



Carey in 1825 by John Neagle (1796-1865)

A Stroll Through *THE AMERICAN MUSEUM (1787-1792)*

Magazines, that is monthly or quarterly publications, first made their appearance in North America in about the middle of the eighteenth century, and were usually modeled on, if not outright copies of, the British *Gentleman's Magazine* (est. 1731) and *London Magazine* (1732). And if patriotism was not a sufficient incentive for American magazine publishers and editors to attempt something original, charges of imitation, cultural subservience, and absence of literary creativity in the America were. At best, and this was rare, American magazines of this period rarely stayed afloat for more than a few years; with a little over a year, if that long, being the more common length of a run. If literary historians of later generations are to be believed, these efforts were largely failures; and there is no lack of sneering.¹ Although the overall picture these pundits present is a bit distorting and rather unfair, their harshness is not without grounds. For wading through such volumes of periodicals today is no easy task and requires immense patience of a casual reader. Eighteenth century magazines have been characterized as a collection, storehouse, assemblage of widely diverse topics and literary forms, and there is so much there -- with topics ranging from botany, biology, agriculture, history, poetry and literature, politics, government, foreign affairs, cooking, psychology, trade, numismatics, medicine, zoology, entomology, manufacturing, meteorology, oceanography, etc. -- that perusing them is not unlike trying to digest elegant chaos.

This said, if one *is* willing to spend the time digging -- *mining* being an very apt metaphor for this kind of endeavor -- odds are good that efforts of finding something interesting and unique will not go unrewarded. Furthermore, too often overlooked is that the magazines were an effective way of edifying the public and bringing them in on subjects otherwise left to specialists, and to that extent they were an incalculably important educational and democratizing influence. By means of them, everyone came together to learn and discuss, and in this way they aided in informing and, in turn, empowering people to become better citizens at a peculiarly pivotal juncture in Western history. At the same time, in doing so they provided the necessary trial and error needed for publishers to learn how to improve them, and thus laid the foundation for later higher quality journals, such as *The Portfolio*, *The Analectic Magazine* and *The North American Review*. On the other hand, it might be argued that aiming towards higher standards may have resulted in leaving much of the previous and more democratic readership behind.

American magazines published in the eighteenth century, predominantly (but not exclusively) issued out of Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, and came under titles such as: *The Massachusetts Magazine*; *The American Apollo*; *The United States Magazine*; *The Universal Asylum and Columbian Magazine*; *The Worcester Magazine*; *The Monthly Magazine and American Review*; *The American Moral and Sentimental Magazine*; *The National Magazine*, and *The Omnium Gatherum*. But possibly the most

¹ e.g., "No literary periodical before 1800 deserves individual consideration." William B. Cairns, *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, vol. 2 (1918), edited by Trent, et al., ch. XX "Magazines, Annuals, and Gift-books, 1783-1850," p. 162.

"Because material was not copyrighted, editors saw no reason not to fill their pages with *pirated* selections." (my italics) Michael T. Gilmore, *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, Vol. One: 1590-1820 (1994), Bercovitch editor, p. 559.

prominent is Irish-Catholic immigrant and Philadelphia publisher Mathew Carey's (1760-1839) *The American Museum, or Repository of Ancient and Modern Fugitive Pieces, &c. Prose and Poetical*. Along with *Columbian Magazine*, the *Museum* was the most popular American periodical of its brief day; though with most of its contents being simply re-published pieces and articles distilled from and that first appeared separately in newspapers.

During a period of his life when he was writing and speaking in behalf of Irish and Irish Catholic emancipation and getting himself into trouble with British authorities in the process, Carey made the acquaintance of Benjamin Franklin while in Paris. He also met there Lafayette who recommended him to George Washington; while providing him with funds to buy him a printing press in America. Upon landing in this country and setting himself up in Philadelphia in 1784, Carey commenced a fairly successful and lasting career as a publisher; while, as *both* idealist and savvy propagandist, playing an important role in helping to shape the consciousness and values of the fledgling nation; overtime putting forth from his printing house numerous books (including a dictionary), pamphlets, maps; as well as several periodicals.

The following are some gleanings of this transplanted Hibernian's *American Museum*, and which, it is hoped, will serve to prove, or at least aid in proving, my aforesaid thesis for those willing to demand of themselves requisite patience with such magazines: "*Seek and ye shall find.*"²

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*Account of the life and death of Edward Drinker, who died on the 17th of November, 1782. In a letter to a friend: said to have been written by Benjamin Rush, M. D. &c.*

EDWARD DRINKER was born on the 24th of December 1680, in a small cabin, near the present corner of Walnut and Second-streets, in the city of Philadelphia. His parents came from a place called Beverly, in Massachusetts-bay. The banks of the Delaware, on which the city of Philadelphia now stands, were inhabited, at the time of his birth, by Indians, and few Swedes and Hollanders. He has often talked to his companions of picking whortle berries, and catching rabbits, on spots now the most improved and populous of the city. He recollected the second time William Penn came to Pennsylvania, and used to point to the place where the cabin stood, in which he and his [Quaker] friends, that accompanied him, were accommodated, upon their arrival. At twelve years of age he went to Boston, where he served his apprenticeship to a cabinet-maker. In the year 1745, he returned to Philadelphia, with his family, where he lived until the time of his death. He was four times married, and had eighteen children, all of whom were by his first wife. At one time of his life, he sat down, at his own table, with fourteen of his children. Not long before his death, he heard of the birth of a grandchild, the fifth in succession to himself.

He retained all his faculties till the last year of his life. Even his memory, so early and generally diminished by age, was but little impaired. He not only remembered the incidents of his childhood or youth<sup>3</sup>, but the events of the latter years; and so faithful was his memory to him, that his son has informed

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<sup>2</sup> A sometime author and editorialist in his own right while America, Carey's personal productions include: *Information for Europeans who are Disposed to Migrate to the United States* (1790); *A short account of the malignant fever, lately prevalent in Philadelphia: with a statement of the proceedings that took place on the subject in different parts of the United States* (1793); *Observations on Dr. Rush's Enquiry into the origin of the late epidemic fever in Philadelphia* (1793); *A short account of Algiers, and of its several wars against Spain, France, England, Holland, Venice, and other powers of Europe, from the usurpation of Barbarossa and the invasion of the Emperor Charles V. to the present time: With a concise view of the origin of the rupture between Algiers and the United States* (1794); *A pill for Porcupine* [pen name of English political writer and activist William Cobbett]: *being a specific for an obstinate itching which that hireling has long contracted for lying and calumny.: containing, a vindication of the American, French, and Irish characters against his scurrilities* (1796), and *Miscellaneous trifles in prose* (1796). For further biographical information, see the Duyckinck's *Cyclopedia of American Literature*, vol. 1.

