

This speech was delivered in obedience to a vote of the Associate Society of West Point. I attended one evening to hear an address by a friend of mine; and was myself elected while in the room to deliver the next. I was not a member of the society at the time, although I had been elected a member. I had privately declined joining the society because I thought its objects visionary, for at least fifty years: but at the moment of my election I was too much confused and abashed to represent this to the Society, and it adjourned before I recovered my confidence.

Gentlemen

Gratified by the honor which you have conferred upon me in selecting me to deliver the semi-annual address on the progress & prospects of this society, I have indulged in feelings of unalloyed satisfaction: surrounded by the friends and advocates of intellectual improvement, and the dissemination of correct views in regard to science and literature, I have nothing to apprehend. It is my task not to convince of the utility of the enterprise in which we are engaged; for all who hear me are convinced, but merely to remind you my fellow-members in the way of friendly suggestion that you still have arduous labors to perform, before your undertaking can be brought to a happy completion.

In the retrospective survey of the advances which the U.S. have made towards the perfection of the arts and sciences since they threw off allegiance to E. B. we have ample reason for pure gratification and are forced to advance our testimonial to the correctness of the universal suffrage of the free & the enlightened & the liberal which secures the immortality of those great Pioneers who restored to man the exercise ^{of his} ~~is~~ faculties of his nature.

From our brief but brilliant elements of knowledge not only of ~~what~~ ^{we} may derive but also of