposed to the privations of garrison duty, on our extended frontiers, or to the dangers of savage warfare, amid the solitudes of our western forests—whether to the pestilential fevers of our Atlantic coast and alluvial streams, or pioneering the way of civilization over our rugged mountains—whether suffering from the pangs of hunger and thirst on distant marches, or enduring the tedium and inactivity of life in camp—whether called to serve your country amid the snows of Wisconsin, the burning sands of Texas, the vast plains of Minnesota and Nebraska, or the gorges and defiles of California and Oregon—your memories will recur with pleasure and delight to your schoolboy days at West Point, where you were taught those habits of self-denial and self-dependence, which enable you to battle with the elements, and which nerved your arms and emboldened your hearts for a conflict with the trials of a soldier's life. (Applause.) In the course of my observation of my duties here, I have been forcibly struck with the fact, how entirely subordinate the ornamental is made to the useful in the course of instruction at West Point. I mean no disparagement to the collegiate institutions of our country—so far from it, we have a cause to feel proud of the high position those institutions have elevated and are still elevating the standard of learning amongst us. But in common with all other collegiate institutions of the world, their main purpose seems to be to convert youths into men—whereas, the main object here at West Point seems to be to prepare youths for the discharge of those duties which devolve upon them when they become to be men. This system of instruction I regard to be, not only in conformity with the laws of development and progress founded on natural principles, but also in strict adaptation to the spirit of the age, and the genius of America, while the philosophy of the schools had for ages fettered the human mind in regard to the duty of man and the means of arriving at truth, the enlightened judgment of the world wherever opinion is free, has been fast verging to the conclusion that the duty of man consists in being useful to his fellows, and that truth is to be arrived at not through *a priori* assumptions, but by a process of inductive experience.

A government in acting on this system, is bound to aid in developing and applying for public use, the talents and energies, and virtues of all, without respect to the conditions of birth, fortune, or social position. How beautifully and harmoniously is the system of education and discipline which you have been taught here, calculated to conduce to this end. You owe your good fortune in first obtaining admission here, and in this day reaching the goal of your long cherished hopes, to none of those adventitious influences to which I have adverted. The object of your country in sending you here, was to make you useful to your fellow countrymen. Those entrusted with your education have been governed by this same great cardinal principle. They have, in nicely balanced scales, weighed the labors, the achievements, and obedience to duty, of all and every one of you. The mode of your selection, and the method of your instruction, are a most beautiful reflex of the nature and working of our free institutions. There is no royal road of birth or position to admission here—and I presume bitter experience has thoroughly taught every one of you that there is no royal road to learning here. (Great applause.) There is no inequality recognized here, but that of merit. The very uniform which you wear, your restriction to the same kind of fare, of quarters, of obedience to authority, all serve to impress on you the great truth, that equal merit will secure to you equal honors—that up that steep ascent, from the top of which "fame's proud temple shines afar," the road is broad enough for every one of you to march abreast. And then again, what a striking lesson is taught you, by all the associations connected with your course of instruction here. Have you prospects of wealth and independence at home, which render all effort at pecuniary gain on your parts unnecessary! Here you have been practically taught the moral truth, that money is valuable only as a means to the attainment of lawful ends—that its mere possession entitles no one to superior rank over his fellow—and that knowledge and virtue are far more desirable than California's mines. On the other hand, are any of you poor in this world's goods! Be not discouraged, (sensation,) in the position you now occupy, and in the possession of those attainments which secured to you that position, you have that which is far "more precious than rubies;" a friend, of which neither the world or misfortune can deprive you; a treasure, which the wise and good appreciate much more highly, than rents or dividends, lands or herds, or fields, rich for the harvest. (Great applause.) Have you high social position at home, where the honors and amenities of influential friends and fashionable life avail you? Here you have been taught the good moral lesson, that these advantages, desirable and pleasant as they may be, should never allow you to look down with disdain upon the plain obscurity of humble and unpretending life.