<sup>3</sup> \* [Footnote in the original by, presumably, Benjamin Rush] It is remarkable that the incidents of childhood and youth are seldom remembered or called forth until old age. I have sometimes been led, from this and other circumstances, to suspect, that nothing is ever lost that is lodged in the memory, however it may be buried for a time by a variety of causes. How often do we find the transactions of early life, which we had reason to suppose were lost from the mind forever, revived in our memories by certain accidental sights or sounds, particularly by certain notes or airs in music? I have known a young man speak French fluently, when drunk, that could not put two sentences of that language together, when sober. He had been taught perfectly, when a boy, but had forgotten it from disuse. The countess of L—v—I was nursed by a Welsh woman, from whom she learned to speak her language, which she soon forgot, after she had acquired the French, which was her mother tongue. In the delirium of a fever many years afterwards, she was heard to mutter

me he never heard him tell the same story twice, but to different persons, and in different companies. His eyesight failed him, many years before his death, but his hearing was uniformly perfect and unimpaired. His appetite was good till within a few days before his death. He generally eat [sic] a hearty breakfast of a pint of tea or coffee, as soon as he got out of his bed, with bread and butter in proportion. He eat likewise at eleven o'clock, and never failed to eat plentifully at dinner of the grossest solid food. He drank tea in the evening, but never eat any supper; he had lost all his teeth thirty years before his death, which was occasioned, his son says, by drawing excessive hot smoke of tobacco into his mouth; but the want of suitable mastication of his food, did not prevent its speedy digestion, nor impair his health. Whether the gums, hardened by age, supplied the place of his teeth in a certain degree, or whether the juices of the mouth and stomach became so much more acrid by time, as to perform the office of dissolving the food more speedily and more perfectly, I know not, but I have often observed, that old people are most disposed to excessive eating, and that they suffer fewest inconveniencies from it. He was inquisitive after news in the last years of his life. His education did not lead him to increase the stock of his ideas any other way. But it is a fact well worth attending to, that old age, instead of diminishing, always increases the desire of knowledge. It must afford some consolation to those who expect to be old, to discover, that the infirmities to which the decays of nature expose the human body, are rendered more tolerable by the enjoyments that are to be derived from the appetite for sensual and intellectual food.

He was remarkably sober and temperate. Neither hard labour, nor company, nor the usual afflictions of human life, nor the wastes of nature, ever led him to an improper or excessive use of strong drink. For the last twenty-five years of his life, he drank twice every day of toddy, made with two table spoons full of spirit, in half a pint of water. His son, a man of fifty nine years of age, told me that he had never seen him intoxicated. The time and manner in which he used spiritous liquors, I believe, contributed to lighten the weight of his years, and probably to prolong his life. "Give wine to him that is of a heavy heart, and strong drink to him that is ready to perish with age, as well as with sickness. Let him drink and forget his sorrow, and remember his misery no more."

He enjoyed an uncommon share of health, insomuch that in the course of his long life, he never was confined more than three days to his bed. He often declared, that he had no idea of that most distressing pain, called the head ach[e]. His steep was interrupted a little in the last years of his life with a deduction on his breast, which produced what is commonly called the old man's cough.

The character of this aged citizen was not summed up in his negative quality of temperance; he was a man of the most amiable temper; old age had not curdled his blood; he was uniformly cheerful and kind to every body; his religious principles were as steady, as his morals were pure. He attended public worship about thirty years in the rev. dr. Sproat's church, and died in a full assurance of a happy immortality. The life of this man is marked with several circumstances which perhaps have seldom occurred in the life of an individual; he saw and heard more of those events which are measured by time, than have ever been seen or heard by any man since the age of the patriarchs; he saw the same spot of earth, which at one period of his life was covered with wood and bushes, and the receptacle of beasts and birds of prey, afterwards become the seat of a city not only the first in wealth and arts in the new, but rivalling in both, many of the first cities in the old world. He saw regular streets, where he once pursued a hare; he saw churches rising upon morasses, where he had often heard the croaking of frogs; he saw wharfs and warehouses, where he had often seen Indian savages draw fish from the river for their daily subsistence; and he saw ships of every size and use, in those streams, where he had often seen nothing but Indian canoes; he saw a stately edifice, filled with legislators, astonishing the world with their wisdom and virtue, on the same spot, probably, where he had seen an Indian council fire; he saw the first treaty ratified between the newly confederated powers of America and the ancient monarchy of France, with all the formalities of parchment and seals, the same spot, probably, he once saw William Penn ratify his first and last treaty with the Indians, without the formality of pen, ink, or paper; he saw all the intermediate stages through which a people pass, from the most simple to the highest degree of civilization. He saw the beginning and end of the empire of Great-Britain in Pennsylvania. He had been the subject of successive crowned heads, and afterwards became a willing citizen of a republic; for he embraced the liberties and

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words which none of her family or attendants understood. An old Welsh woman came to see her, who soon perceived that the sounds which were so unintelligible to the family, were the Welsh language. When she recovered, she could not recollect a single word of the language she had spoken in her sickness. I can conceive great advantages may be derived from this retentive power in our memories, in the advancement of the mind towards perfection in knowledge (so essential to its happiness) in a future world.

independence of America in his withered arms, and triumphed in the last year of his life, in the salvation of his country.<sup>4</sup>

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The origin of tobacco: by dr. Franklin.

A Swedish minister took occasion to inform the chiefs of the Susquehannah Indians, in a kind of sermon, of the principal historical facts on which the christian religion is founded; and particularly the fall of our first parents, by eating an apple. When the sermon was over, an old Indian orator replied, "what you have told us is very good; we thank you for coming so far to tell us those things you have heard from your mothers; in return, we will tell you what we heard from ours.

"In the beginning, we had only flesh of animals to eat; and if they failed, we starved; two of our hunters, having killed a deer, and broiled a part of it, saw a young woman descend from the clouds, and seat herself on a hill hard by. Said one to the other, 'It is a spirit, perhaps, that has smelt our venison; let us offer some of it to her.' They accordingly gave her the tongue; she was pleased with its flavour, and said, 'your kindness shall be rewarded; come here thirteen moons hence, and you will find it.' They did so, and found, where her right hand had touched the ground, maize growing; where her left hand had been, kidney-beans; and where her back-side had been, they found tobacco." The Swedish minister was disgusted. "What I told you, said he, is sacred truth: yours is fable, fiction, and falsehood." The Indian, offended in his turn, replied, "My friend, your education has not been a good one; your mothers have not done you justice; they have not well instructed you in the rules of common civility. You saw that we, who understand and practice these rules, believed all your stories; why then do you refuse to believe ours? We believe, indeed, as you have told us, that it is bad to eat apples; it had been better that they had all been made into cyder; but we would not have told you so, had you not disbelieved the method by which we first obtained maize, kidney-beans and tobacco."⁵

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*An oration, delivered at the north church in Hartford, at the meeting of the society of the Cincinnati, July the fourth, 1787, in commemoration of the independence of the united states. By Joel Barlow, esq. Published by desire of said society.*

*Mr. President, gentlemen of the society, and fellow citizens,*

ON the anniversary of so great an event, as the birth of the empire in which we live, none will question the propriety of pasting a few moments in contemplating the various objects suggested to the mind by the important occasion. But at the present period, while the blessings, claimed by the sword of victory, and promised in the voice of peace, remain to be confirmed by our future exertions -- while the nourishment, the growth, and even the existence of our empire depend upon the united efforts of an extensive and divided people -- the duties of this day ascend from amusement and congratulations to a serious patriotic employment.

We are assembled, my friends, not a boast, but to realize -- not to initiate our national vanity by a pompous relation of past achievements in the council, or in the field; but, from a modest retrospect of the truly dignified part already acted by our countrymen -- from an accurate view of our present situation -- and from an anticipation of the scenes that remain to be unfolded -- to discern and satirize the duties that still await us, as citizens, as soldiers, and as men.

