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# ORATION,

DELIVERED ON

THE FORTY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY

OF

THE ORPHAN HOUSE,

IN CHARLESTON, S. C.

OCTOBER 18th, 1837.

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**BY REV. THOMAS SMYTH.**

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

CHARLESTON :

PRINTED BY J. S. BURGESS,

No. 85 East Bay.

1837.

## ORATION.

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HALLE is a large town of Prussian Saxony, situated on both sides of the river Saale. It contains twenty-four thousand inhabitants and many objects of attraction. Among these are its cathedral, the tower of which is higher than two hundred and sixty-eight feet, and its famous university, which is even yet attended by six hundred students, and has sent forth some of the most eminent German Scholars.

But the celebrity of Halle depends on a different cause. The traveller who enters this town, as he casts his eyes around, is attracted by a large pile of buildings sufficient to fill both sides of a court eight hundred feet long. On inquiry he is informed that this is the Orphan House, and that it was built by one who had himself, by the early loss of his father, known what it was to be left an orphan in a friendless world.

The Rev. Augustus Herman Francke was a man remarkable for his piety and benevolence. When he came to live in Halle as a Professor in its university, it was customary for the poor to go round on certain days and receive from the inhabitants whatever assistance they might be disposed to render. Francke was struck, not only with their poverty and squalid wretchedness, but much more by their moral degradation. Though himself poor, he determined out of his poverty, to make an effort to befriend them by taking charge of some children and having them educated. Being encouraged and assisted in this attempt he finally resolved, in dependence upon that charity which God might awaken in answer to his prayers, to attempt the erection of a large building, where these orphan children might be received, provided for, and instructed. By a series of the most wonderful and almost in-

credible interpositions of divine providence, he completed that establishment which has perpetuated his fame, given celebrity to the town, and rendered incalculable benefit to the country and the world. His birth-day is still yearly celebrated at the institution, which commands the undiminished interest of the inhabitants.

In the year 1727, when Francke died, there were in all the schools connected with this establishment two thousand and two hundred pupils. One hundred and thirty-four of these were orphans who lived in the Orphan House, and who with one hundred and sixty other children and two hundred and fifty indigent students, daily ate at the public tables of the establishment without charge.

Connected with the institution, Francke had erected several departments in which children intended for any kind of business received an appropriate education. In the year one thousand six hundred and ninety-eight, an apothecary's shop was opened, and simple and popular medicines manufactured, which brought in at one time an income of not less than thirty-six thousand six dollars. Another department is the book store, the printing for which is done in the establishment, which has become one of the most extensive in Germany, and a source of considerable revenue. The Orphan House possesses also a library of twenty thousand volumes; a museum of natural science—and a chemical laboratory. In this institution also is located the celebrated Canstein Bible establishment, whose object it is to send abroad through Europe the word of God by printing it so cheaply that all may purchase. From this society have been issued two millions of Bibles and one million of New Testaments. Since the commencement of the institution, four thousand five hundred orphans alone, of whom three fourths were boys, have been here educated.

This vast establishment, which has for a long time entirely supported itself, although it still receives benefactions, took its rise from three dollars and a half, which was given to Francke, and from the invincible faith, energy and perseverance of this one man. "Better to have such an eulogy as is contained in the history of this Orphan House, than to be the

conqueror of the world. Better to be embalmed as Francke, in the grateful recollections of thousands, than to sleep under the proudest monument that has ever covered the remains of earthly greatness." Well may the benevolent traveller turn away from the curious monuments of St. Ulric, the Town House with its relic of the Imperial Constitution, the neighboring mines and manufactories, and feast his soul on this miracle of charity, this wonderful achievement of Christian faith.

And perhaps, my fellow-citizens, you will not think the brief account which I have given of an institution renowned throughout the world, an uninteresting or inappropriate introduction to the address to be delivered on this Anniversary of your Orphan Asylum. The perfection of this institution being your great desire, some hints towards this consummation may be derived from the course pursued in one so eminently successful. The spirit of an honorable emulation may well be awakened, and the talents of some consecrated, perhaps, to this glorious undertaking.