So that you see, gentlemen, the occasion, if properly considered, speaks to all and each of you, the same language of encouragement and hope—the same excitement to "deeds of high and noble daring." You, from this day, enter on that career of usefulness, to which your country has called you, and for which it claims your genius, your attainments, and your moral worth. The other collegiate institutions of the country teach an education merely preparatory to the study of a profession. Here you have, in four short years, received not only your education, but your profession too. You have performed Herculean labors, I admit, but yet your task of usefulness has just commenced. You will soon be called on to apply practically, and for useful ends, either in the military or civil line of your profession, those great principles of mathematical and scientific deduction, the technicalities of which may have often puzzled you, and the uses of which you have, no doubt, often wondered at in your hours of study, but the importance of which will burst upon your minds in striking force and exhilirating beauty in the practical details of your profession. It is your good fortune to live in an age the peculiar characteristic of which marks the dominion of mind over matter. In order to control matter efficiently, an acquaintance with the unchanging laws that govern the whole material world is indispensable.—The principles of curves and of angles, of material forces, of chemical combinations, of light and shade, are the very same, whether demonstrated on the black board, or practically applied in the revolutions of the battle-field, the manœuvres of strategy, the spanning of rivers, the delineation of nature on the speaking canvass, the measuring the courses and orbits of the stars—in fact the entire subjection of the elements to human control, whether in defending ourselves or in assailing our foes; in developing the resources of our own country, or in ministering to the wants and comforts of man. Yes, gentlemen, yours is indeed a high calling, an ennobling profession. In this age of rapid progress and startling innovation the demand for a knowledge of applying the laws and principles of science to the arts, and to the pursuits of industrial life, is constantly increasing, and is far in advance of the supply. In this age, Commerce is universal queen; her genius presides over the councils of civilized nations; she has been, for years, their surety or the bond of peace; and some supposed or pretended violation of her rights and privileges will probably be the first signal for letting loose the elements of destruction that have been accumulating for years in the European world. It is the commercial spirit of this utilitarian age which is tunneling mountains, bridging rivers, exploring mines, rearing workshops, levelling forests, excavating docks—in fact, waging a perpetual conflict with the obstacles of nature. In doing this, science must direct what muscle and sinew execute. This great field of mental labor is open before you. Your country needs your assistance, not only in fighting her battles against foreign foes, but in developing her resources, and in strengthening her power. Take any of the great sciences, in which you have been so thoroughly taught. Military engineering, the highest department of military science, is designed not only to enable you to carry the enemy's strongholds, but to do so at the least possible loss of life, and expenditure of time and treasure. Paradoxical as it may seem, a feeling of humanity here intervenes to soften the horrors, and lessen the costs of war. Astronomy is not now studied, as with the Chaldee and the Egyptian, for the pastime of the solitary shepherd's contemplation, or as the groundwork of priestly imposture, but for the more ennobling purpose of expanding the mind and sublimating the conceptions, by communion with the stars, and the more useful object of measuring distance, economising time, establishing international landmarks, and by measuring the courses of the spheres, to enable those who sail under our flag to carry it with safety and despatch over the trackless deep. (Applause.) The uses of chemistry are not to amuse the lonely student in his solitary tower, to minister to the hopes of the miser in his search for the transmutation of metals, or to the delusions of the alchymist in his search for the philosopher's stone, but for the more noble purpose of investigating the hidden uses of nature's products in applying them to the useful arts, to the relief of human suffering, and the prolongation of human life. You have not been taught drawing, such an important element of instruction here, merely to beguile your idle hours, but for useful and practical ends. Maps are not more indispensable to a knowledge of geography, than is drawing in the various pursuits of your profession. The laws that govern light and shade, the relations of objects at a distance, the combinations of the forces that regulate machinery, in all these and many others, the difficulties