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America's Founding Patriots



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HONORING OUR PAST

Special Interest Articles:

- **REMEMBERING OUR PAST**, an introduction by J. S. Smithies.
- **MERCY WARREN** by Elizabeth F. Ellet, [The Women of the American Revolution](#), New York, 1856.
- **THE GENIUS OF AMERICA WEeping THE ABSURD FOLLIES OF THE DAY, OCTOBER 10, 1778** by Mercy Otis Warren.
- The Vocabulary of Moral Character, **NOAH WEBSTER'S 1828 DICTIONARY**.

During 2011, Intrepid Books is proud to continue the series on America's Founding Patriots. These reprints of historical documents and books provide us with the stories of our national's hero's and heroine's.

With the American social structure coming under fire from many areas of the modern world, we need to pause and remember our past; not only the noble deeds done, but the people who helped to form our nation.

The lives of these individuals should inspire us today and allow us to realize that each of us are unique and have the capacity to change the world around us. We each have the power to change our lives internally with our thoughts and externally with our actions and deeds.

We have the power to change our families through the choices we make.

We have the power to change our schools and business by living the principles that our Founding Patriots believed it.

We have the power to change our communities, states, and nation by accepting the great responsibilities that come with living in the greatest nation known. To those that much has been given, much is expected.

We hope you enjoy learning about our Founding Patriots.

MERCY OTIS WARREN

In this newsletter, we will be presenting a reprint of **MERCY WARREN** by Elizabeth F. Ellet, from [The Women of the American Revolution](#), New York, 1856.

The second section will be a reprint of **THE GENIUS OF AMERICA WEeping THE ABSURD FOLLIES OF THE DAY, OCTOBER 10, 1778** by Mercy Otis Warren. *"This piece was written when a most remarkable depravity of manners pervaded the cities of the United States, in consequence of a state of war; a relaxation of government; the sudden acquisition of fortune; a depreciating currency; and a new intercourse with foreign nations."*

MERCY WARREN

by Elizabeth F. Ellet, [The Women of the American Revolution](#), NY, 1856.



The Name of Mercy Warren belongs to American history. In the influence she exercised, she was perhaps the most remarkable woman who lived at the Revolutionary period. She was the third child of Colonel James Otis, of Barnstable, in the old colony of Plymouth; and was born there, September 25th, 1728.¹ The Otis family came to the country in 1630 or 1640, and settled first in Hingham.

The youth of Miss Otis was passed in the retirement of her home, in a routine of domestic employments, and the duties devolving upon her as the eldest daughter in a family of high respectability. Her love of reading was early manifested; and such was her economy of time, that, never neglecting her domestic cares or the duties of hospitality, she found leisure not only to improve her mind by careful study, but for various works of female ingenuity. A card-table is preserved by one of her descendants in Quincy, as a monument of her taste and industry. The design was her own, the patterns being obtained by gathering and pressing flowers from the gardens and fields. These are copied in worsted work, and form one of the most curious and beautiful specimens to be found in the country.

At that period, the opportunities for female education were extremely limited, but perhaps the more prized on that account. Miss Otis gained nothing from schools. Her only assistant, in the intellectual culture of her earlier years, was the Rev. Jonathan Russell, the minister of the parish, from whose library she was supplied with books, and by whose counsels her tastes were in a measure formed. It was from reading, in accordance with his advice, Raleigh's [History of the World](#), that her attention was particularly directed to history, the branch of literature to which she afterwards devoted herself. In later years, her brother James, who was himself an excellent scholar, became her adviser and companion in literary pursuits. There existed between them a strong attachment, which nothing ever impaired. Even in the wildest moods of that insanity, with which, late in life the great patriot was afflicted, her voice had power to calm him, when all else was without effect.

These favorite employments of reading, drawing and needlework, formed the recreation of a quiet life, in the home, which Miss Otis rarely quitted. A visit to Boston, at the time of her brother's graduation at Harvard College, in 1743, was the occasion of her first absence for any length of time.

When about twenty-six, she became the wife of James Warren, then a merchant of Plymouth, Massachusetts. In him she found a partner of congenial mind. Her new avocations and cares were not allowed to impair the love of literature, which had been the delight of her youth. It was while residing occasionally for a few weeks with her husband, and children on a farm a few miles from the village, to which she gave the name of "*Clifford*," that most of her poetical productions were written. On the other hand, attached as she was to these pursuits, she never permitted them to interfere with household duties, or the attention of a devoted mother to her children. Her attainments fitted her to give them valuable instruction; and the lessons of her loving spirit of wisdom were not lost.

With this fondness for historical studies, and the companionship of such a brother and husband, it is not strange that the active and powerful intellect of Mrs. Warren should become engaged with interest in political affairs. These were now assuming an aspect that engrossed universal attention. Decision and action were called for on the part of those inclined to one or the other side. How warmly Mrs. Warren espoused the cause *of* her country--how deeply her feelings were enlisted--appears in her letters. Her correspondence with the great spirits of that era, if published, would form a most valuable contribution to our historical literature.

"...she found leisure not only to improve her mind by careful study, but for various works of female ingenuity..."



MERCY WARREN by Elizabeth F. Ellet, continues:

This rich correspondence has been preserved by her descendants; and affords the material for the present memoir. It includes letters, besides those from members of her own family, from Samuel and John Adams, Jefferson, Dickinson, Gerry, Knox and others. These men asked her opinion in political matters, and acknowledged the excellence of her judgment. Referring to some of her observations on the critical state of affairs after the war, General Knox writes:

“I should be happy, Madam, to receive your communications from time to time, particularly on the subject enlarged on in this letter. Your sentiments shall remain with me.”

Mrs. Warren herself thus writes to Mr. Adams, before the meeting of the first Congress:

*“Though you have condescended to ask my sentiments, in conjunction with those of a gentleman qualified both by his judgment and integrity, as well as his attachment to the interest of his country, to advise at this important crisis, yet I shall not be so presumptuous as to offer any thing but my fervent wishes that the enemies of America may hereafter for ever tremble at the wisdom and firmness, the prudence and justice of the delegates deputed from our cities, as much as did the Phocians of old at the power of the Amphyctions of Greece. But if the Locrians should in time appear among you, I advise you to beware of choosing an ambitious Philip as your leader. Such a one might subvert the principles on which your institution is founded, abolish your order, and build up a monarchy on the ruins of the happy institution.”*²

*“You, madam,
are so sincere a
lover of your
county...”*

Colonial difficulties, and the signs of the times formed subjects of communication continually between Mrs. Warren and her female friends. Mrs. Adams says to her, in 1773,

“You, madam, are so sincere a lover of your country, and so hearty a mourner in all her misfortunes, that it will greatly aggravate your anxiety to hear how much she is now oppressed and insulted. To you, who have so thoroughly looked through the deeds of men, and developed the dark designs of a ‘Rapatio’ soul, no action, however base or sordid, no measure, however cruel and villainous, will be matter of any surprise. The tea, that baneful weed, is arrived: great, and I hope effectual opposition, has been made to the landing.”