Revolutions in other countries have been effected by accident. The faculties of human reason and the rights of human nature have been the sport of chance and the prey of ambition. And when indignation has burst the bonds of slavery, to the destruction of one tyrant, it was only to impose the manacles of another. This arose from the imperfection of that early stage of society, which necessarily occasioned the foundation of empires on the eastern continent to be laid in ignorance, and which induced a total inability

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<sup>4</sup> Vol. II, no. 1, for July 1787, pp. 73-75.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. II, no. 1, for July 1787, p. 86.

of foreseeing the improvements of civilization, or of adapting the government to a state of social refinement.

I shall but repeat a common observation, when I remark, that on the western continent the scene was entirely different, and a new task, totally unknown to the legislators of other nations, was imposed upon the fathers of the American empire.

Here was a people thinly scattered over an extensive territory, lords of the soil on which they trod, commanding a prodigious length of coast and an equal breadth of frontier -- a people habituated to liberty, professing a mild and benevolent religion, and highly advanced in science and civilization. To conduct such a people in a revolution, the address must be made to reason, as well as to the passions. And to reason, to the clear understanding of these variously affected colonies, the solemn address was made.

A people thus enlightened, and capable of discerning the connexion of causes with their remotest effects, waited not the experience of oppression in their own persons; which they well knew would render them less able to conduct a regular opposition. But in the moment of their greatest prosperity, when every heart expanded with the increasing opulence of the British American dominions, and every tongue united in the praises of the parent state and her patriot king, when many circumstances concurred, which would have rendered an ignorant people secure and inattentive to their future interests -- at this moment the eyes of the American Argus were opened to the first and most plausible invasion of the colonial rights.

In vain were we told, and perhaps with the greatest truth and sincerity, that the monies levied in America were all to be expended within the country, and for our benefit; equally idle was the policy of Great Britain, in commencing her new system by a small and almost imperceptible duty, and that upon very few articles. It was not the quantity of the tax, it was not the mode of appropriation, but it was the right of the demand, which was called in question. Upon this the people deliberated: this they discussed in a cool and dispassionate manner: and this they opposed, in every shape that an artful and systematic ministry could devise, for more than ten years, before they assumed the sword.

This single circumstance, aside from the magnitude of the object, or the event of the contest, will stamp a peculiar glory on the American revolution, and mark it as a distinguished era in the history of mankind; that sober reason and reflexion have done the work of enthusiasm, and performed the miracles of gods. In what other age or nation has a laborious and agricultural people, at ease upon their own farms, secure and distant from the approach of fleets and armies, tide-waiters, and stamp-masters, reasoned before they had felt, and, from the dictates of duty and conscience, encountered dangers, distress, and poverty, for the sake of securing to posterity a government of independence and peace? The toils of ages and the fate of millions were to be sustained by a few hands. The voice of unborn nations called upon them for safety; but it was a still small voice, the voice of rational reflexion. Here was no Cromwell to inflame the people with bigotry and seal, no Caesar to reward his followers with the spoils of vanquished foes, and no territory to acquire by conquest. Ambition, superstition, and avarice, those universal torches of war, never illumined an American field of battle. But the permanent principles of sober policy spread through the colonies, reused the people to assert their rights, and conducted the revolution.

It would be wandering from the objects which ought to occupy our present attention, again\*<sup>6</sup> to recount the numerous acts of the British parliament which compose that system of tyranny designed for the subjugation of America: neither can we indulge in the detail of those memorable events, which marked our various stages of resistance, from the glooms of unsuccessful supplication, to the splendor of victory and acknowledged sovereignty. The former were the theme of senatorial eloquence, producing miracles of union and exertion in every part of the continent, till we find them preserved far everlasting remembrance in that declaratory act of independence, which gave being to an empire, and dignified the day we now commemorate; the latter are fresh in the memory of every person of the least information. It would be impertinence, if not a breach of delicacy, to attempt a recital of those glorious achievements, especially before an audience, part of whom have been distinguished actors in the scene, others the anxious and applauding spectators. To the faithful historian we resign the task -- the historian, whom it is hoped the present age will deem it their duty, as well as their interest, to furnish, encourage, and support.

Whatever praise is due for the task already performed, it is certain that much remains to be done. The revolution is but half completed. Independence and government were the two objects contended for: and but one is yet obtained. To the glory of the present age, and the admiration of the future, our severance

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<sup>6</sup> [Footnote in the original.] \* This oration was preceded by the lecture of the act of independence; which, by an order of this state society, is in future to make part of their public exercises at every annual meeting.

from the British empire was conducted upon principles as noble, as they were new end unprecedented in the history of human actions. Could the same generous principles, the same wisdom and unanimity be exerted in effecting the establishment of a permanent federal system, what an additional lustre would it pour upon the present age! a lustre hitherto unequalled; a display of magnanimity, for which mankind may never behold another opportunity.

Without an efficient government, our independence will cease to be a blessing. Shall that glow of patriotism and unshaken perseverance, which have been so long conspicuous in the American character, desert us at our utmost need? Shall we lose sight of our own happiness, because it has grown familiar by a near approach? Shall thy labours, O Washington, have been bestowed in vain? Hast thou conducted us to independence and peace, and shall we not receive the blessings at thy hands? Where are the shades of our fallen friends? and what is their language on this occasion? [Joseph] Warren, [Richard] Montgomery, [Hugh] Mercer, [David] Wooster, [Alexander] Scammel, and [John] Laurens, all ye hosts of departed heroes! rich is the treasure you have lavished in the cause, and prevalent the price you have paid for our freedom. Shall the purchase be neglected? the fair inheritance lie without improvement, exposed to every daring invader? Forbid it, honour; forbid it, gratitude; and oh, may heaven avert the impending evil.

In contemplating the price of our independence, it will never be forgotten, that it was not entirely the work of our own hands; nor could it probably have been established, in the same term of time, by all the blood and treasure that America, unassisted, was able to furnish for the contest. Much of the merit is due, and our warmest acknowledgments shall ever flow to that illustrious monarch, the father of nations and friend of the distress -- that monarch who by his early assistance taught us not to despair; and who, when we had given a sufficient proof of our military virtue and perseverance, joined us in alliance, upon terms of equality; gave us a rank and credit among the maritime nations of Europe; and furnished fleets and armies, money and military stores, to put a splendid period to the important conflict.

Where shall we find language to express a nation's gratitude for such unexampled goodness and magnanimity? my friends, it is not to be done with language. Our sense of obligation for favours received from heaven, is best expressed by a wise improvement. Does Louis ask for more? and can duty be satisfied with less? Unite in a permanent federal government; put your commerce upon a respectable footing; your arts, and manufactures, your population, your wealth and glory will increase; and when a hundred millions of people are comprised within your territory, and made happy by your sway, then shall it be known, that the hand of that monarch assisted in planting the vine, from which so great a harvest is produced. His generous heart shall exult in the prospect: his royal descendants, fired by the great example, shall imitate his virtues: and the world shall unite in his praise.