of vision can only be supplied to the mind's eye by the lineations and groupings of the pencil. It is from the charts and drawings of the typographical engineer, that in extended operations, the commander is enabled to exercise that wonderful *coup d'œil*, which often terminates a campaign by some striking *coup de main*. How forcibly exemplified this was in the campaign which terminated at Waterloo. Napoleon saw with the inspiration of genius, that Quatre Bras was the key to the campaign. Hence Napoleon's positive orders to Ney to seize this position at the earliest possible moment, and to hold it at all hazards. But Wellington also saw the same thing, hence his orders, issued from the ball room of the Duchess of Richmond, for his troops to concentrate on Quatre Bras, not by divisions, but by batallions, by companies and by squads. Had Napoleon's orders been strictly complied with, Ney might have held Quatre Bras with twenty-five thousand men against the whole English army. With the balance of his forces he might have fallen upon the rear of the Prussians at Ligny, and annihilated them. Grouchy's force could thus have been made available at Waterloo, instead of being sent to watch the Prussians—the battle of Waterloo, might have terminated differently, and the fate of the world have been changed. Of course it must have been owing to the labors of their engineers that these great commanders were enabled to see at a glance the relations between distant points, and the natural obstacles intervening. Carry yourselves, in imagination, to the headquarters of both, on the night previous to the battles of Ligny and Quatre Bras—each of them surrounded by his corps of engineers, who were pointing out, on the charts and drawings spread out before them, the strategic relations between different points, and proving by mathematical demonstration the great importance of getting first in position at Quatre Bras—then think of the results—and you will readily see the great importance to a military man of the use of the pencil. (Deep interest manifested, and loud applause.) Or if, perchance, some of you may possess a spark of that "fire divine," which placed a Raphael, a Corregio, a Titian, a Vandyke, among "the few immortal names that were not born to die," what a field you have before you! How many heart stirring subjects in our colonial and revolutionary history are there yet to be immortalized on canvass—subjects calculated to arouse your patriotism as well as fire your genius. Who would not rather have the enduring fame of him under whose instruction you have sat, whose genius speaks from the canvass in the great picture of "The embarkation of the Pilgrims," which adorns the rotunda, than all the ephemeral notoriety which is effervescing in the two ends of the national capitol! (Very deep feeling manifested.—Mr. Weir was present, and all eyes at once turned towards him, while his own, moistened by a tear, fell to the floor—his looks betraying that almost feminine modesty which is so often allied to genius.) And so, gentlemen, in regard to all the other great branches of science which you have been taught here. Their object is to make you useful to your country and to your fellow men. I wish not to be misunderstood. I do not design to proclaim war against the graces and the ornaments of life. Far from it. The graces and ornaments of character are in most of the relations of life, a component part of the useful. Mere manner is more important than in the days of chivalry, in proportion to the substitution of moral for physical force, in controlling the destinies of men and of nations. A proper regard for the courtesies and amenities of life is not only indispensable to the character of a gentleman, but also to the application of high mental and moral worth to the public good. Humanity, generosity, modesty, in short, all the private virtues known to social life are especially the province of the soldier, and should serve as landmarks to his usefulness and fame. Whatever refines the feelings, purifies the heart, and elevates the conceptions, appertains to the useful. It is a mistaken idea to suppose that severe discipline in mathematical and scientific induction, is either designed or calculated to render the heart callous or the feelings crabbed. There is nothing in it inconsistent with the most sensitive refinement, and the most tender and poetic sentiments. Far be it from me then to wish to dispel that poetry of feeling, that halo of hope and of joy, which beams in your hearts and glows in your faces. I would not, if I could deface that *couleur de roze* with which it is the nature of youth to paint the future of life, on first entering on the duties of manhood. There is enough in the associations connected with this spot, to kindle the fire and excite the enthusiasm of youthful feeling in your bosoms. Here you have for four years been treading on classic ground.