The friendship that existed between these two gifted women was truly beautiful and touching. Commenced in early youth, it continued unchanged through the vicissitudes of a long and eventful life—unshaken by troubles, un-chilled by cares, un-alienated by misunderstanding. Their thoughts were communicated to each other with perfect freedom and openness; and they found in joy and sorrow, a solace, or an added in each other’s sympathy and affection. The sister of Abigail Adams, who married Mr. Shaw, was also warmly attached to Mrs. Warren.

The celebrated Mrs. Macaulay was another of her favorite correspondents though they were not personally acquainted till that lady’s visit to New England. Mrs. Warren’s letters to her describe the progress of the Revolutionary spirit. That written December 29th, 1774, speaks forcibly of the aspect of things:

“America stands armed with resolution and virtue; but she still recoils at the idea of drawing the sword against the nation from whence she derived her origin. Yet Britain, like an unnatural parent, is ready to plunge her dagger into the bosom of her affectionate offspring. But may we not yet hope for more lenient measures! You, madam, can easily delineate the characters of the new Parliament.”



“You, madam can easily delineate the characters of the new Parliament.”

MERCY WARREN by Elizabeth F. Ellet, continues:

“The seeds of empire are sown in this new world; the ball rolls westward fast, and though we are daily threatened with the depredations of Britain with foreign auxiliaries, and the incursions of the savages, yet each city, from Nova Scotia to Georgia, has her Decii and her Fabii, ready to sacrifice their devoted lives to preserve inviolate, and to convey to their children the inherent rights of men, conferred on all by the God of nature, and the privileges of Englishmen claimed by Americans from the sacred sanction of compacts.”

In the following year she writes:

“I hinted that the sword was half drawn from the scabbard. Since that it has been unsheathed. Almost every tongue is calling on the justice of heaven to punish or disperse the disturbers of the peace, liberty, and happiness of their country.”

She says to John Adams:

“I have my fears. Yet, notwithstanding the complicated difficulties that rise before us, there is no receding; and I should blush if in any instance the weak passions of my sex should damp the fortitude, the patriotism, and the manly resolution of yours. May nothing ever check that glorious spirit of freedom which inspires the patriot in the cabinet, and the hero in the field, with courage to maintain their righteous cause, and to endeavor to transmit the claim to posterity, even if they must seal the rich conveyance to their children with their own blood.”³

“The desk, the pews, and other encumbrances are taken down in the Old South (a church long venerated in the town), to make it convenient for the accommodation of General Burgoyne’s light horse; while the infamous Dr. Morrison, whose character I suppose you are acquainted with, reads prayers in the church in Brattle street to a set of banditti, who, after the rapines, robberies, and devastations of the week, dare some of them-to lift up their sacrilegious hands, and bow before the altar of mercy.

“I will breathe one wish more; and that is for the restoration of peace--peace, I mean, on equitable terms; for pusillanimous and feeble as I am, I cannot wish to see the sword quietly put up in the scabbard until justice is done to America.”¹

During the years that preceded the revolution, and after its out-break, Mrs. Warren’s house appears to have been the resort of much company. As she herself says, *“by the Plymouth fireside were many political plans originated, discussed, and digested.”* She reminds Mr. Adams while he is in Europe, of his words once uttered in a moment of despondency that:

“...the dispute between Great Britain and America will not be settled till your sons and my sons are able to assist and negotiate with the different European courts...A lady replied, though perhaps not from prescience but from presentiment or presumption, that you must do it yourself; that the work must be done immediately; and that she expected from you in the intervals of business, a pleasing narration of the different customs, manners, taste, genius, and policy of nations with whom, at present, we were little acquainted. You assented a compliance if the prediction took place.”



MERCY WARREN by Elizabeth F. Ellet, continues:

Although her home was in Plymouth, her place of residence was occasionally changed during the war. At one time she lived in the house at Milton, which Governor Hutchinson had occupied. Wherever she was, the friends of America were always welcomed to the shelter of her roof, and the hospitalities of her table. In different passages of her letters to Mr. Adams, the officers with whom she became acquainted are described. The following extract is interesting:

“The Generals Washington, Lee, and Gates, with several other distinguished officers from headquarters, dined with us (at Watertown) three days since. The first of these I think one of the most amiable and accomplished gentlemen, both in person, mind, and manners, that I have met with. The second, whom I never saw before, I think plain in his person to a degree of ugliness, careless even to impoliteness--his garb ordinary, his voice rough, his manners rather morose; yet sensible, learned, judicious, and penetrating: a considerable traveler, agreeable in his narrations, and a zealous, indefatigable friend to the American cause; but much more from a love of freedom, and an impartial sense of the inherent rights of mankind at large, than from any attachment or disgust to particular persons or countries. The last is a brave soldier, a high republican, a sensible companion, an honest man, of unaffected manners and easy deportment.”

She speaks thus of the Count D'Estaing:

“While the errand on which the Count D'Estaing came out excites our gratitude, the dignity of his deportment commands respect; and his reserved affability, if I may so express it, heightens our esteem.”

And La Fayette is praised in laconic fashion:

“Penetrating, active, sensible, and judicious, he acquits himself with the highest applause in the public eye, while the politeness of his manners, and the sociability of his temper, insure his welcome at every hospitable board.”

Every page from the pen of Mrs. Warren, is remarkable for clearness and vigor of thought. Thus her style was not vitiated by the artificial tastes of the day; yet her expression is often studiously elaborated, in accordance with the prevalent fashion. This is the case in her letters written with most care; while in others her ardent spirit pours out its feelings with irrepressible energy, portraying itself in the genuine and simple language of emotion. The following passage perhaps did not then appear studied, even in a familiar letter:

“The late convulsions are only the natural struggles which ensue when the genius of liberty arises to assert her rights in opposition to the ghost of tyranny. I doubt not this fell form will ere long be driven from our land; then may the western skies behold virtue (which is generally the attendant of freedom) seated on a throne of peace, where may she ever preside over the rising Commonwealth of America.”⁵

About this time, as it appears, was published *“The Group”*--a satirical dramatic piece in two Acts, in which many of the leading Tory characters of the day were humorously introduced. A strong political influence has been ascribed to this and other satirical poems from her pen. It is in allusion to this that Mrs. Adams speaks of *“a Rapatio soul”*--Governor Hutchinson being thus designated. The following description is applied to him:

“But mark the traitor--his high crime glossed o'er
 “Conceals the tender feelings of the man,
 “The social ties that bind the human heart;
 “He strikes a bargain with his country's foes,
 “And joins to wrap America in flames.
 “Yet with feigned pity, and satanic grin,
 “As if more deep to fix the keen insult,
 “Or make his life a farce still more complete,
 “He sends a groan across the broad Atlantic,
 “And with a phiz of crocodilian stamp,
 “Can weep, and wreathe, still hoping to deceive;
 “He cries--the gathering clouds hang thick about her,
 “But laughs within; then sobs--
 “Alas, my country!”