Here shall that pride of the military character, the gallant FAYETTE, find his compensation for a life of disinterested service; whose toils have not ceased with the termination of the war; and whose successful endeavours to promote our interest, in commercial and political arrangements, can only be equalled by his achievements in the field. How will the posterity of that nobleman, and that of the other brave officers of his nation, who have fought by your sides, on reviewing the American history, rejoice in the fame of their fathers; nor even regret the fate of those who bled in so glorious a field! An acknowledgement of the merits of Rochambeau and Chastellux, D'Estaing, De Grasse, De Barras, and the other heroes of the French army and navy -- affection to the memory of our brethren and companions who have bled in our battles -- reverence to the advice of our illustrious commander in chief, and of all those sages and patriots who have composed our councils, from the time of the first congress to the present moment -- honour to our worthy creditors in Europe -- a regard to the conduct of the imperial sovereigns of Russia and Germany, who evince to the world that they revere the cause of liberality and human happiness, in which we drew the sword -- a respect to the memory of the venerable Frederic of Prussia, whose dying hand put the signature to a treaty of commerce with the united states, upon the most liberal principles that ever originated in a diplomatic council -- a sacred regard to ourselves and to all posterity -- and, above all, a religious gratitude to our heavenly Benefactor, who hath hitherto smiled upon our endeavours -- call upon us, in the language of a thousand tongues, for firmness, unanimity, and perseverance, in completing the revolution, and establishing the empire.

The present is justly considered an alarming crisis: perhaps the most alarming that America ever saw. We have contended with the most powerful nation, and subdued the bravest and best appointed armies: but now we have to contend with ourselves, and encounter passions and prejudices, more powerful than armies, and more dangerous to our peace. It is not for glory, it is for existence that we contend.

Much is expected from the federal convention now sitting at Philadelphia: and it is a happy circumstance that so general a confidence from all parts of the country is centred in that respectable body.

Their former services, as individuals, command it, and our situation require, it. But although much is expected from them, yet more is demanded from ourselves.

The first great object is to convince the people of the importance of their present situation: for the majority of a great people, on a subject which they understand, will never act wrong. If ever there was a time, in any age or nation, when the fate of millions depended on the voice of one, it is the present period in these states. Every free citizen of the American empire ought now to consider himself as the legislator of half mankind. When he views the amazing extent of territory, settled, and to be settled under the operation of his laws -- when, like a wise politician, he contemplates the population of future ages -- the changes to be wrought by the possible progress of arts, in agriculture, commerce, and manufactures -- the increasing connexion and intercourse of nations, and the effect of one rational political system upon the general happiness of mankind -- his mind, dilated with the great idea, will realize a liberality of feeling which leads to a rectitude of conduct. He will see that the system to be established by his suffrage, is calculated for the great benevolent purposes of extending peace, happiness, and progressive improvement to a large proportion of his fellow creatures. As there is a probability that the system to be proposed by the convention may answer this description, there is some reason to hope it will be viewed by the people with that candour and dispassionate respect which is due to the importance of the subject.

While the anxiety of the feeling art is breathing the perpetual sigh or the attainment of so great an object, it becomes the strongest duty of the social connexion, to enlighten and harmonize the minds of our fellow citizens, and point them to a knowledge of their interests, as an extensive federal people, and fathers of increasing nations. The price put into their hands is great, beyond all comparison; and, as they improve it, they will entail happiness or misery upon a larger proportion of human beings, than could be affected by the conduct of all the nations of Europe united.

Those who are possessed of abilities or information in any degree bore the common rank of their fellow citizens, are called upon by every principle of humanity, to diffuse a spirit of candour and rational enquiry upon these important subjects.

[John] Adams, to his immortal honour, and the timely assistance of his country, has set the great example. His treatise<sup>7</sup> in defence of the constitutions, though confined to the state republics, is calculated to do infinite service, by correcting thousands of erroneous sentiments arising from our inexperience; sentiments which, if uncorrected in this early stage of our existence, will be the source of calamities without measure and without end. Should that venerable philosopher and statesman be induced to continue his enquiries, by tracing the history of confederacies, and with his usual energy and perspicuity, delineate and defend a system adapted to the circumstances of the united states -- I will not say he could deserve more from his distressed country, but he would crown a life of patriotic labours, and render an essential service to the world.

While America enjoys the peculiar felicity of seeing those, who have conducted her councils and her battles, retire, like Cincinnatus, to the humble labours of the plough, it must be remembered, that she there expects a continuance of their patriotic exertions. The society of the Cincinnati, established upon the most benevolent principles, will never lose sight of their duty, in rendering every possible aid, as citizens, to that community which they have defended, as soldiers. They will rejoice, that, although independence was the result of force, yet government is the child of reason. As they are themselves an example of the noblest effort of human nature, the conquest of self, in obeying the voice of their country, and exchanging the habits, the splendor, and importance of military life, for domestic labour and poverty -- they will readily inculcate on others, the propriety of sacrificing private and territorial advantages, to the good of the great majority, the salvation of the united states.

Slaves to no party, but servants of the whole, they have wielded the sword of every state in the union, and bled by the side of her sons. Their attachments are as extensive as their labours. Friendship and charity, the great pillars of their institution, will find their proper objects, through the extended territory; and seek the happiness of all.

While we contemplate the endearing objects of our association -- and indulge in the gloomy pleasure of recollecting that variety of suffering which prompted the sympathetic soldier to institute this memorial of his friendship -- fraternal affection recalls the scene of parting; and enquires with solicitude the fate of our beloved companions.

Since the last anniversary, the death of general [Robert] Howe has diminished the number of our brethren, and called for the tribute of a tear. With some of the foibles, incident to human nature, he

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<sup>7</sup> *A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* (1787).

possessed many valuable accomplishments. His natural good understanding he had embellished with considerable attention to polite literature. As a soldier, he was brave -- as an officer, attentive to discipline; he commanded with dignity and obeyed with alacrity; and whatever talents he possessed, were uniformly and cheerfully devoted to the service of his country.

But a few weeks previous to that period, the much lamented deaths of [Tench] Tilghman and [Alexander] M'Dougall were successively announced, and the tidings received, with a peculiar poignancy of grief. What citizen of the American empire does not join the general voice of gratitude, when contemplating the merits of those distinguishing officers; and swell the tide of sympathy with his bereaved country, when deprived of their future assistance? They were ornaments to the states in which they lived, as well as to the profession in which they acquired their glory.

Amiable and heroic Tilghman! short was the career of thy fame: but much hast thou performed for thy country. Of thee shall it ever be remembered, that no social virtue was a stranger to thy breast, and no military achievement too daring for thy sword. While we condole with thy afflicted father for the loss of so dear a son, permit the tear of friendship to flow for its own bereavement: and as oft as the anniversary of this day shall assemble the companions of thy life, to rejoice in the freedom of their country, they shall mingle a sigh to thy lasting memory, and bewail thy untimely fate,

Untimely also was the death of the brave and patriotic M'Dougall. Though many years were worn away in his unremitting labours for the public safety -- though his early and decided exertions against the claims of Great Britain had an essential influence in determining the conduct of the province in which he resided -- though he was the nerve of war, the wisdom of council and one of our principal supporters in the acquist [sic] of independence -- yet these but shew us the necessity of such characters in establishing the blessings of the acquisition. While it shall require the same wisdom and unshaken fortitude, the same patience and perseverance, to rear the fabric of our empire, as it did to lay the foundation -- patriotism and valour in sympathetic affection will bemoan the loss of M'Dougall.

Happy would it be for America, thrice happy for the feelings of sorrowing friendship, could the list of our deceased companions be closed even with the names of those worthy heroes. But heaven had bestowed too much glory upon the life of the favourite Greene, to allow it a long duration.