—There is here a moral lesson, a poetic idea, connected with almost every object that greets your vision. This grand and imposing scenery is well calculated to elevate your conceptions "through nature up to nature's God," and to excite your reverence for Him, who "fashioned the everlasting hills." The placid streams that run at your feet, on whose bosom floats the commerce of an empire tells you of the greatness and wonderful resources of that country whose flag and whose honor you have to defend. One of the most striking incidents of our revolutionary history is here brought forcibly to your minds. The delivery of this post to our British foes might have prolonged for years that war of freedom.—The history of Arnold, whose former dwelling is within the scope of your vision, cannot fail to teach you that genius, and bravery, and public service, without high moral worth, and stern devotion to principle, are "as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." (Great sensation.) The ruins of Fort Putnam, which overlook your daily parade, and of Fort Clinton, within the limits of your evening walk, cannot fail to suggest to you the hardy endurance and daring valor of our revolutionary fathers, within whose rude fortifications was often recited the story of our country's wrongs, and which, as long as they are spared by time, are ever reminding us of how much we owe to the giants of the heroic age. The legends connected with Kosciusko's haunts must suggest to you how often, when reclining on his favorite rock, with the silver Hudson rolling beneath his feet, he wept at the thought of his country's fall, and looked forward to the time when young America, then struggling for freedom, would cause the tyrants of the earth to tremble. The monumental marble commemorative of the melancholy end of Dade and his comrades, while it extorts from you a tear for their fate, consoles you with the reflection that if a like destiny should be yours, the gratitude of your country, and the affection of your companions in arms, will not suffer your names and your exploits to be consigned to oblivion.—(Great sensation particulary among the officers.) Surrounded by such associations as you have been for years, there is little danger of your thoughts becoming too prosaic, or the current of your feelings running in too stagnant a stream. Indulge, then, my young friends, the impulses of gladness, and of joy, to their full extent. Enjoy the luxury of anticipation in meeting the welcome and kind greeting of friends, of family, and of kindred. Drink deep of the draft of pleasure, at the idea of donning the livery of your country—in exchanging the musket for the sword—in passing from the duties of obedience to those of command.

Revel in the bright hopes of revisiting the scenes of your childhood—in witnessing a father's pride, a mother's love, a brother's sports, a sister's enchanting smiles; or if perchance the face of some fair one, who may have pined at your absence, is wreathed with smiles at the prospect of your return, quaff the cup of nectar to the very bottom—give full scope to the impulse of "love's young dream." It is an ennobling feeling, a sentiment hallowing to the heart and chastening to the mind. (The applause here became perfectly uproarious, and the intense excitement of the cadets showed that the speaker had touched the 'electric chain' with a potent hand.) All these rewards you have now, by your constancy, your perseverance, your devotion to duty. And yet, bright as is the rainbow of hope, that spans the firmament of your future, I ought perhaps to remind you that you will not always find the pathway of life strewn with roses. Trial and difficulty, disappointment and sorrow, are the common lot of all the sons of men. Success and honor, and fame in every relation of life, are only to be attained by paying the price of fortitude, of patience, and of toil. The curse of man's first disobedience, "that in the sweat of his brow he should eat his bread," is the condition upon which success is promised in every human pursuit. And although you may not have to "till the ground" with your hands literally—yet you will find, that every blessing which Providence has vouchsafed to man, is upon the condition of some corresponding sacrifice. The rewards of honor and of glory in this life no less than those of the Christian's triumph, are to be reached by a constant struggle with the elements of evil—by "fighting the good fight" of duty, and "keeping the faith" of principle and of truth.—When brought in contact with the world, its selfishness, its cunning, its deceit, its jealousy, its envy, and the thousand other "ills that flesh is heir to," beware of the reaction, of suddenly waking up to the sad realities of life. Think not with the poet, that "this world is all a fleeting show, to man's illusion given;" seek no retreat from disappointment in the gloomy reveries of the misanthrope, but, as difficulties thicken, let your motto be "fight on, fight ever;" and console yourself with the reflection of the martyr, "the greater the trial, the greater the crown." And, if "it needs be offences must come," be sure to avoid the "wo" pronounced in holy writ against "those from whom they do come." Especially, let me admonish you to make honor your polar star, as you journey on along the voyage of life. Worship honor with the idolatory of the Parsee for the rising sun.