--ACT II. Scene I.

MERCY WARREN by Elizabeth F. Ellet, continues:

With the classical allusions then common, she mentions:

“...India's poisonous weed,
Long since a sacrifice to Thetis made,
A rich regale. Now all the watery dames
May snuff souchong, and sip in flowing bowls
The higher flavored choice Hysonian stream,
And leave their nectar to old Homer's gods.”

It may be imagined that such bold and keen satire would produce a marked sensation, and be severely felt by the persons against whom it was aimed. The author herself seems to have had some misgivings, fearing lest her patriotic feelings should have carried her too far. Mrs. Adams thus re-assures her:

“I observe my friend is laboring under apprehension, lest the severity with which a certain Group was drawn, was incompatible with that benevolence which ought always to be predominant in a female character. Though ‘an eagle’s talon asks an eagle’s eye,’ and satire in the hands of some is a very dangerous weapon; yet when it is so happily blended with benevolence, and is awakened only by the love of virtue and abhorrence of vice--when truth is unavoidably preserved, and ridiculous and vicious actions are alone the subject, it is so far from blamable that it is certainly meritorious.”

Mrs. Warren employed much of her leisure with her pen. She kept a faithful record of occurrences during the dark days of her country’s affliction, through times that engaged the attention both of the philosopher and the politician. She did this with the design of transmitting to posterity a faithful portraiture of the most distinguished characters of the day.

Her intention was fulfilled in her history of the war. Her poetical compositions, afterwards collected and dedicated to General Washington, were the amusement of solitude, when many of her friends were actively engaged in the field or cabinet. Some of them contain allusions to bodily sufferings, her health being far from robust. The tragedies, “The Sack of Rome,” and “The Ladies of Castile,” are more remarkable for patriotic sentiment than dramatic merit. The verse is smooth and flowing, and the language poetical, but often wanting in the simplicity essential to true pathos. An interest deeper than that of the story is awakened by the application of many passages to the circumstances of the times. The truth of the following lines must have been dolefully felt:

*“‘Mongst all the ills that hover o’er mankind,
Unfeigned, or fabled in the poet’s page,
The blackest scroll the sister furies hold
For red-eyed wrath, or malice to fill up,
Is incomplete to sum up human woe;
Till civil discord, still a darker fiend,
Stalks forth unmasked from his infernal den,
With mad Alecto’s torch in his right hand,
To light the flame, and rend the soul of nature.”*

Both these tragedies were read with interest, and much praised in after years. Alexander Hamilton writes to the author, July 1st, 1791:

“It is certain that in the ‘Ladies of Castile,’ the sex will find a new occasion of triumph. Not being a poet myself, I am in the less danger of feeling mortification at the idea that in the career of dramatic composition at least, female genius in the United States has out-stripped the male.”

The criticism of John Adams--who writes from London, Dec. 25th, 1787, is equally favorable.

“The ‘Sack of Rome’ has so much spirit in itself, that for the honor of America, I should wish to see it acted on the stage in London, before crowded audiences. The dedication of it does so much honor to me, that I should be proud to see it in print, even if it could not be acted. It requires almost as much interest and intrigue to get a play acted, as to be a member of Parliament.”

MERCY WARREN by Elizabeth F. Ellet, continues:

At another time he says of her Poems:

*"The Poems are not all of them new to me, by whom some of them have been read and esteemed some years ago. However, foolishly some European writers may have sported with American reputation for genius, literature and science, I know not where they will find a female poet of their own to prefer to the ingenious author of these compositions."*⁶

"*A Poetical Reverie*" was published before the breaking out of the war. It gives a poetical view of the future greatness of America, and the punishment of her oppressors. "*The Squabble of the Sea Nymphs*," celebrates the pouring of the tea into the sea, and is something in the Rape of the Lock style. The lines to a friend, who on the American determination to suspend all commerce with Great Britain, except for the necessaries of life, requested a poetical list of the articles the ladies might comprise under that head, have some fine satire. The reader will not object to the following specimen:

*"An inventory clear
 "Of all she needs, Lamira offers here;
 "Nor does she fear a rigid Cato's frown
 "When she lays by the rich embroidered gown,
 "And modestly compounds for just enough,
 "Perhaps some dozens of more slightly stuff:
 "With lawns and lutestrings--blond and mechlin laces,
 "Fringes and jewels, fans and tweezer cases;
 "Gay cloaks and hats, of every shape and size,
 "Scarfs, cardinals, and ribbons of all dyes;
 "With ruffles stamped, and aprons of tambour,
 "Tippeta and handkerchiefs, at least three score:
 "With finest muslins that fair India boasts,
 "And the choice herbage from Chinese coasts;
 "(But while the fragrant hyson leaf regales,
 "Who'll wear the home-spun produce of the vales?
 "For if 'twould save the nation from the curse
 "Who'll wear the home-spun produce of the vales?
 "For if 'twould save the nation from the curse
 "Of standing troops--or name a plague still worse,
 "Few can this choice delicious draught give up,
 "Though all Medea's poisons fill the cup.)
 "Add feathers, furs, rich satins, and ducapes,
 "And head-dresses in pyramidal shapes;⁷
 "Side-boards of plate, and porcelain profuse,
 "With fifty dittos that the ladies use;*

*"If my poor treacherous memory has missed,
 "Ingenious T---I shall complete the list.
 "So weak Lamira, and her wants so few,
 "Who can refuse? They're but the sex's due.
 "In youth, indeed, an antiquated page
 "Taught us the threatenings of a Hebrew sage
 "'Gainst wimples, mantles, curls and crimping pins,
 "But rank not these among our modern sins;
 "For when our manners are well understood,
 "What in the scale is stomacher or hood?
 "'Tis true, we love the courtly mien and air,
 "The pride of dress, and all the debonair:
 "Yet Clara quits the more dressed negligé,
 "And substitutes the careless polance;
 "Until some fair one from Britannia's court
 "Some jaunty dress, or newer taste import,
 "This sweet temptation could not be withstood,
 "Though for the purchase paid her father's blood;
 "Though loss of freedom were the costly price,
 "Or flaming comets sweep the angry skies;
 "Or earthquakes rattle, or volcanoes roar;
 "Indulge this trifle, and she asks no more ;
 "Can the stern patriot Clara's suit deny?
 "'Tis beauty asks, and reason must comply."*

The powers of Mrs. Warren were devoted to nobler objects than chastising the follies of the day. She gave her tenderest sympathies to the sufferings of her friends, and poured the balm of consolation into many a wounded heart. The letters of Mrs. Adams show how much she leaned, amidst her heavy trials, on this faithful support. Nor was her kindness limited to the circle of her acquaintance. Every sufferer from this cruel war had a claim her heart acknowledged, and her benevolence went forth on its gentle mission among strangers. She addressed a letter of condolence to the widow of the brave Montgomery, Jan. 20th, 1776, in which the consolatory suggestions are those of a patriot and a Christian.