My affectionate auditory will anticipate more than can be uttered, in the melancholy duty of contemplating his distinguished excellence. To any assembly that could be collected in America, vain would be the attempt to illustrate his character, or embellish the scene of his exploits. It is a subject to be felt, but not to be described. To posterity, indeed, it may be told, as an incentive to the most exalted virtue and astonishing enterprise, that the man, who carried in his native genius all the resources of war, and the balance of every extreme of fortune -- who knew the advantages to be derived from defeat, the vigilance of military arrangement, the rapidity and happy moment of assault, the deliberate activity of battle, and the various important uses of victory -- that the man who possessed every conceivable quality of a warrior, was, in his public and private character, without a foible or a fault; that all the amiable as well as heroic virtues were assembled in his soul: and that it was the love, of a rational and enlightened age, and not the stupid stare of barbarity, that expressed his praise.

The map of America may designate the vast extent of conquered country recovered by his sword: the future traveller, in the southern states, may be pointed, by the peasant, to the various regions containing monuments of his valour and his skill; where, amid his marches and countermarches, his studied retreats and his rapid approaches, every advantage, given to the enemy, was resumed with ten-fold utility and certain conquest. The historic muse, as a legacy to future ages, may transmit with heroic dignity the feats of her favourite chief: but who shall transmit the feelings of the heart -- or give the more interesting representation of his worth? the hero will remain; but the man must be lost.

The grief of his bereaved consort, aggravated by the universal testimony of his merit, we hope will receive some alleviation from the ardent sympathy of thousands, whose hearts were penetrated with his virtues, and whose tears would have flowed upon his hearse.

But we will not open afresh the wounds, which we cannot close. The best eulogium of the good and great is expressed by an emulation of their virtues. As those of the illustrious Greene were equally useful in every department, in which human society can call a man to act, every friend to America must feel the want of his assistance, in the duties that remain to be performed. Yet, as these duties are of the rational and pacific kind, the performance is more attainable, and emulation the better encouraged. In military operations, none but the soldier can be distinguish; nor any but the fortunate are sure of rendering service: but here is a theatre of action for every citizen of a great country: in which the smallest circumstance will have its weight, and on which infinite consequences will depend.



The present is an age of philosophy, and America, the empire of reason. Here, neither the pageantry of courts, nor the glooms of superstition, have dazzled or beclouded the mind. Our duty calls us to act worthy of the age and the country that gave us birth. Though inexperience may have betrayed us into errors -- yet they have not been fatal: and our own discernment will point us to their proper remedy.

However defective the present confederated system may appear -- yet a due consideration of the circumstances, under which it was framed, will teach us rather to admire its wisdom, than to murmur at its faults. The same political abilities, which were displayed in that institution, united with the experience we have had of its operation, will doubtless produce a system, which will stand the test of ages, in forming a powerful and happy people.

Elevated with the extensive prospect, we may consider present inconveniencies as unworthy of regret. At the close of the war, an uncommon plenty of circulating specie, and a universal passion for trade, tempted many individuals to involve themselves in ruin, and injure the credit of their country. But these are evils which work their own remedy. The paroxysm is already over. Industry is increasing faster than ever it declined; and, with some exceptions, where legislative authority has sanctioned fraud, the people are honestly discharging their private debts, and increasing the resources of their wealth.

Every possible encouragement for great and generous exertions is now presented before us. Under the idea of a permanent and happy government, every point of view, in which the future situation of America can be placed, fills the mind with peculiar dignity; and opens an unbounded field of thought. The natural resources of the country are inconceivably various and great. The enterprising genius of the people promises a most rapid improvement in all the arts that embellish human nature. The blessings of a rational government will invite emigrations from the rest of the world; and fill the empire with the worthiest and happiest of mankind; while the example of political wisdom and felicity, here to be displayed, will excite emulation through the kingdoms of the earth; and meliorate the condition of the human race.

In the pleasing contemplation of such glorious events, and comparing the scenes of action that adorn the western hemisphere, with what has taken place in the east, may we not apply to our country the language of the prophet of Israel, though spoken on a different occasion -- "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts:" -- peace to any disorders that may at present subsist among us -- peace to the contending passions of nations -- peace to this empire, to future ages, and through the extended world?<sup>8</sup>

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Complaining regulated.

-----*Nunc fera querelis*
Haud justis assurgis, et irrita jurgia
*jactas.*⁹

COMPLAINTS of bad times have been common in all ages. No period was ever so good, but many would think, former days were not so bad, and present days might be better. This is a period remarkable for complaints. Whether there be sufficient cause for them, I will not say. Every man, in this matter, will judge for himself. "Scarcity of cash, heavy taxes, frequent suits, severity of creditors, bad debts, ill management of public affairs," &c. &c. are common topics of conversation in most companies. But I cannot find that complaining has mended the times: for they still continue the same. Since complaining is so considerable a part of the business of the day, it is necessary some rules should be prescribed, to guide us in so important an affair. Until better are provided, I would recommend the following:

Never complain of any thing before you have examined it, and are sure that it is an evil. Judge not of a matter merely from its present appearance, or from your present feelings: but consider its natural tendency, and probable consequences; for, however disagreeable it may be at present -- yet, if it be naturally productive of superior good, it is not, on the whole, an evil, or proper matter of complaint,

⁸ Vol. II, no. 2, for August 1787, pp. 135-142.

⁹ *Aeneid*, Book X, line 95: "-- now you raise complaints without justice, and incite distracting quarrels."

If you are not capable, at present, of making a proper judgment of its probable tendency, suspend your complaints, till you are wiser, or can see the issue. Never complain of that as a grievance, which is necessary to prevent or remove something worse.

Complain not of that which could not have been prevented, or cannot be remedied: this would be impiety, as well as folly: for it would be murmuring at providence.

Complain not of that which proceeds from your own choice, or your own conduct: but silently censure your error; and, from your experience, learn wisdom and virtue.

Never complain of that which it is in your power to mend. Remove the evil: and there will be nothing to complain of. Complain not of that which becomes painful merely' from the irregularity of your own temper: but correct your temper: and then all will be well.

Never complain of the conduct of others, when you act in the same manner, or in a manner that shews you have the same disposition, and would act like them, in the same circumstances: but first reform yourself: and then, perhaps, your example will do something to reform them.

Complain not of that in the great which is faulty only in part: but wish to destroy what only wants mending. Would you throw away your only coat, because the tailor erred in the cut of the cuff?

Complain not, when complaints do no good. This is spending your breath, and disturbing your mind in vain.

Never complain of mere trifling inconveniencies. This shews a trifling mind. Complain not of that which you do not, and cannot, understand. This indicates rashness.

Complain not of disappointments, which originate from unreasonable and extravagant expectations. Bring your views down to the standard of nature: and your disappointments will be few and small. Never serve, like a piece of inanimate nature, to echo other people's complaints: perhaps, they are designing men, and want you to be their tool.

Never complain of a matter after it has been fully explained, and unanswerably justified. This would be obstinacy and perverseness.

Never complain to shew your own importance, or to make a noise, perhaps you will raise a noise that you did not expect; and sink, from opposed importance, into real insignificance.

Never complain of that which in no respect concerns you: nor search their faults, for the sake of talking about them. This is to be a busy only in other men's matters.