—Suffer not the uniform of your country to be tarnished by any act that can bring reproach upon your names. Let the eagle on your button be emblematic of your conduct, as it is of your country's pride. Let your thoughts and your aspirations soar aloft in the pure and etherial regions of honor, integrity and truth, far above the low impulses and vulgar prejudices of ignoble souls. And if, perchance, slander should assail you, live it down by the rectitude of your lives, till its authors shall hang their heads in shame. (Enthusiastic applause.) The crusader when starting to the Holy Land, with his sword belted around him by the lady of his love, took not a more solemn vow on the altar of honor, than that, in which you this day consecrate your lives to the service and honor of your country. (Applause.) The sword of your country is itself the very livery of honor. (Great applause.) And whether it shall in your hands drink deep of the blood of the enemies of your country, or whether its hilt shall ever continue enwreathed with the garlands of peace—whether after the carnage of battle, or in the quiet evening of life, let it be returned to the scabbard without a single stain of dishonor upon its blade. (Very great sensation and applause.) You will thus be enabled to preserve it for your children, and hand it down as an heirloom to your posterity, as the living witness of the valor and virtue of an honored sire. An American officer has a high responsibility resting on him, unknown to that of any other nation in the civilized world. In other nations, having large standing armies, their strength and power are mainly physical, depending upon numbers. There the want of the *morale* is compensated for in the *physique*. In our country, where neither public opinion nor necessity countenances large standing armies in time of peace, our officers constitute the true element of our strength. This is strictly in accordance with the character of our free institutions. Our institutions being founded in, and depending for their duration on the affections of the people, we rely, in the conscious security of our strength, on the patriotism of the masses, as the element of physical force. But as mental and moral cultivation are not weeds of natural growth, we must rely upon the professional elevation of our officers as the main bulwark of our strength, in order to make our physical force effective when the hour of crisis comes. Many striking illustrations of the truth of this were afforded by the incidents of the late war with Mexico. Mere daring and undisciplined valor could encounter danger, confront batteries, and pour out blood freely. But it was soon discovered that reckless exposure in the field constituted no evidence of fitness for command. It was for the eye of science to discover at a glance the pivot points of battle, to calculate with precision how great expenditure of life was necessary to effect the desired ends, and to know when the calls of mercy required the hand of havoc to be stayed. There was not a battle-field from Palo Alto to Molina del Rey on which the elements of science and skill taught here did not tell with effective force. Such great results with such slender means, and such comparatively trifling cost, could not have been effected, but for the scientific instruction and hardy discipline obtained at West Point. Her sons poured out their blood in torrents, many of them sleep in their parent dust—but they fell like Wolfe in the arms of victory—the tears of their comrades bedewed their graves, and history will record their exploits for the admiration of posterity. Of the survivors, I would not speak of the fact, that many have had filched from them the honors that were their due, by those bearing more lofty titles, but that history, with its pen of steel, will do them justice, and that the sober reflection of the nation is beginning to acknowledge their claims. What must have been the feelings of those, at whose feet they sat for instruction here, as the latter read from time to time their gallant achievements, and their melancholy ends. How their hearts must have been wrung with sorrow at the recital of their fate, and then, again, how their bosoms must have swelled with pride, as they witnessed the crowning triumph of their labors. (Very apparent feeling.) But to return, the duties, responsibilities and requirements of an American officer, compared with those of other countries, are in proportion to the value and the affection of our people for our glorious institutions, compared with the crumbling and time-worn institutions of the European world. Yes, gentlemen, what a high mission, what a sacred duty is yours. You are the chosen guardians of your country's freedom, her independence, and her glory. Yours is a sacred deposite in having to