"While you are deriving comfort," she says, "from the highest source, it may still further brighten the clouded moment to reflect that the number of your friends is not confined to the narrow limits of a province, but by the happy union of the American Colonies, (suffering equally by the rigor of oppression,) the affections of the inhabitants are cemented; and the urn of the companion of your heart will be sprinkled with the tears of thousands who revere the commander at the Gates of Quebec, though not personally acquainted with General Montgomery."

Montgomery, as is known, married Janet Livingston, a sister of Chancellor Robert R. Livingston. Her life was a secluded one, and affords few materials for biography; but her letters expressive of her feelings have a deep interest. Mrs. Warren says with truth--writing to her Nov. 25th, 1777:

"The sensibility of soul, the pathos of grief so strongly marked in your letters, have convinced me that the brave Montgomery had a partner worthy of his character."

The following is an extract from her letter in reply to Mrs. Warren:

"My dear Madam,

"The sympathy that is expressed in every feature of your letter, claims from me the warmest acknowledgments; and the professions of friendship from one who so generously feels and melts at the woes of a stranger, not only soothe but flatter me.

"It is very kind of you, madam, to seek for alleviating consolations in a calamity (though of so much glory). I thank God I feel part of their force, and it is owing to such affectionate friends as you, that have lightened the load of misery.

"As a wife I must ever mourn the loss of the husband, friend and lover; of a thousand virtues, of all domestic bliss; the idol of my warmest affections, and in one word, my every dream of happiness. But with America I weep the still greater loss of the firm soldier and the friend to freedom. Let me repeat his last words when we parted: 'You shall never blush for your Montgomery.'"

"Nobly has he kept his word; but how are my sorrows heightened! Methinks I am like the poor widow in the Gospel, who having given her mite, sits down quite destitute. Yet would I endeavor to look forward to the goal with hope; and though the path is no longer strewn with flowers, trust to the sustaining hand of friendship to lead me safely through, and in assisting me to rise superior to my misfortunes, make me content to drag out the remainder of life, till the Being who has deprived me of husband and father, will kindly close the melancholy scene, and once more unite me to them in a world of peace, where the tyrant shall no more wantonly shed the blood of his innocent subjects, and where vice and virtue will receive their reward."

All the letters of Mrs. Montgomery preserved in the correspondence of Mrs. Warren; dwell on her irreparable loss, breathing a tender sorrow, mingled with an ardent spirit of patriotism. She writes, Nov. 20th, 1780:

"I have been interrupted. Another alarm of the enemy's being in full march for Saratoga, and the poor harassed militia are again called upon. My impatient spirit pants for peace. When shall the unfortunate individual have the gloomy satisfaction of weeping alone for his own particular losses! In this luckless state, woes follow woes--every moment is big with something fatal. We hold our lives and fortunes on the most precarious tenure. Had Arnold's plan taken place, we could not have escaped from a fate dreadful in thought, for these polished Britons have proved themselves fertile in inventions to procrastinate [protract] misery."

When going with her nephew to visit her husband's family in Dublin, her patriotic feeling is still fervent:

"When I return," she says, "I hope to find my dear country, for which I have bled, the envy of her enemies and the glory of her patriots."

The friendships formed by Mrs. Warren were not short-lived. The letters addressed to her evince the warmth of attachment she inspired; and her own true heart never swerved from its faith. The interchange of sentiments was continued for years; and when interrupted, resumed with the same affectionate ardor as soon as the obstacles were removed. Mrs. Washington was one of her favorite correspondents. On her visit to head-quarters in Cambridge, Mrs. Warren invited her to her house, and paid her many attentions. Her letter from Valley Forge describing their accommodations, and others have been elsewhere published. The Commander-in-chief joined in his wife's feelings of regard.

Another of Mrs. Warren's intimate friends, was Hannah Winthrop, the wife of Dr. Winthrop, of Cambridge. Her letters discover a mind of no common order. They corresponded sometimes under the signatures of Honoria and Philomela, the last name being bestowed on Mrs. Warren for her powers of song. The poetical signature assumed by Mrs. Warren was "Marcia," afterwards given at her request to a beloved grand-daughter. But as the subjects became momentous on which the two wrote, the fanciful appellations were dropped. Some portions of Mrs. Winthrop's letters are so characteristic, that extracts will be interesting. She writes, in Jan. 1773,

"I think one of the most extraordinary political maneuvers this century has produced, is the ministerial mandate to the Newportians for transporting them a thousand leagues for trial. Oh, America! You have reason to tremble and arouse, if we of this side of the Atlantic are not able to say to this Royal Vengeance--Hitherto shalt thou come and no further; here shall thy proud waves be stayed! I should rejoice to see the Plymouthean spirit prevail, which discovers such noble disinterested virtue, and such a sacred regard to rights purchased at the expense of every thing valuable by those persevering, self-denying patriarchs, who, if permitted to be spectators of these terrestrial scenes, must view those of their sons who set so little value upon the dear bought purchases, with displeasure. Many are waiting impatiently the meeting of our assembly. I hope Colonel Warren will not fail of favoring his country with his presence at that important crisis, when every eye will be upon our political fathers."

Again, Jan. 1st, 1774, her patriotic spirit breaks out.

"Yonder, the destruction of the detestable weed, made so by cruel exaction, engages our attention. The virtuous and noble resolution of America's sons, in defiance of threatened desolation and misery from arbitrary despots,

demands our highest regard. May they yet be endowed with all that firmness necessary to carry them through all their difficulties, till they come off conquerors. We hope to see good accounts of the tea cast away on the Cape. The union of the Colonies, the firm and sedate resolution of the people, is an omen for good unto us. And be it known unto Britain, even American daughters are politicians and patriots, and will aid the good work with their female efforts.

"Nor can she ever forget, nor will old time ever erase--the horrors of that midnight cry, preceding the bloody massacre at Lexington, when we were roused from the benign slumbers of the season, by beat of drum and ringing of bells, with the dire alarm that a thousand of the troops of George the Third had gone forth to murder the peaceful inhabitants of the surrounding villages. A few hours, with the dawning day, convinced us the bloody purpose was executing; the platoon firing assuring us the rising sun must witness the bloody carnage. Not knowing what the event would be at Cambridge, at the return of these bloody ruffians, and seeing another brigade dispatched to the assistance of the former, looking with the ferocity of barbarians, it seemed necessary to retire to some place of safety till the calamity was passed. My partner had been confined a fortnight by sickness. After dinner we set out, not knowing whither we went. We were directed to a place called Fresh-pond, about a mile from the town; but what a distressed house did we find it, filled with women whose husbands had gone forth to meet the assailants, seventy or eighty of these (with number-less infant children,) weeping and agonizing for the fate of their husbands. In addition to this scene of distress, we were for sometime in sight of the battle; the glittering instruments of death proclaiming by an incessant [fire] that much blood must be shed; that many widowed and orphaned ones [must] be left as monuments of British barbarity. Another uncomfortable night we passed; some nodding in their chairs; some resting their weary limbs on the floor. The welcome harbingers of day gave notice of its dawning light. [It] brings no news. It is unsafe to return to Cambridge, as the enemy were advancing up the river, and fixing on the town to stay in.