Complain not of grievances, but with a view to remove them; nor in misconduct in others, but for the end of reforming it. If no good end can be answered, you may as well be silent.

But, you will say, "these are riling[?]"¹⁰ rules: may we not complain at them?" What matter is it whether you do or not? Let every man study his own duty, and comply with his own obligations; know himself, and assess his faults; be as good as he might, and by his example make others as good as he can; conduct as generously as he thinks others ought to conduct; and fill his sphere as well as he thinks others ought to fill theirs: and he will see less evil to complain of, and be less disposed to complain of what he sees.¹¹

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#### *Efficacy of black-berry jelly -- Recipe for making it.*

AS the season for making a jelly of black-berries has arrived, it may be proper to communicate the following account of its very remarkable efficacy, in that dreadful disorder, the gravel and stone.

A gentleman, who for many years had been afflicted with this dreadful complaint, was persuaded to take every night going to bed the quantity of a large nutmeg of this jelly. The effect of which was, that the stone was broken to pieces, and voided in grannels, some of them nearly the size of pepper-corns, manifestly appearing so be portions of a much larger substance. The gentleman, though more than four score, is now enabled to discharge these stony particles without much difficulty, and finds no other inconvenience than a frequent irritation to urinate.

To make the jelly: take black berries before they are quite ripe when turned red; pick them and put them into a pot, tie them up close and put them in a kettle of water. Let them stand over the fire, until they

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<sup>10</sup> Text here is illegible.

<sup>11</sup> Vol. II, no. 2, for August 1787, p. 174.

are reduced to a pulp. Then strain them: and to a pint of juice put pound of powdered sugar. Boil it to a jelly: and put it up for use.<sup>12</sup>

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Verses written at sea, in a heavy gale.
By Philip Freneau

HAPPY the man, who safe on shore
Now trims at home his evening fire;
Unmov'd, he hears the tempests roar,
That on the tufted groves expire.
Alas! on us they doubly fall:
Our feeble barque must bear them all.

Now to their haunts the birds retreat:
The squirrel seeks his hollow tree:
Wolves in their shaded caverns meet:
All, all are blest but wretched we.
Foredoom'd a stranger to repose,
No rest th' unsettled ocean knows.

While o'er the dark abyss we roam,
Perhaps (whate'er the pilots say)
We saw the Sun descend in gloom,
No more to see his rising ray.
But buried low, by far too deep,
On coral beds, unpitied, sleep.

But what a strange, uncoasted strand
Is that, where Death permits no day?
No charts have we, to mark that land,
No compass to direct that way.
What pilot shall explore that realm?
What new Columbus take the helm?

While death and darkness both sit round,
And tempests rage with lawless pow'r,
Of friendship's voice I hear no sound,
No comfort in this dreadful hour,
What friendship can in tempests be?
What comforts on this angry sea?

The barque accustomed to obey,
No more the trembling pilots guide:
Alone she gropes her trackless way,
While mountains burst on either side:
Thus skill and science both must fall,
And ruin is the lot of all.¹³

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<sup>12</sup> Vol. II, no. 2, for August 1787, p. 178.

<sup>13</sup> Vol. II, no. 2, for August 1787, p. 202.

*To the memory of the brave, accomplished, and patriotic col. John Laurens, who in the 27th year of his age, was killed in an engagement with a detachment of the British from Charleston, near the river Cambaheee [Combahee], South-Carolina, August, 1782. By Philip Freneau.*

SINCE on her plains this gen'rous chief expir'd,  
Whom sages honour'd, and whom France admir'd;  
Does fame no statues to his mem'ry raise,  
Nor swells one column to record his praise?  
Where her palmetto shades th' adjacent deeps,  
Affection sighs, and Carolina weeps!

Thou, who shalt stray where death this chief confines,  
Approach, and read the patriot in these lines:  
Not from the dust the muse transcribes his name,  
And more than marble shall declare his fame;  
Where scenes more glorious his great soul engage,  
Contest thrice worthy in that closing page;  
When conqu'ring time to dark oblivion calls,  
The marble totters, and the column falls.

Laurens! thy tomb while kindred hands adorn,  
Let northern muses, too, inscribe your urn --  
Of all, whose names on death's black list appear,  
No chief, that perish'd, claim'd more grief sincere;  
Not one, Columbia, that thy bosom bore,  
More tears commanded, or deserv'd them more! --  
Grief at his tomb shall heave th' unweary'd sigh,  
And honour lift the mantle to her eye:  
Fame thro' the world his patriot name shall spread,  
By heroes envy'd and by monarchs read:  
Just, generous, brave -- to each true heart ally'd:  
The Briton's terror, and his country's pride;  
For him the tears of war-worn soldiers ran,  
The friend of freedom, and the friend of man.

Then what is death, compar'd with such a tomb,  
Where honour fades not, and fair virtues bloom?  
Ah! what is death, when fame like *this* endears  
*The brave man's favourite, and his country's tears!*<sup>14</sup>

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Letter on Slavery. By a negro.

I AM one of that unfortunate race of men, who are distinguished from the rest of the human species, by a black skin and woolly hair -- disadvantages of very little moment in themselves, but which

¹⁴ Vol. II, no. 5, for November 1787, pp. 514-515. In another published version of this poem, found in *The Army Correspondence of Col. John Laurens 1777-1778* (1857), edited by William Gilmore Simms, p. 56., the last stanza reads:

*Then what is death, compar'd with such a tomb,
Where honour fades not, and fair virtues bloom?
When silent grief on every face appears,
The tender tribute of a nation's tears;
Ah! what is death, when deeds like his thus claim
The brave man's homage, and immortal fame!*

prove to us a source of the greatest misery, because there are men, who will not be persuaded, that it is possible for a human soul to be lodged within a sable body. The West Indian planters could not, if they thought us men, so wantonly spill our blood; nor could the natives of this land of liberty, deeming us of the same species with themselves, submit to be instrumental in enslaving us, or think us proper subjects of a sordid commerce. Yet, strong as the prejudices against us are, it will not, I hope, on this side of the Atlantic, be considered as a crime, for a poor african not to confess himself a being of an inferior order to those, who happen to be of a different colour from himself; or be thought very presumptuous, in one who is but a negro, to offer to the happy subjects of this free government, some reflexions upon the wretched condition of his countrymen. They will not, I trust, think worse of my brethren, for being discontented with so hard a lot as that of slavery; nor disown me for their fellow creature, merely because I deeply feel the unmerited sufferings, which my countrymen endure.

It is neither the vanity of being an author, nor a sudden and capricious gall of humanity, which has prompted the present design. It has been long conceived, and long been the principal subject of my thoughts. Ever since an indulgent master rewarded my youthful services with freedom, and supplied me at a very early age with the means of acquiring knowledge, I have laboured to understand the true principles, on which the liberties of mankind are founded, and to possess myself of the language of this country, in order to plead the cause of those who were once my fellow slaves, and if possible to make my freedom, in some degree, the instrument of their deliverance.

