

**AN ADDRESS: DELIVERED ON THE  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
PHILOLEXIAN SOCIETY OF THE  
PHILOLEXIAN SOCIETY OF  
COLUMBIA COLLEGE, MAY 15, 1831**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649267620

An Address: Delivered on the Anniversary of the Philolexian Society of the philolexian society of Clumbia College, May 15, 1831 by John W. Francis

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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**JOHN W. FRANCIS**

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AN  
ADDRESS  
DELIVERED BEFORE THE  
PHILOLEXIAN SOCIETY  
OF  
COLUMBIA COLLEGE.

L.A.N

To MESSRS. DILLON,  
BLANCHE,  
GALLAGHER, } *Committee.*  
FISH,  
EMORY,

GENTLEMEN,—

Agreeably to your wishes, so kindly expressed,  
I now furnish you with a copy of the Address which I had the  
honour to pronounce on the Anniversary of the Philolexian  
Society of Columbia College, in May last.

Accept the assurances of my most friendly feelings towards  
the Society, and of my personal regard for yourselves.

JOHN W. FRANCES.

New-York, June 4, 1831.

A N A D D R E S S, & c.

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

IN consenting to perform the unexpected task assigned me by your kind partiality, allow me to bespeak your indulgent criticism on the efforts of one long estranged by the duties of professional life from the contemplative studies of the scholar. Many years have passed since, within the walls of this honoured institution, I listened with delight, and I hope with profit, to the learned lessons of instructors, whose pride it was to adapt to the youthful capacity the matured fruits of their wisdom and knowledge. Death hath since called them from the sphere of their activity to their reward. I cannot but reflect with gratitude, that their devoted attention to our welfare lessened the labour

which was the necessary attendant on our studies: our lament, however, over their departure is lessened, when we turn to the chairs now so ably filled by their worthy and accomplished successors.

And here allow me, gentlemen, to testify to the high character of the Institution which I, the humblest of her alumni, boast as my *Alma Mater*. Connected to her by no other relation, justice alone compels me to declare, that among the temples to learning which the piety and public spirit of our countrymen have reared up among us, none can boast superiority in the ability of its teachers, or in the judicious and ample courses of instruction afforded to its pupils.

To you, young gentlemen, who now occupy those scholastic seats which myself and my former juvenile associates once held, permit me to advert to the ample and capacious theatre of action which the American republic offers to her ingenuous youth. Although I am persuaded that in the discharge of the numerous and responsible duties of your future life, the monitions of justice, and the dictates of your own consciences, will ever be the governing principles of your actions, yet it



is not inconsistent with the purest feelings of the heart, to be cheered in your arduous career by a generous and laudable desire of distinction.

Who, says the illustrious author of the *Faerie Queene*,

"Who would care to do brave deeds  
Or strive in virtue others to excel,  
If none should yield him his deserved mood  
Due praise, that is the spur of doing well."

No nation, ancient or contemporary, presents to its youth nobler projects of ambition than the one which we can proudly call our own, whether emulous of political eminence, or literary renown. In the absence of all hereditary distinctions and privileged orders, merit alone is the passport to success; and here, it may be justly said, in the language of the poet,

"The field of glory is the field for all."

Here are offered on a broad and splendid theatre of ambition, the glorious rewards which the ancient republics of Greece and Rome held out to virtuous exertions for the public good, unattended with those direful results which too

often awaited among them the most meritorious services. But there are other and higher distinctions than kings or people can bestow. Our ancestors have bequeathed in their literature and language, an inheritance inferior only in value to our sacred religion, and to the great principles of our republican constitution. Our noble anglo-saxon dialect, rich and various, copious yet philosophical, in which no fact worthy of attention, is unrecorded, no important principle which has not been illustrated, now conveys instruction to as great a number of readers as any ever used by man; and, ere the lapse of another century, the English and American writer will address as many readers as are embraced in all other civilized communities. Our philosophers will enlighten the understandings, our poets melt the feelings of the inhabitants of the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, the Thames, the Burrampooter, the Macquarie, and the Messurado.

“The Western nations,” says the philosophical Humboldt, in his late address before the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg, “have carried into the different parts of the world those forms of civilization, that developement of the

human intellect, whose origin ascends to the epoch of the intellectual greatness of the Greeks, and to the gentle influence of Christianity. Divided in language and in manners, and in political and religious institutions, the enlightened nations form in our day but a single family, (and this is one of the most beautiful results of modern civilization,) where the object in view is the great interests of science, literature, and the arts; all that, springing from one internal source, the depths of thought and feeling, elevates man above the vulgar cares of society."\*

Although our country has but recently entered into the great career of nations, her Washington, her Franklin, her Hamilton, her Jefferson, her Rittenhouse, her Clinton, her Fulton, vie in the splendour of their renown with the most illustrious names which the ancient world can present, and are a pledge that her sons will not faint or grow weary in the course.

The diligent observer will not fail to trace an intimate connexion between the moral and intellectual cultivation of a people, with the fullest exercise of their powers, and the highest enjoy-

\* Prof. Jameison's Philosophical Journal, vol. ix.