“Thus with precipitancy we were driven to the town of Anderson, following some of our acquaintance--five of us to be conveyed with one poor tired horse and chaise; thus we began our pilgrimage, alternately walking and riding, the roads filled with frightened women and children; some in carts with their tattered furniture, others on foot fleeing into the woods. But what added greatly to the horrors of the scene was our passing through the bloody field at Monotong, which was strewn with the mangled bodies. We met one affectionate father with a cart, looking for his murdered son, and picking up his neighbors who had fallen in battle, in order for their burial.

“July 8th, 1775--Our barrack, or wigwam, or whatever name you may please to give it when you see it, ornamented with broken chairs and un-legged tables, with shattered etceteras, is entirely at your service. Methinks I need not repeat the pleasure I shall have in administering comfort to my friends.”

She writes in the following August, after the conflagration of Charlestown:

“The laying a whole town in ashes, after repeated promises that if they would protect their troops in their return from Concord, it should be the last place that should suffer harm! How did they give shelter to the wounded expiring soldiers! Their houses, their beds were prepared to receive them; the women readily engaged in pouring balm into their wounds, making broths and cordials to support their exhausted spirits, for at that time the softer sex had not been inured to trickling blood and gaping wounds. Some of the unhappy victims died. They gave up the ghost blessing the hands that gave relief; and now in return for this kindness, they take the first opportunity to make five hundred householders miserable; involving many a poor widow and orphan in one common ruin. Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and let the inhabitants of America tremble to fall into the hands of such a merciless foe.”

The following extract, the last that will be given from Mrs. Winthrop's letters, describes the entry into Cambridge of the captive army of Burgoyne. The letter bears date November 11th, 1777:

“It is not a great while since I wrote my dear friend on my disappointment in not paying her a visit. Now methinks I hear her wondering how it is with her Cambridge

friends, who are at this time delayed with British and Hessian--what shall I call them? Who are prancing and patrolling in every corner of the town, ornamented with their glittering side-arms--weapons of destruction. A short detail of our situation may perhaps amuse you. You will be able to form a judgment of our unhappy circumstances. Last Thursday, which was a very stormy day, a large number of British troops came softly through the town via Watertown to Prospect Hill. On Friday we heard the Hessians were to make a procession in the same route. We thought we should have nothing to do but view them as they passed. To be sure the sight was truly astonishing. I never had the least idea that the creation produced such a sordid set of creatures in human figure--poor, dirty, emaciated men. Great numbers of women who seemed to be the beasts of burden, having bushel-baskets on their backs, by which they were bent double. The contents seemed to be pots and kettles, various sorts of furniture, children peeping through gridirons and other utensils--some very young infants, who were born on the road--the women barefoot, clothed in dirty rags. Such effluvia filled the air while they were passing, that had they not been smoking all the time, I should have been apprehensive of being contaminated. After a noble-looking advanced guard, General Burgoyne headed this terrible group on horseback. The other generals also clothed in blue cloaks Hessians, Waldeckers, Anspackers, Brunswickers, etc., etc., followed on. The Hessian generals gave us a polite bow as they passed. Not so the British. Their baggage-wagons [were] drawn by poor, half-starved horses. But to bring up the rear another fine, noble-looking guard of American brawny victorious yeomanry, who assisted bringing these sons of slavery to terms. Some of our wagons drawn by fat oxen, driven by joyous-looking Yankees, closed the cavalcade. The generals and other officers, went to Bradish's, where they quarter at present. The privates trudged through thick and thin to the hills, where we thought they were to be confined. But what was our surprise, when in the morning we beheld an inundation of those disagreeable objects filling our streets? How mortifying is it!--they in a manner demanding our houses and colleges for their genteel accommodation. Did the brave General Gates ever mean this? Did our legislature ever intend the military should prevail above the civil? Is

there not a degree of unkindness in loading poor Cambridge, almost ruined before this great army seemed to be let loose upon us! What will be the consequence, time will discover. Some polite ones say we ought not to look on them as prisoners--that they are persons of distinguished rank. Perhaps, too, we must not view them in the light of enemies. I fear this distinction will be soon lost. Surprising that our general, or any of our colonels, should insist on the first university in America being disbanded for their more genteel accommodation; and we, poor oppressed people, seek an asylum in the woods against a piercing winter! Where is the stern virtue of a ----, who opposed such infractions, in former days? Who is there to plead our cause? Pity-pity it is our Assembly had not settled these matters before their adjournment. It will be vastly more difficult to abridge them after such an unbounded license. Perhaps you may see some of them at Plymouth. For my part, I think insults, famine, and a train of evils present themselves to view. General Burgoyne dined on Saturday in Boston with General ----. He rode through the town properly attended, down Court street and through the main street; and on his return walked on foot to Charlestown Ferry, followed by a great number of spectators as ever attended a Pope; and generously observed to an officer with him, the decent and modest behavior of the inhabitants as he passed; saying, if he had been conducting prisoners through the city of London, not all the Guards of Majesty could have prevented insults. He likewise acknowledges Lincoln and Arnold to be great generals. It is said we shall have not less than seven thousand persons to feed in Cambridge and its environs, more than its inhabitants. Two hundred and fifty cords of wood will not serve them a week. Think then how we must be distressed. Wood has risen to 5£. 10s. per cord, and but a little to be purchased. I never thought I could lie down to sleep surrounded by these enemies; but we strangely become inured to those things which appear difficult when distant.

“If you like anecdotes, I will give you one more: When General Phillips was traveling back of Albany, where it is very rocky and barren, he expressed his astonishment that they should ever cross the Atlantic, and go through such difficulty to conquer so unfavorable a country, which would not be

worth keeping when conquered. When they came upon the fertile banks of Connecticut River, General Whipple said to him, ‘This is the country which we are fighting for.’ ‘Ah,’ replied the General, ‘this is a country worth a ten years’ war.’”

Her indignation does not seem to have subsided at once In February she says:

“Methinks I hear Mrs. Warren wondering how they do at head-quarters at Cambridge. Perhaps her wonder may increase when I tell her the British officers live in the most luxurious manner possible, rioting on the fat of the land, and talking at large with the self-importance of lords of the soil.”

To return to Mrs. Warren. From her retirement, in which she was constantly visited by her friends, she continued to watch the progress of the struggle, and to treasure her observations for the historical work she had in contemplation. Early in 1777 she writes to her friend, Mrs. Macaulay:

“The approaching spring appears big with the fate of empires, and the wheels of revolution move in swift progression. They may smite the diadem from the brow, and shake some tyrant from his throne before he is aware. The flatterers of majesty may be more attended to than the prophetic voice that augurs evil; yet when the mene tekel is inscribed on the walls of the palace, it cannot be blotted out by the hand of the prince who humbles not himself, though he sees the works that have been done in the days of his fathers.”