The first thing then, which seems necessary, in order to remove those prejudices, which are so unjustly entertained against us, is to prove that we are men -- a truth which is difficult of proof, only because it is difficult to imagine, by what arguments it can be combated. Can it be contended, that a difference of colour alone can constitute a difference of species? -- if not, in what single circumstance are we different from the rest of mankind? what variety is there in our organization? what inferiority of art in the fashioning of our bodies? what imperfection in the faculties of our minds? -- Has not a negro eyes? has not a negro hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? -- fed with the same food; hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases; healed by the same means; warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter, as a white man is? if you prick us, do we not bleed? if you poison us, do we not die? are we not exposed to all the same wants? do we not feel all the same sentiments -- are we not capable of all the same exertions -- and are we not entitled to all the same rights, as other men?¹⁵

Yes -- and it is said we are men, it is true; but that we are men, addicted to more and worse vices, than those of any other complexion; and such is the innate perverseness of our minds, that nature seems to have marked us out for slavery. -- Such is the apology-perpetually made for our masters, and the justification offered for that universal proscription, under which we labour.

But I supplicate our enemies, to be, though for the first time, just in their proceedings towards us; and to establish the fact, before they attempt to draw any conclusion from it. Nor let them imagine, that this can be done, by merely asserting, that such is our universal character. It is the character, I grant, that our inhuman masters have agreed to give us, and which they have too industriously and too successfully propagated, in order to palliate their own guilt, by blackening the helpless victims of it, and to disguise their own cruelty under the semblance of justice. Let the natural depravity of our character be proved -- not by appealing to declamatory invectives, and interested representations, but by shewing, that a greater proportion of crimes have been committed by the wronged slaves of the plantations, than by the luxurious inhabitants of Europe, who are happily strangers to those aggravated provocations, by which our passions are every day irritated and incensed. Shew us, that, of the multitude of negroes, who have, within a few years, transported themselves to this country*¹⁶, and who are abandoned to themselves; who are corrupted by example, prompted by penury, and instigated, by the memory of their wrongs, to the commission of every crime -- shew us, I say, (and the demonstration, if it be possible, cannot be difficult) that a greater proportion of these, than of white men, have fallen under the animadversion of justice, and have been sacrificed to your laws. Though avarice may slander and insult our misery, and though poets heighten the horror of their fables, by representing us as monsters of vice -- the fact is, that, if treated like other men, and admitted to a participation of their rights, we should differ from them in nothing, perhaps, but in our possessing stronger passions, nicer sensibility, and more enthusiastic virtue.

¹⁵ These last sentences are ostensibly and intended echoes of Shylock's speech in *The Merchant of Venice*, Act III, sc. 1.

¹⁶ [Footnote in the original.] * This letter was originally published in England, where the number of negroes is considerably increased, since the late war in America.

Before so harsh a decision was pronounced upon our nature, we might have expected -- if sad experience had not taught us, to expect nothing but injustice from our adversaries -- that some pains would have been taken, to ascertain, what our nature is; and that we should have been considered, as we are found in our native woods, and not as we now are -- altered and perverted by an inhuman political institution. But, instead of this, we are examined, not by philosophers, but by interested traders; not as nature formed us, but as man has depraved us -- and from such an enquiry, prosecuted under such circumstances, the perverseness our dispositions is said to be established. Cruel that you are! you make us slave; you implant in our minds all the vices, which are, in some degree, inseparable from that condition ; and you then impiously impute to nature, and to God, the origin of those vices, to which you alone have given birth; and punish in us the crimes, of which you are yourselves the authors.

The condition of slavery is in nothing more deplorable, than in its being so unfavourable to the practice of every virtue. The surest foundation of virtue, is the love of our fellow-creatures; and that affection takes its birth, in the social relations of men to one another. But to a slave these are all denied. He never pays or receives the grateful duties of a son -- he never knows or experiences the fond solicitude of a father -- the tender names of husband, of brother, and of friend, are to him unknown. He has no country to defend and bleed for -- he can relieve no sufferings -- for he looks around in vain, to find a being more wretched than himself. He can indulge no generous sentiment -- for, he sees himself every hour treated with contempt and ridicule, and distinguished from irrational brutes, by nothing, but the severity of punishment. Would it be surprising, if a slave, labouring under all these disadvantages -- oppressed, insulted, scorned, and trampled on -- should come at last to despise himself -- to believe the calumnies of his oppressors -- and to persuade himself, that it would be against his nature, to cherish any honourable sentiment, or to attempt any virtuous action? Before you boast of your superiority over us, place some of your own colour (if you have the heart to do it) in the same situation with us; and see, whether they have such innate virtue, and such unconquerable vigour of mind, as to be capable of surmounting such multiplied difficulties, and of keeping their minds free from the infection of every vice, even under the oppressive yoke of such a servitude.

But, not satisfied with denying us that indulgence, to which the misery of our condition gives us so just a claim, our enemies have laid down other and stricter rules of morality, to judge our actions by, than those by which the conduct of all other men is tried. Habits, which in all human beings, except ourselves, are thought innocent, are, in us, deemed criminal -- and actions, which are even laudable in white men, become enormous crimes in negroes. In proportion to our weakness, the strictness of censure is increased upon us; and as resources are withheld from us, our duties are multiplied. The terror of punishment is perpetually before our eyes: but we know not, how to avert it, what rules to act by, or what guides to follow. We have written laws, indeed, composed in a language we do not understand, and never promulgated: but what avail written laws, when the supreme law, with us, is the capricious will of our overseers? To obey the dictates of our own hearts, and to yield to the strong propensities of nature, is often to incur severe punishment; and by emulating examples, which we find applauded and revered among Europeans, we risk inflaming the wildest wrath of our inhuman tyrants.

To judge of the truth of these assertions, consult even those milder and subordinate rules for our conduct, the various codes of your West India laws -- those laws, which allow us to be men, whenever they consider us as victims of their vengeance, but treat us only like a species of living property, as often as we are to be the objects of their protection -- those laws, by which (it may be truly said) that we are bound to suffer, and be miserable, under pain of death. To resent an injury, received from a white man, though of the lower rank, and to dare to strike him, though upon the strongest and grossest provocation, is an enormous crime. To attempt an escape from the cruelties exercised over us, by flight, is punished with mutilation, and sometimes with death. To take arms against masters, whose cruelty no submission can mitigate, no patience exhaust, and from whom no other means of deliverance are left, is the most atrocious of all crimes; and is punished by a gradual death, lengthened out by torments, so exquisite, that none, but those who have been long familiarized, with West Indian barbarity, can hear the bare recital of them without horror. And yet I learn from writers, whom the Europeans hold in the highest esteem, that treason is a crime, which cannot be committed by a slave against his master; that a slave stands in no civil relation towards his master, and owes him no allegiance; that master and slave are in a state of war; and if the slave take up arms for his deliverance, he acts not only justifiably, but in obedience to a natural duty, the duty of self-preservation. I read in author, whom I find venerated by our oppressors, that to deliver one's self and one's countrymen from tyranny, is an act of the sublimest heroism. I hear Europeans exalted, as the martyrs of public liberty, the saviours of their country, and the deliverers of mankind -- I see their memories honoured with statues,

and their names immortalized in poetry -- and yet when a generous negro is animated by the same passion, which ennobl'd them -- when he feels the wrongs of his countrymen as deeply, and attempts to revenge them as boldly -- I see him treated by those same Europeans, as the most execrable of mankind, and led out, amidst curses and insults, to undergo a painful, gradual, and ignominious death*¹⁷: and thus the same Briton, who applauds his own ancestors, for attempting to throw off the easy yoke, imposed on them by the Romans, punishes us, as detested parricides, for seeking to get free from the cruelest of all tyrannies, and yielding to the irresistible eloquence of an African Galgacus or Boadicea.