protect and maintain the dear-bought privileges purchased by the blood of our revolutionary fathers—to defend the soil watered with their blood, and in which repose their honored dust. To you is entrusted the honor of that flag, which has floated in triumph over so many fields of carnage; and rather than suffer it to trail in dishonor, you should swear by the ashes of your sires that you will find your winding sheets in its folds. (Deafening applause.) Next to liberty, let me admonish you to love and reverence this Union. As an American, you can have but one country—that country is the Union of these States, as symbolized by the stars and stripes. In order to preserve our freedom at home, and maintain our position abroad, these States, like the Graces, as at present, should ever remain entwined by the arms of affection, in harmonious support of each other.—Cultivate your love of the Union then as a sentiment. Without it liberty itself can be contemplated only as an abstraction. (Applause.) 'Tis this which gives us our identity among the nations—which enables the American to walk erect in foreign lands, with the proud consciousness of a title, scarcely less prized than that of Roman citizen, in Rome's most palmy days. 'Tis this which carries our flag in triumph over every sea, and which is the beacon of hope to the oppressed in every land. Under its fostering care and protection, we have subdued a continent from the dominion of savage solitude, and carried the blessings of civilization, science, religion, liberty, and law, from ocean to ocean. Let it be pursued, and whose heart does not swell with the rapture of patriotic pride, as he contemplates our future destiny! Destroy it, and whose gaze is strong enough to pierce the dark future that lies beyond! At what shrine shall we worship, to what Mecca shall we turn—when the dome of that temple, whose doric pillars rest on the Alleghanies and the Rocky Mountains, that is now bathed in hues of living light, shall be shrouded in perpetual darkness! What American soldier can, without horror, contemplate that future, when he must snatch the eagled button from his coat, break, in despair, that sword which he received for his country's defence, and be compelled to exclaim, in the agony of his soul, "alas, I have no country left." (Great sensation and applause.) Next to the injunctions of holy writ, study, reverence and maintain the constitution of your country. Upon its broad and deep foundations the fabric of our Union and our freedom rests. No less sacred should it be in your affections, than was in the hearts of the Athenians, the fabled palladium, which they supposed to have fallen from Olympus, as the peculiar gift of their goddess. The constitution was the gift of a heroic ancestry. Let it be your pride and your duty to maintain and defend it. Let it be preserved pure and unimpaired, and the fabric of our free institutions, whether from foreign violence or domestic discord, may rock "from turret to foundation stone"—yet, like that "house" spoken of in the great sermon on the mount, which "was founded on a rock," it will stand firm and secure, defying the "floods and storms" of the political elements. The dying appeal of Galgachus to the ancient Britons, was—"Think of your country, think of your posterity." Should it ever be your destinies to fall in defence of your country's rights and liberties, let your dying appeal to your comrades be—"Strike for the constitution which we received from our fathers—strike for the Union, the last refuge of our hopes." (Great applause.) In conclusion, gentlemen, let me admonish you to cultivate a holy reverence for the christian religion. I speak not of it as it is expounded in creeds, or taught in sectarian schools, but in reference to those moral precepts and everlasting truths which paint, as with a sunbeam, the duty of man to God and his fellow-men. I do not speak of it in the sense in which the Pharisee practised obedience to the Mosaic ritual—of regularly paying tithe of "mint, anise, and cummin," and neglecting the more weighty matters of the law, but in its comprehensive injunction of the duty of man, to "work justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before God. I would not vindicate the philosophy of the ancients—but compared with the sermon on the mount, it is all Cimmerian darkness, compared to the blaze of the midday sun. The Christian religion is the great civilizer of the world—the subduer of the passions, refiner of the affections, the comforter of the afflicted, the rewarder of the just, the teacher of those sublime virtues, which approximate man most nearly to the Author of his being. It not only tells us our duty to our fellows and our God, but it teaches us the true secret of patriotism, the condition of national greatness and renown. It enforces in its precepts the great moral lesson, which history has inscribed in letters of light upon the ruin of past ages, and the crumbling monuments of fallen dynasties—that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