I was led to these reflections by the correspondence of the emotions excited in a recent traveller on his visit to Halle, and my own when I first came to this city. My attention was soon attracted to yonder building, large and yet simple, in good and careful repair, evincing attention and interest and a high estimate of its importance, with its spacious grounds and gardens, throwing around it the smiling aspect of pleasure and comfort, rather than of confinement—and with its modest spire and chapel pointing heavenward, informing me that it was consecrated to the genius of piety and prospered under the fostering care of heaven. It was unnecessary to inquire into its nature, for it bore enstamped upon it the image of charity, while its lettered front told me that this was the home of the Southern Orphan. And does it not speak to the stranger's heart, whose father or mother or both may lie slumbering under the sod of some distant island in the far off ocean, with a sweeter and more touching voice than any or all the other buildings which may adorn your city? 'Well,' said I, 'a man may come here a foreigner and an alien, he may be unknown, he may contend with the fierceness and treachery of disease, and he may fall in the midst of his hopes

a victim—but his children have found a home. They will not be outcasts. Kind voices will address them, and kind hands lead them; and here they will be nurtured in the lap of care, of knowledge, and of religion. Glory be to him who is known as Abbe Yetomim, the father of orphans, who has led to the erection of such an Asylum.”

Fifty years ago, and no such retreat for the homeless children of penury was found in this city. Then might they be seen clad only in the livery of misfortune, wandering about the streets, seeking a support from casual charity, or cast upon the bounty of some good Samaritan, who might be touched with their distresses. For them no cheerful fireside prepared the accustomed seat. No parent's voice conveyed to them the lessons of admonition. No restraining authority kept them back from the paths of destruction and the snares of vice. They became accustomed to crimes before they knew that they were evil, exhibiting childhood without childhood's innocence. They grew up as weeds in the garden of society, spreading around them their pestiferous influence. Without character, with no interest in the public happiness, regarding themselves as outcasts from all the advantages, they spurned at the restraints of law, and thus became enemies of the peace and burdens upon the prosperity of the community.

Then might be seen the poor widow with her numerous offspring, possessing the name without the power or the resources of a guardian, left by her husband's death in an unprovided home, with no habit of personal exertion, no ability to meet the harsh selfishness of the world, and no knowledge of any means whereby she might procure subsistence for herself or family.

Death! thou art always terrible! Thick darkness rests upon the grave! And fearful are the terrors which encompass the dreary valley of death! Trying is even the temporary separation of loved companions, but when by the ruthless hand of death it is made final and unchangeable, oh! is it not indeed dreadful? But when this calamity comes down like an avalanche upon some family, dependent for their daily bread upon their daily labor; when it overwhelms in its ruins, the head of such an infant community; when it carries blight over



every coming prospect, and scathes every present means of comfort and enjoyment; there is added to those pangs which rend the heart of true affection, the hopelessness of a dark and dreary future in a pitiless world. To be bereft of a fond husband or of an affectionate father, even when he leaves his widow well provided for, and his children comfortable, is to enter the depth of human wretchedness; but to be deprived then of this only remaining stay against the floods of earthly sorrow; to have this only light shut out from their darkness, is to be sunk into a deeper depth of unutterable misery. Who that has not experienced such misfortune can conceive or describe it, can enter into those wailings of despairing sorrow, which become the natural language of the helpless widow, or those shrieks of terror which instinctively break forth from the fatherless and portionless orphan?

Such, however, were the scenes then witnessed, and not unfrequently in this city, and such the sorrow which was then endured in this Christian community. How many and how aggravated they were, those ministering spirits can alone say, who hovered over these habitations of calamity, not as in the hour of Egypt's doom, that they might destroy, but that they might bind up the broken heart, and pour the oil of consolation into the bleeding wound.

It was about the year 1786, that the City Council of Charleston requested a gentleman to present before them a plan of the Orphan House in Georgia, erected through the exertions of the celebrated Whitefield. The subject was not acted upon until three years after, when owing to the zeal and perseverance of Mr. John Robertson, then a member of Council, an ordinance was passed for the erection of a similiar institution, under the care and protection of the city. This was on the 18th of Oct. 1790, forty seven years ago. And here let me say, for the encouragement of all, who are disposed to engage in plans of usefulness, that the individual we have named was of comparatively humble standing in the community, and indebted for his success in this business, wholly to his spirit of persevering benevolence. A temporary house was obtained for the accommodation of the children, and on the 12th of Nov. 1792, was laid the foundation of the present Orphan House.



