

**AN ADDRESS TO THE MEMBERS
OF THE BAR OF SUFFOLK, MASS.
AT
THEIR STATED MEETING ON THE
FIRST TUESDAY OF MARCH, 1824**

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An Address to the Members of the Bar of Suffolk, Mass. At Their Stated Meeting on the First Tuesday of March, 1824 by William Sullivan

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WILLIAM SULLIVAN

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The North American Review

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ADDRESS

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BAR

OF

Suffolk, Mass.

AT

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ON THE

FIRST TUESDAY OF MARCH, 1824.

By WILLIAM SULLIVAN.

BOSTON,

PRESS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

L. E. BOTS, PRINTER.

1825.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SUFFOLK BAR,

ON the day when this Address was delivered, you did me the honor to request a copy for the press. I then thought, that you complimented *your own brotherly good will*, much more than the *merit* of these hasty sketches.

Since that time, several members of the Bar, and some gentlemen, who are not of the Bar, have expressed an opinion that the *facts* stated, ought to be published. I have, therefore, concluded, though at a late period, to comply with your request. I am, however, apprehensive that, *as to the public*, I shall have done little more than to evince the regard, which an individual may feel for his profession; and, *as to yourselves*, to avail myself of an opportunity to repeat the

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grateful acknowledgments which are due, for the honor which you have conferred, during several successive years; and to express the affectionate respect, with which, I am,

Gentlemen,

Your Friend, and Brother,

WILLIAM SULLIVAN.

APRIL 25, 1825.

Address.



As we find civil society, every where, divided into classes, which are engaged in some one description of labor, and that these classes subdivide, as numbers and wealth increase, it may be inferred, that it was the design of the AUTHOR of our being, that the means of subsistence, and of comfort, should be promoted by *division of labor*. Possibly, every individual is formed by nature, to labor, in some one department, more successfully than in any other. There are instances of original, native propensity, to excel in certain employments; especially in music, sculpture, painting, and in mathematical pursuits. There are instances of genius breaking through all

obstacles, and attaining, almost without the aid of education, to eminent distinction. There are instances of very early indications of vicious propensities, which no discipline could eradicate. The difficulty of deciding whether there be, or be not, a natural adaptation to particular employment, lies in the inability to determine *how much* of any character, which we examine, is original, and how much is imitative and derived from education.

Selections of employment are commonly made at an age, when original or acquired dispositions are not unfolded; and when fitness or unfitness, whether from nature or from education, or from both, can hardly be ascertained. Selections are often made from misapprehension, or from accident, or from causes which cannot be controlled. Unsuccessful effort, in one department, does not negative the supposition, that eminence might have been found in some other. We are, at this day, familiar with inventions and discoveries, which, if foretold, would have seemed exceedingly visionary; but it may not be a mere imagination, that among the improvements of future times, will be that of discerning in early life the department of labor, to which each one is best adapted.

Among classes of men, by whatever means the members become associated, there must always be a community of interests. Each class is, for some purposes, separated from all others, though sustaining a relation to all others. We find that most of these classes exercise a voluntary government among themselves; and generally with the assent of all others, because the rules which they establish are adapted to fit those who observe them, for the more able and faithful performance of the obligations assumed. This organization is, especially, useful among those, whose labor is merely *intellectual*.

Rules are, at least, as useful to *our class*, as to any other. The main purpose of our Republic is to maintain civil freedom, and to preserve to every one, the rights of religious conscience, and to secure the right to voluntary industry, and its fruits. As these depend on *laws* constitutionally derived, the profession of the law springs from our civil institutions. Our vocation is held in honor and esteem, in proportion to the degree of civil liberty which is enjoyed. It is an humble and degraded order, in proportion to the degree of despotism under which it exists.

Whatever merit may belong to lawyers in continental Europe,* it is only in *England*, that we find what we justly consider as our own profession. It is in *England* only that the senti-

* The Law of continental Europe, of the present day, seems to be compounded of the feudal, civil, and canon law, variously modified by customs, usages, and sovereign decrees, and by the influence of commerce. In France and in Prussia, an attempt has been made, (with what success time must disclose,) to make a system out of all these materials. The same effort is in process in Russia.

In *Spain*, the study of the Law is pursued in colleges. A peculiarity of dress distinguishes students in different branches. It was a point of honor among those, who had obtained a fellowship, never to desert the interest of their colleges; and never to quit a fellowship, but for a place among superior judges. The avenue to the Bench was never through the Bar; nor through professional learning. Judicial office depended on family, and on the influence of the colleges. The court is addressed *viva voce*. The forms of process in the different "kingdoms" of the Peninsula, differ from each other; are complex, tedious, and expensive, and incumbered with a multitude of useless provisions. Though some men have risen from the bar to eminence in other employments, Lawyers are a comparatively low order of men in Spain; and here, as in most countries in Europe, admission to practice is connected with some financial exaction. There has been a sort of corruption here worse than that of money, in favor, influence, and flattery; and a kind of court in the evening parties of judges, or their