## ABOLITION IN DISGUISE.

There are not many Southern people who take the trouble to examine very particularly or carefully the various tracts and other similar publications issued by the Northern press and which are strewn broadcast over the land. Some of these issues are designed to accomplish very different purposes from their *ostensible* ones. We have no fear of the *newspapers* of the fanatic school. They can do but little mischief, because the public mind is well informed as to their anti-Slavery, Free Soil opinions, and therefore is sufficiently guarded. We never dread a serpent when we see it fully exposed to view before us. We can turn aside or crush it, at our option. But we are not so safe against the reptile when he is concealed in the grass through which we are walking. We have been induced to write thus by noticing in a little New York monthly, which bears the popular name of the "Youth's Temperance Advocate," and which, we suppose, has a large circulation at the South, a very dexterously inserted tribute of praise to Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, meant, no doubt, as an Abolition lesson to be engrafted on the young minds to which the "Advocate" is addressed. In that paper of June 1st, on the last page, will be found the article to which we allude, which runs as follows:

"MRS. HARRIET B. STOWE IN ENGLAND.—The talented authoress of Uncle Tom's Cabin has come to great notoriety and honor in the world. She has been invited to England; and there she has been received and honored for her work amid the acclamations of thousands. In Liverpool she had a purse of small collections, given to her, amounting to 135 pounds sterling or 600 dollars; and in Glasgow, the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw made her a speech, and a large entertainment was made for her. In Edinburgh she was received with great enthusiasm; and from that city she will go to London, where she will be received with greater honors than are bestowed on princes. There is in the breasts of men a love of freedom and humanity; and they who labor wisely for its promotion, will be rewarded. The story of Uncle Tom and little Eva has drawn tears from many eyes, and will continue to do so for a long time to come."

Now, we have the least imaginable objection to people's making fools of themselves if they choose to do so by thus ridiculously attempting to swell an already overflated bubble which will soon burst and leave its present admirers to wonder at their delusion. We care not three straws how the authoress of Uncle Tom is beslavered with the meretricious and nonsensical eulogies of her devotees.—She is not to be blamed half as much as they, for she has a perfect right to make money, if she can, and all she can, out of the simple noddies who choose to buy her book. Juggernaut would have been but a very pitiful and harmless piece of pagan mechanism if it had not been for the wretched creatures who chose to make a God of him, and who thought it to be the quintessence of earthly happiness to be crushed under the wheels of his chariot. But we are digressing. Returning to the subject of our comments, we ask is not the above effusion in the "Advocate" about Mrs. Stowe calculated to produce false and mischievous impressions upon the young mind about Southern slavery? Does it not in terms charge inhumanity upon all the owners of slaves? "There is in the breasts of men a love of freedom and *humanity*," insidiously remarks this paper. Yes, and we tell the author that there is also in the breasts of men another feeling for the manifestation of which we never saw a greater occasion than is presented in this whole Abolition business, viz: a detestation of fraud, falsehood, hypocrisy and imposture—all of which ingredients, to the exclusion of every good one, make up the character of the Abolitionist.—We speak in a general sense, leaving room for a few individual exceptions to our remarks which possibly may be found. We do not believe, however, that more than one in ten thousand of the Abolitionists in the United States or Great Britain entertain for the slave a millionth part of the sympathy which they so loudly and impudently profess. If they did, they certainly would not be, as they are, in close league with the masters—for they buy, sell, eat, drink, wear and enjoy, to the utmost, without any scruple or reservation, the proceeds of slave labor. The truth is, that but for the Abolition looms of New and Old England—but for the ships and capital employed in conveying Southern products to the world's markets, slavery could not support itself. But, on the other hand, were it not for the commerce thus created by slave labor there would be but little profit to the ship owners of the North and in the huge cotton spinning and weaving structures of England, which give prosperity to her cities, employment and food to millions of her people and security and stability to her Government. This one argument is enough for us, in dealing with the Abolitionists, as long as they eat, drink and wear, or in any manner deal in cotton, rice, tobacco, flour, sugar, or any other article of commerce