Charleston has been often aroused to deep and universal excitement—when, invested by the enemies of her country, she awaited victory or destruction—when the fierce hurricane swept over her in devastation—when the flames seemed commissioned to lay waste and utterly destroy—but never perhaps was she filled with such an universal spirit of sympathy, and so animated as it were by one soul—as when she poured out her population in solemn and joyful procession, accompanied with the stirring sounds of pealing music, to witness this event. Proud and glorious triumph of the spirit of Christianity—the spirit of charity—when a whole community were seen assembled in the presence of the God of the Bible, that they might publicly proclaim to the houseless orphan, “Behold your home;” to the friendless, “Behold in us your friends;” to the fatherless, “Behold in us your father.”

In the year 1794, on this day, the 18th of October, the same community were seen again assembled to receive into the bosom of yonder asylum, their collected orphans, and year by year have they come together on this memorable day, that they might sing the praises of charity, rejoice over their adopted family, and give thanks to the author of all mercy and the giver of every good and perfect gift.

We have said that in the erection of this Institution, and in the circumstances connected with it, there was a noble tribute to the power of Christianity, and the goodness of its all merciful author. Before proceeding to the further consideration of this institution, let us dwell a little upon this point. For it is a first principle of duty, to render unto God the things that are God’s and essential to acceptance with him, that in all our ways we should acknowledge him, giving unto him the glory that is his due.

M. Constant has beautifully said that Christianity is the epoch of pity. Heathen philosophers considered children as beneath their notice or attention—the God of the Bible alone is not ashamed to be called their Father, and in the person of his Son, to take them up in his arms and bless them. Compassionate regard to the poor or destitute or helpless, formed no part of the teachings of the Pagan philosophy. You might have traversed, as has been said, the Roman empire in the zenith of its power from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, with-

out meeting with a single charitable asylum, for the widow the orphan, or the diseased. Monuments of pride, of ambition, of vindictive wrath, were to be found in abundance, but not one legible record of pity for the poor.\* Not only so, children were abused and made subservient to every foolish and hurtful superstition. "It is a common practice," says Justin in his apology, to the Roman Emperor, "to expose infants in your empire; and there are persons who afterwards bring up these infants for the business of prostitution.—Throughout all the nations subject to you, we meet with none but children destined for the most execrable purposes, who are kept like herds of beasts, and upon whom you levy a tribute." This was in perfect accordance with their treatment throughout the heathen world, in past and present times. The custom of exposing infants, or sacrificing them, especially orphans, prevailed among the Egyptians, Latins, Greeks, Romans, and other ancient nations. The Caribees were accustomed to salt and eat their children.† In New Spain, children were put to death on the first appearance of green corn, when it was a foot high, and when it had grown two feet.‡ The Aboriginal inhabitants of Virginia sacrificed children to the devil. In Mexico, five or six thousand children were annually sacrificed to the numerous Idols, while as many as ten thousand are supposed to be now annually exposed to death in the capital of China. The Japanese are instructed by their religion that the sick and needy, including orphans, are odious, and devoted to the gods, and they are accordingly sacrificed or left to perish. Before the time of Mahomet, the Arabs refused to widows and orphans any share in the property of their deceased husbands and fathers. The alteration which he made in this law he derived from his acquaintance with the gospel.

The condition of the poor and needy was incomparably bettered by the Jewish dispensation. It is declared that among the Jews according to their laws, orphans should be considered by them as their brethren; that each family should

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\* See Homer's touching description of the pitiable condition to which by the death of Hector, his son Astyanax was brought. Il. 22. l. 620. &c.

† See Ryan on Eff. of Relig. p. 273. ‡ Ryan, p. 273.

adopt one; and that the child thus adopted, should eat at the table, share in the substance, and be treated as a member of the family. God was known in Israel, as a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow.\* These regulations and this spirit of kindness were however practically too much disregarded. The ignorant, the unfortunate, and the wretched, were by the Pharisaic dogmas considered as accursed, as under the frown of heaven, and as undeserving of pity. Schœtgenius has quoted this expression from one of their books—*plebeius non est pius*, the poor man is not a pious man.