Are then the reason and the morality, for which Europeans so highly value themselves, of a nature so variable and fluctuating, as to change with the complexion of those, to whom they are applied? -- Do the rights of nature cease to be such, when a negro is to enjoy them? -- Or does patriotism, in the heart of an African, rankle into treason?

A free negro. ¹⁸

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*Letter from an Indian chief to his friends in the state of New York.*

Dear sir,

YOUR letter came safe to hand. To give you entire satisfaction, I must, I perceive, enter into the discussion of a subject, on which I have often thought. My thoughts were my own, and being so different from the ideas entertained among your people, I should have certainly carried them with me to the grave, had I not received your obliging favour. You ask then, whether, in my opinion, civilization is favourable to human happiness? In answer to the question, it may be observed, that there are degrees of civilization from Can[n]ibals to the most polite European nations; the question is not, whether a degree of refinement is not conducive to happiness, but, whether you, or the natives of this land, have obtained the happy medium? On this subject, we are at present, I presume, of very different opinions; you will, however, allow me in some respects to have had the advantage of you in forming my judgment. I was, sir, born of Indian parents, and lived, while a child, among those you are pleased to call savages; I was afterwards sent to live among the white people, and educated at one of your schools; since which period, I have been honoured, much beyond my deserts, by an acquaintance with a number of principal characters both in Europe and America. After all this experience, and after every exertion to divest myself of prejudice, I am obliged to give my opinion in favor of my own people. I will now, as well as I am able, collect together and set before you, some of the reasons that have influenced my sentiments on the subject before us.

In the governments you call civilized, the happiness of the people is constantly sacrificed to the splendor of empire; hence your code of civil and criminal laws have had their origin; and hence your dungeons and prisons, I will not enlarge on an idea so singular in civilized life, and perhaps disgraceful to you; and will only observe, that among us, we have no law but that written on the heart of every rational creature by the immediate finger of the great Spirit of the universe himself. We have no prisons -- we have no pompous parade of courts; and yet judges are as highly esteemed among us, as they are among you, and their decisions as highly revered; property, to say the least, is as well guarded, and crimes are as impartially punished. We have among us no splendid villains, above the controul of that law, which influences our decisions; in a word, we have no robbery under the colour of law -- daring wickedness here is never suffered to triumph over helpless innocence -- the estates of widows and orphans are never devoured by enterprising sharpers. Our sachems, and our warriors, eat their own bread, and not the bread of wretchedness. No person, among us, desires any other reward for performing a brave and worthy action, than the consciousness of serving his nation. Our wise men are called fathers -- they are truly deserving the character; they are always accessible -- I will not say to the meanest of our people -- for we have none mean, but such as render themselves so by their vices.

Civilization creates a thousand imaginary wants, that continually distress the human mind. I remember to have read, while at one of your schools, the saying of a philosopher to this purport, "The real wants of human nature are very few;" on this maxim our people practice, without ever having learned to read. We do not hunger and thirst after those superfluities of life, that are the ruin of thousands of families

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<sup>17</sup> [Footnote in the original.] \* For a remarkable instance of this species of barbarous cruelty -- see vol. I [?-illegible] of this work, page 210.

<sup>18</sup> Vol. VI, no. 1, for July 1789, pp. 77-80.

among you. Our ornaments, in general, are simple and easily obtained. Envy and covetousness, those worms that destroy the fair flower of human happiness, are unknown in this climate.

The palaces and prisons among you, form a most dreadful contrast. Go to the former places, and you will see, perhaps, a deformed piece of earth swelled with pride, and assuming airs, that become none but the Spirit above. Go to one of your prisons -- here description utterly fails! -- certainly the sight of an Indian torture, is not half so painful to a well informed mind. Kill them, if you please -- kill them, too, by torture; but let the torture last no longer than a day. Let it be, too, of such a nature, as has no tendency to unman the human mind. Give them an opportunity, by their fortitude in death, of entitling themselves to the sympathy of the human race, instead of exciting in them the mortifying reflexion of being enveloped in the gulph of eternal infamy. Those you call savages, relent -- the most furious of our tormentors exhausts his rage in a few hours, and dispatches the unhappy victim with a sudden stroke.

But for what are many of your prisoners confined? For debt! Astonishing! and will you ever again call the Indian nations cruel? -- Liberty, to a rational creature, as much exceeds property, as the light of the sun does that of the most twinkling star: but you put them on a level, to the everlasting disgrace of civilization. Let me ask, is there any crime in being in debt? While I lived among the white people, I knew many of the most amiable characters contract debts, and I dare say with the best intentions. Both parties at the time of the contract, expected to find their advantage. The debtor, I suppose, by a train of unavoidable misfortunes, fails. Here is no crime, nor even a fault; and yet your laws put it in the power of that creditor, to throw the debtor into jail, and confine him there for life: a punishment infinitely worse than death to a brave man. And I seriously declare, that I had rather die by the most severe tortures ever inflicted by any savage nation on the continent, than languish in one of your prisons for a single year. Great Maker of the world! and do you call yourselves christians? I have read your bible formerly, and should have thought it divine, if the practice of the most zealous professor had corresponded with his professions. Does then the religion of him whom you call your Saviour, inspire this conduct, and lead to this practice? Surely no. It was a sentence that once struck my mind with some force, that "a bruised reed he never broke." Cease then, while these practices continue among you, to call yourselves christians, lest you publish to the world your hypocrisy. Cease to call other nations savage, while you are tenfold more the children of cruelty, than they.<sup>19</sup>

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An HYMN to RESIGNATION

Written by a clergyman of Philadelphia.

Oh! from that high and holy sphere,
Where, thron'd in light, you dwell,
Sweet maid, in all thy charms descend
To gild my humble cell.

Thy presence heightens ev'ry bliss,
Draws out the sting of woe,
Allures to brighter worlds above.
And makes an heav'n below.

The pilgrim, roving all night long,
Through trackless wilds forlorn,
Oft sighs oppres'd, and sighs, again,
The wish'd return of morn.

So I, in sorrow's gloomy night,
Condemn'd a while to stray.
Look up, with ardent eye, to heav'n,
And ask the devious way.

¹⁹ Vol. VI, no. 3, for September 1789, pp. 226-227.

Inconstant as the idle wind,
That sports with ev'ry flow'r,
When earthly friends by turns drop off,
Friends of our brighter hour;

Do thou, mild cherub, fill my breast
With all that's good and wise.
Snatch me from earth's tumultuous scenes,
And lead me to the skies.

There kindred spirits ne'er deceive,
Soul mingles there with soul;
Sweet sympathy and truth are there.
And love cements the whole.

More welcome to this sorrowing heart,
O pensive queen, thy strain,
Than all the joys mad Riot gives
To soothe his clam'rous train.

You shade the poor man's evening walk
With wreaths of endless green,
And when the lamp of life declines,
You tend the last dread scene.

Oh! then from heav'n, thy holy sphere.
Where, thron'd in light, you dwell;
Come, Resignation, sainted maid.
And gild my humble cell.²⁰

William Thomas Sherman

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For a full list of titles in the Continental Army series, see:

²⁰ Vol. VI, no. 2, for August 1789, pp. 173-174.

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