produced at the South, they stand precisely in the same guilty relation towards slavery, that they charge the Southern people with standing in. This is a shirt of Nessus upon their backs, and we defy them to tear it off without tearing off also their skins and the flesh under it to the bone. No, they will never do this. Mad as they are, there is too much method in their madness for them ever voluntarily to subject themselves to nakedness and starvation—to destitution and its sufferings, in order to prove what does not exist viz: the honesty, sincerity and consistency of their avowals in favor of negro slaves. They would sooner see whips and manacles sent by additional ship loads from their harbors to the South, than abandon the personal uses, domestic comforts and rich profits to themselves of slave labor. When an Abolitionist, therefore, inveighs against the South on account of its slavery institution he inveighs in the same breath equally against himself, his neighbors and every Northern community—for one and all, he and they, are alike guilty of a participation in the crime, if it be one, as they falsely and maliciously charge. They are individually and collectively, daily enjoying the fruits of slave labor in a hundred shapes, and with what sort of consistency can one of them throw a Stone at the South!—*Pet. Intelligencer.*

SINGULAR LAKES.—The Crateur Lakes, in the town of Manlius, Onondaga county, N. Y., are curiosities, and are supposed to be of volcanic origin. They are, by the inhabitants about there, called the Green Lakes. One of them is on the top of a hill, and is in the form of a tea-cup. The banks are two hundred feet high, and the water four hundred feet deep. The water appears of a deep green, but when taken up in a glass, it is perfectly clear and transparent. Trees and limbs which fall into the water, soon become encrusted with a bright green substance, which, on being exposed to the air, becomes hard. The timber decays and leaves this incrustation in the shape of hollow tubes. Wood saturated with this water and burned, emits a strong odor of sulphur. A farmer who resides near, once heard a great rush of water, and looking round saw the lake rising over the banks. He was alarmed and fled with his team, but the water soon receded to its usual level, and he returned to his furrow, more puzzled than instructed.

MAJOR-GENERAL RILEY.—The telegraph has already announced the death of this distinguished officer. He was a native of Maryland, and served with distinction in the war of 1812. From the post of Ensign, to which he was appointed on the 19th of January, 1813, he rose by regular gradation, to the rank he held at his death. His services in Mexico were of a distinguished character. At Contreras he led the assaulting party on both days, and finally carried the works with the bayonet in a style which has rarely been surpassed. During the whole of these eventful days, his Brigade endured hardships, and performed actions worthy of a place beside the wildest records of chivalry. Gen. Persifor F. Smith thus speaks of it:

"The opportunity afforded to Col. Riley by his position was seized by that gallant veteran with all the skill and energy for which he is distinguished. The charge of his noble Brigade down the slope in full view of friend and foe, unchecked even for a moment, until he planted all his colors upon their farthest works, was a spectacle that animated the army to the boldest deeds!"

Similar, says one of his biographers, was the conduct of Col. Riley in the battle along the aqueducts leading to the capital. He stormed some of the enemy's positions, and on the night of the 13th of December, 1847, had arrived before the principal gate. He entered Mexico next morning in company with the Commander-in-chief, and remained for some time at the head of his troops in the capital. He was afterwards appointed by President Polk, Military Governor of California, and called the famous Convention that adopted in November, 1849, the Constitution which was submitted to Congress; and by act of that body consequent thereon, in September, 1850, California was admitted into full membership as one of the U. States.—*N. O. Bee.*

AN INGENIOUS DEVICE.—We mentioned some weeks since the method pursued to get clear of the carcass of a dead horse by a man in Halifax county; this week we have heard of a way adopted by a Warren man to get clear of a grassy patch, which, we think, is sufficiently novel to bear telling, and is more ingenious than that adopted by the Halifax man in his dilemma. A friend of ours living a certain number of miles from Warrenton, planted his potatoes this spring, and, from some cause neglected to work them until the grass had grown as thick on the ground as the hairs on a dog's back. It was a heavy job to clean out that potatoe patch—our friend felt it to be so, and dreaded to undertake it, so he just made hills on another spot of ground, dug up his potatoes that had began to grow in the old patch, and set them out in the new one; thus getting round the necessity of weeding the old one.

He ought to take out a patent immediately for his plan.—*Warrenton News.*