After the close of the war, Mrs. Macaulay visited this country, and met with a reception due to the celebrity her works had gained. Her principles endeared her to the Americans, who were willing to bestow lasting honor on such as had distinguished themselves by the sword or the pen in defense of their opinions. Mrs. Warren says of her, writing to Mr. Adams,

“She is a lady of most extraordinary talents, of commanding genius, and brilliancy of thought. This, in my opinion, often outruns her capacity of expression.”

Mrs. Warren’s correspondence with Mr. Adams continued while he remained abroad. From time to time she demands of him an account of the busy and important scenes in which he is engaged; and when she fails to receive intelligence, playfully accuses the watery nymphs of Neptune’s court of having robbed the woodland dames of America. This was in allusion to the practice during the war, of sinking all packages in case of capture. “Otherwise,” she

says, “*a folio from the court of France would, ere this, have reached Braintree, and one small octavo at least have found its way to Plymouth.*” The statesman was under an engagement to make observations for the use of more than one woman on the western side of the Atlantic. In a letter to him, dated October, 1778, she thus mentions Franklin:

“Are you, sir, as much in the good graces of the Parisian ladies, as your venerable colleague, Dr. F-? We often hear he is not more an adept in politics than a favorite of the ladies. He has too many compliments of graduation and esteem from each quarter of the globe, to make it of any consequence whether I offer my little tribute of respect or not. Yet I would tell him as a friend to mankind, as a daughter of America, and a lover of every exalted character, that no one more sincerely wishes the continuance of his health and usefulness; and so disinterested is my regard, that I do not wish him to leave the soft caresses of the court of France; for his unpolished country women will be more apt to gaze at and admire the virtues of the philosopher, than to embrace the patriotic sage?”

A soul like Mrs. Warren’s must have been continually saddened by grief and pity, in the view not only of the miseries of war, but the depravity prevalent as one of its consequences. Yet while she mourned the crimes and follies of many to whom her country looked for succor, she followed with ardent admiration the career of those incorruptible patriots who kept their faith unshaken by misfortune or temptation. Her anxieties and hopes were freely communicated to her friends, whose answers show the intense interest felt in every movement. Miss Catharine Livingston, the sister of Mrs. Montgomery, writes in April, 1781:

“The news from the southward is by no means so favorable as the sanguine among us expected. Arnold, it is feared, will get off safely as well as Cornwallis. I think the British understand retreat better than we do pursuit. It has been an observation, this war, whenever the expectations of the multitude were raised to almost a certainty of success, the event has turned directly opposite to their views. This I believe we may extend to private, as well as public concerns.”

A letter from Mrs. Montgomery, the year previous, so agreeably describes Mrs. Jay, that an extract must be given:

“You speak of my dear friend Mrs. Jay. We have heard from her at Hispaniola, where she was obliged to put in after the storm, in which she had like to have been taken. When she

arrives at Paris, I expect to hear from her; if in the descriptive way, it shall be entirely at your service. She is one of the most worthy women I know--has a great fund of knowledge, and makes use of most charming language; added to this she is very handsome, which will secure her a welcome with the unthinking, whilst her understanding will gain her the hearts of the most worthy. Her manners will do honor to our country women; and I really believe will please even at the splendid court of Madrid.

“The starting tear, and the heaving sigh, interrupt my thread. Strange that self will forever discover itself! I find I am to learn much before I become a philosopher; but in every instance of my life I hope you, my dear madam, will ever find me your most sincere friend and humble servant,

“ J. MONTGOMERY.”

Mrs. Warren wrote many letters to her sons at college, containing sound advice, of which she preserved copies labeling the packages for the use of her grand children. Space can be afforded for but a single passage from one of these parental missives:

“I am persuaded you will never counteract those native dictates that lead you to struggle for distinction by cherishing that ambition that dignifies the rational creature. May you extend your views beyond the narrow limits of time, that you may rank not only with those models of virtue and heroism that have been so much your admiration from your earliest youth, but may be able to stand with confidence before HIM who discriminates character not according to the weak decisions of man, but by the unerring scale of eternal truth.”

Rochefoucault, in his Travels in the United States, speaks of Mrs. Warren’s extensive and varied reading. She was then seventy; and he says, “*truly interesting; for, lively in conversation, she has lost neither the activity of her mind, nor the graces of her person.*” Her History of the Revolution was written, but not published till some years afterwards. This work exhibits her as a writer in advance of the age. Its sound judgment and careful research, with its clear and vigorous style, give it a high and lasting value. Her portraiture of Mr. Adams gave offence to the great statesman, which for a time threatened to interrupt the affectionate relations between the two families. But after a sharp correspondence it was amicably settled; and as a token of reconciliation, Mrs. Adams sent her friend a ring containing her own and her husband’s hair. This is now in the possession of one of Mrs. Warren’s descendants.

For many years before her death Mrs. Warren was afflicted with the failure of her sight; but she submitted to the trial with pious resignation, continuing to receive with cheerfulness the company that frequented her house, and to correspond with her friends by means of a secretary. A passage from a letter to one of her sons, written in 1799, amidst the convulsions that agitated Europe, may serve to show that she still occasionally indulged in the elaborate style so much in vogue:

“The ices of the Poles seem to be dissolved to swell the tide of popularity on which swim the idols of the day; but when they have had their day, the tide will retire to its level, and perhaps leave the floating lumber on the strand with other perishable articles, not thought worth the hazard of attempting their recovery.”

Towards the close of her protracted life, her influence did not diminish; for her mental superiority was still unimpaired and acknowledged. Seldom has one woman in any age, acquired such an ascendancy over the strongest, by the mere force of a powerful intellect. She is said to have supplied political parties with their arguments; and she was the first of her sex in America who taught the reading world in matters of state policy and history. By her own relatives and connections she was revered and beloved in a degree that affords the best testimony to her elevated character, and the faithfulness with which she had discharged her duty towards them. The influence commanded by her talents was enhanced by her virtues, and by the deep religious feeling which governed her throughout life. Her descendants are still taught to cherish her memory with reverent affection.

The portrait from which the engraving is taken, was painted by Copley. A lady who visited Mrs. Warren in 1807, describes her as at that time erect in person, and in

conversation full of intelligence and eloquence. Her dress was a steel-colored silk gown, with short sleeves and very long waist; the black silk skirt being covered in front with a white lawn apron. She wore a lawn mob-cap, and gloves covering the arm to the elbows, cut off at the fingers.

In her last illness, her constant fear was that she might lose her mental faculties as death approached. She prayed to be spared this; and her prayer was granted. With an expression of thankfulness upon her lips--that reason was clear, and the vision of her spirit unclouded--she passed to the rest that awaits the faithful Christian, October 19th, 1814, in the eighty-seventh year of her age.

Footnotes:

¹ This date, with that of her death, is taken from the entry in the family Bible at Plymouth.

² Letter, July 14th, 1774. All the extracts from letters in this memoir are from the manuscript correspondence of Mrs. Warren, in the possession of her daughter-in-law, who resides at Plymouth. This lady is herself a descendant of Governor Winslow, whose family inter-married with the Warrens in the fourth and sixth generations. One of the curiosities of her parlor is an easy chair belonging to Governor Winslow, which was brought over in the Mayflower. The iron staples are still attached, by which it was fastened to the cabin floor of the Pilgrim ship; and its present covering is the dress of white brocade richly embroidered, worn by Mercy Warren on the day after her marriage. Some of the ancient china also remains; several pieces one hundred and fifty years old, are of surpassing beauty.

³ Letter, August 24, 1775.

⁴ Letter, October, 1775.

⁵ Letter to Mrs. Lathrop, 1775.

⁶ Letter to Mrs. Warren, Dec. 26th, 1790.

⁷ It is mentioned in Sanderson's Biography of the Signers of Independence, that the Whig ladies of Philadelphia having adopted the Tory fashion of high head-dresses, after the evacuation of the city by the British, some Whigs dressed a Negress in the full costume of a loyalist lady, took her to a place of resort, where the fashionables displayed their towering top-knots, seating her in a conspicuous place,--and afterwards paraded her through the city. Nothing, however, could stop the progress of the fashion, which for a season became general in America.

THE GENIUS OF AMERICA WEeping THE ABSURD FOLLIES OF THE DAY, OCTOBER 10, 1778

By Mercy Otis Warren *

O TEMPORA! O MORES!

Beneath the lofty pine that shades the plain,
Where the blue mount o'erlooks the western main,
I saw Columbia's weeping Genius stand,
A blacken'd scroll hung waving in her hand.
The pensive fair, in broken accents said,
Shall freedom's cause by vice be thus betray'd?
Behold the schedule that unfolds the crimes
And marks the manners of these modern times
She sigh'd and wept--the folly of the age,
The selfish passions, and the mad'ning rage
For pleasure's soft debilitating charms,
Running full riot in cold avarice' arms;

Who grasps the dregs of base oppressive gains,
While luxury in high profusion reigns.
Our country bleeds, and bleeds at every pore,
Yet gold's the deity whom all adore;
Except a few, whose probity of soul
No bribe could purchase, nor no fears control
A chosen few, who dar'd to stem the tide
Of British vengeance in the pomp of pride,
When George's fleets with every sail unfurl'd,
And by his hand the reeking dagger hurl'd,
The sharpen'd steel, the angry ferries held
And Albion's offspring strew'd the purple field
With kindred blood, warm from his brother's veins
The crimson flood each field and village stains
Yet back recoil'd the reeking bloody hilt,
And slaughter'd millions mark'd the tyrant's guilt.

But 'midst the carnage the weak monarch made,
Stern bending down his awful grandsire's shade,
Bespoke the pupil of the Scottish thane,
"Why fully thus the glories of my reign?
"The western world oft for my house has bled,
"And Brunswick's friends--lie mingled with the dead?
"In yon fair fields of glory and renown,
"Now independent of thy trembling crown,
"The lustre of thy diadem is fled,
"The brightest jewel that adorn'd thy head;
"America--no more supports thy reign,
"Nor freedom will forgive her martyrs slain,
"As I shot down across th' empurpled plains,
"Whole cities burn'd, and Vulcan forg'd new chains,
"Yet dying patriots clasp'd the darling son,
"And bid him gird the warlike helmet on.
"The cold lip quiver'd on the blood stain'd ground,
"The spirit rifting from the ghastly wound,
"The hero sob'd--the glorious work complete,
"And Britain's Barbarous policy defeat;
"Tis heav'n commands, and freedom is the prize,
"Adieu, my son--death steals thy father's eyes."

The stern majestic form about to rise,
The guardian goddess met him--from the skies;
"Tis just, she cry'd--I urg'd the battle on,"
And, pointing down--"see, there the trophies won,
"While they believ'd heav'n's uncontrol'd decree,
"That virtue only made them brave and free."

The trump of war from shore to shore resounds,
And the shrill echo o'er the vale rebounds;
The distant nations hear the dread alarm,
Enkindled Europe for the conflict arm;
The Gallic powers, the western peasants join,
And distant legions form in freedom's line;
America is hail'd from sea to sea,
Sits independent, glorious, and free;
Propitious heaven approv'd, and smil'd benign,
And guards of angels aided her design;
While still her senate, vigilant and wise,
Spreads wide her fame, and lifts her to the skies,

But he who holds the universal chain
Of all events, his system will maintain;
He through the whole creation has decreed,
Effects must follow as our actions lead;
All nature shows that heaven ne'er design'd,
Spite of themselves, to save and bless mankind.
The friendly genius lifted slow her veil,
And still hid half the melancholy tale;
When, lo! She fight'd, the happy prospect dies,
Guilt has provok'd the vengeance of the skies;
As wealth pour'd in from every distant shore,
The gaudy lap of luxury ran o'er;
The blacken'd passions all at once let loose,
And rampant crimes scarce ask'd for an excuse.

So dissolute--yet so polite the town,
Like Hogarth's days, the world's turn'd upside down;
Old Juvenal, who censur'd former crimes,
Or Churchill's pen, in more satiric rhymes,
Or crabbed Swift, in yet a rougher stile,
Might lash the vices of a venal isle,

If sermons, satires, or the law of heaven,
(Though it again from Sinai's mount were given)
Should all combine to censure modish vice,
It can't be wrong, when fashion sanctifies.

Hogarth might paint, and Churchill lash the times,
Compar'd with moderns, modest were their crimes;
Not Swift himself could now defame the age,
Truth might be told in each sarcastic page;
Whoe'er delights to show mankind absurd,
The life in vogue may ample room afford;

The early creed of lisping girls and boys,
Is taste, high life, and pleasure's--guilty joys;
The modest stile the heedless parent taught,
And sins run rank, from levity of thought;
Ere the big cloud that shook the north retires,
Each generous movement of the soul expires;
All public faith, and private justice dead,
And patriot zeal by patriots betray'd;
While hot bed plants of yesterday shoot up,
Erect their heads, and reach the cedar's top.

Thankless to heaven, and to the men ingrate,
Who ventur'd all to save a sinking state;
Who kept the thatter'd bark, and stood the deck,
When timid helmsmen left her as a wreck.
Those godlike men, those lovers of mankind,
Have naught to retrospect that pains the mind;
Placid they move amidst an heedless band,
And fight in silence o'er a guilty land.

But when old Time is so decrepit grown,
His worn out car no more will bear him on,
When Fame throws by her faithless tinkling tube,
That carol'd falsehoods round the lifting globe,
The evergreens on yonder ether plains,
Eternal flourish to reward their pains.

Thus truth exhibits virtue in an age,
When vice, unblushing, stalk'd across the stage,
And star'd around with hideous prowling eyes,
To catch the heedless witting as he flies;
The disputant, who enters on the lift,
To foil a Newton, or to win at whist.
He lives a sceptic, if you take his word,
Thinks 'tis heroic to deny his God,
Or to dispute his providential care
Deride his precepts, or to scoff at prayer;
His coat, his creed, his faith and genius too,
Are moderniz'd as fashion forms the cue;
Prompt and alert, with erudition fraught,
Than Locke, or Boyle, in ethics better taught;
Me swears the taste the bon ton of the times,
By moralists can ne'er be constru'd crimes
Most modern writers are much better bred,
Voltaire and Hoyle, the authors he has read,
Discard such antique, odd ideas of truth,
Such musty rules for regulating youth.

Lord Bolingbroke, among the wits a toast;
And Mandeville, the sceptic's empty boast;
Reason so clear, that e'en their pigmy race
Who swarm and cluster in each public place,
With scientific brow can demonstrate,
Whate'er the pious sage or priest may prate,
Virtue is an enthusiastic dream,
Reveal'd religion, a long worn out theme.

At bacchanalian feasts, it is the mode
To pour libations to the red ey'd God,
'Till penetration so out runs his sense
That the arcana of omnipotence,

Brought to the reas'ner's superficial left,
The Christian code becomes his wanton test.
Scarce any decent principles remain,
A fool's cap, perch'd on folly's feather'd brain,
Is the learn'd signal for the warm debate
On Voltaire's creed--or the decrees of fate;
'Till graceful so improves the plan,
The deist blushes at his bolder strain;
His flowing stile, and easy periods such,
His influence sinks, because he doubts too much
This smooth romantic bard, from east to west,
Has conjurg'd up each sceptical protest
'Gainst all religion--ev'n the most sublime,
Oral or wrote--of late or modern time.
All hope renounc'd of an immortal state,
By rote his pupils' syllogisms prate--
Annihilation dissipates all fear,
We can but suffer and enjoy while here.

As ignis fatuus floats' from lake to bog,
The vapor plays in pestilential fog,
Sparkles and links in the dark marshy tomb,
As modern wits in metaphysic fume.
Yet they assume a self important air,
Or to confound, or proselyte the fair,
Who no ideas have of other heaven,
If dress, parade, and a gallant is given;
Who rail aloud 'gainst puritanic rules,
And learn their moals in deistic schools ;
Who prattle nonsense with the half fledg'd beau,
Can cog the die, and raffle high or low;
In folly's lap, by childish passions toss'd,
On vanity's delusive shallow coast;
The rippling surface hides the deep abyss,
That gapes destruction, while the hydra's hiss,
Unheard as pleasure's fascinating song,
In gales perfum'd, the triflers hurl along.
While wide spread ruin stalks from door to door,
Famine and sword still threat'ning to devour,
How many dance on dissipation's wing,
No pen can paint, nor can the poet sing.

Profoundly learn'd, investigating truth,
And thus thrown off the shackles of his youth.
He's wisest sure who makes the most of life.
Prefers a mistress to a sober wife;
The coxcomb laughs, and revels life away,
White gaming high's the business of the day;
Pleasure shall dance in every festive bowl,
The Brute's secure—the Man has not a soul.

Finis

Footnotes:

*This piece was written when a most remarkable depravity of manners pervaded the cities of the United States, in consequence of a state of war; a relaxation of government; the sudden acquisition of fortune; a depreciating currency; and a new intercourse with foreign nations.



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The definitions of moral character are from Noah Webster's **1828 DICTIONARY**:

character — a mark made by cutting or engraving, as on stone, metal or other hard material...a mark or figure made by stamping or impression...the peculiar qualities, impressed by nature or habit on a person, which distinguish him from others.

charity — love, benevolence, good will.

chastity — purity of the body,...freedom from obscenity, as in language or conversation.

civility — the state of being civilized; refinement of manners; good breeding; politeness; complaisance; courtesy,...civilities denote acts of politeness.

complaisance — a pleasing deportment; courtesy; that manner of address and behavior in social intercourse which gives pleasure; civility.

complaisant — pleasing in manners; courteous; obliging.

courtesy — elegance or politeness of manners; especially, politeness connected with kindness; civility...to treat with civility.

ethics — the doctrines of morality or social manners...a system of moral principles.

evil — having bad qualities of a moral kind; wicked; corrupt; perverse; wrong...moral evil is any deviation of a moral agent from the rules of conduct prescribed to him by God, or by legitimate human authority.

felicity — happiness; blessedness.

fidelity — faithfulness; careful and exact observance of duty,...honesty; veracity.

humble — lowly, modest; meek.

humility — in ethics, freedom from pride and arrogance; humbleness of mind.

industry — habitual diligence in any employment, either bodily or mental.

justice — the virtue which consists in giving everyone what is his due...honesty and integrity in commerce or mutual intercourse.

manner — form; method; way of performing or executing; custom; habitual practice.

mannerly — with civility; respectfully; without rudeness.

manners — deportment; carriage; behavior; conduct; course of life; in a moral sense.

modesty — that lowly temper which accompanies a moderate estimate of one's own worth and importance.

moral — relating to the practice, manners or conduct of men as social beings in relation to each other, and with reference to right and wrong. The word moral is applicable to actions that are good or evil, virtuous, or vicious, and has reference to the law of God as the standard by which their character is to be determined.

morality — the doctrine or system of moral duties, or duties of men in their social character; ethics.

polite — literally, smooth, glossy, and used in this sense till within a century. Being polished or elegant in manners; refined in behavior; well bred; courteous; complaisant; obliging.

precept — in a general sense, any commandment or order intended as an authoritative rule of action; but applied particularly to commands respecting moral conduct. The Ten Commandments are so many precepts for the regulation of our moral conduct.

principle — in a general sense, the cause, source or origin of anything; that from which a thing proceeds; as the principle of motion; the principles of actions;...ground; foundation; that which supports an assertion, an action, or a series of actions or of reasoning....a general truth; a law comprehending many subordinate truths; as the principles of morality, of law, of government, etc.

quality — property; that which belongs to a body or substance, or can be predicated of it...virtue or particular power of producing certain effects...disposition; temper...virtue or vice as good qualities, or bad qualities...character.

refinement — the act of purifying by separating from a substance all extraneous matter;...polish of language; elegance; purity,...purity of heart; the state of the heart purified from sensual and evil affections.

rule — government,...control; supreme command or authority;...that which is established as a principle, standard or directory; that by which anything is to be adjusted or regulated, or to which it is to be conformed...established mode or course of proceeding prescribed in private life. Every man should have some fixed rules for managing his own affairs.

strength — firmness; solidity or toughness...power of resisting attacks; fastness.

temperance — moderation; particularly, habitual, moderation in regard to the indulgence of the natural appetites and passions.

truth — conformity to fact or reality; true state of facts.

valor — strength of mind in regard to danger; that quality which enables a man to encounter danger with firmness; person bravery.

veracity — habitual observance of truth.

vice — properly, a spot or defect; a fault; a blemish...in ethics, any voluntary action or course of conduct which deviates from the rules of moral rectitude, or from the plain rules of propriety...corruption of manners.

virtue — strength, the practice of moral duties and abstaining from vice...the practice of moral duties from sincere love to God and His laws, is virtue and religion.