It is true there may be found in Heathen philosophy and more abundantly in Jewish writers, many rich and glowing sentiments of charity. But these sentiments perished in their birth; they were uttered not to be acted upon but admired. Stoicism or hardened selfishness was the medium through which misery was contemplated, and through which it appeared stript of all its gloominess, as a mere necessity of nature, which like the storm or the hurricane, beat upon hearts insensible to its fury or self-sustained.

The lamp that has led us to this true and noble charity was lighted at the altar of Christianity, and there is not existent and probably never has been, an asylum for the fatherless and friendless orphan beyond the influence of this divine faith. Houses have been erected as in India for feeding sacred vermin—as in Egypt for the protection and worship of cats and cattle—and temples erected in abundance where children might be immolated and youth consecrated to prostitution and vice—but under the whole reign of Paganism, as its own genuine offspring, there has not sprung up one refuge for the

Poor orphan in the wide world scattered,<sup>†</sup>  
As budding branch wrenched from the native tree,  
And thrown forth till it be withered.\*

Christianity is the religion of charity. It adopts as peculiarly its own, the poor and miserable and wretched, and blind and naked. It feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, protects the stranger, delivers the captive, and receives the orphan un-

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\* See Deut. and Ps.

† Spencer.

der its divine paternity. The birth of Christ is one of those appropriate representations which are hung up in the entrance of those institutions where "children dwell who know no parent's care." Did He not take them in his arms and bless them, saying, of such is the kingdom of heaven? Is it not the will of our Heavenly Father that not one of these little ones should perish? He that receiveth one of these little ones, is he not regarded as receiving Christ, and his charity as given to Christ? It is no longer necessary to ask in despair, "What country hath the poor to claim?" Christianity shall answer, "God's foundlings then are ye." It is the voice of Christianity which is heard addressing us as she points to these young and tender orphans—"Honor these children. Welcome them to your embrace, rejoicing that as the appointed guardians of heaven, they are entrusted in this commencement of an endless being to your nurture and admonition. Honor these children." I will not, says the Saviour, leave you orphans. How expressive! I will not leave you in that condition which orphans find themselves in these eastern countries, where they are regarded as slaves and obliged to serve their protectors.\* The Athenians indeed adopted for the public the children of those who died fighting for their country, educated them until twenty-one, and then giving them a suit of armour enlisted them in their armies;—but Christianity, in the munificence of her charity, throws her protecting arm around them all and claims for them all the kind protection of the good, and extends for the acceptance of them all adoption into the family of heaven.

What was the first origin of distinct institutions for the orphan we cannot trace. They are referred to in the praise of Constantine who was very liberal towards them, and who enacted edicts commanding the public to maintain those children unable to provide for themselves.† Orphans were early regarded in the canons and laws of the Church and of Christian countries. Such houses were common in the West, A. D. 808. Canute is celebrated for his attention to orphans, and many Queens and Princes thought themselves distinguished

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\* Calmet Dict. Tom. 3. p. 365. Lond. Edit.

† Suiceri Thes. Tom. 2. Also Blackstone's Com't. vol. 1. p. 95 Chitty's Ed.

by the foundation of a foundling hospital. When Spencer brings his wounded knight to the house of holiness, we are told that of those who came to wait upon the needy applicants,

The seventh now after death and burial done,  
Had charge the tender orphans of the dead.

There are very probably three thousand towns out of many thousand in Christendom, in which there are orphan asylums. These will contain on an average one hundred children, thus making the number of orphan children at present under the care and protection of Christians, three hundred thousand. Far greater would be the result were we to compute the number of hospitals and their inmates, colleges and their students, penitentiaries and their refugees, and which are all the productions of this tree of righteousness which bears twelve manner of fruits, and whose leaves are for the healing of nations. Blessed are our eyes which witness her heavenly beneficence! Blessed are our ears which hear her joyful sounds! Blessed are our hearts which are made the fountains of her life giving influence!\*

Having thus traced this charity to its source, and presented our thanksgivings unto its beneficent author, let us turn our attention to the charity itself. It would appear unaccountably strange that an Institution so simple in itself, in its object so constantly obtruded upon public notice, so accordant to the beneficent feelings of the heart, and at the same time so fraught with manifold advantages to the community in which it exists, should not have suggested itself in every age and country. Nor can any other solution of this singular fact be given than that contained in the word of God, the all absorbing selfishness of the human heart, when not renewed by the spirit of divine love. We are thus also practically taught that the religion of the Bible is promotive of human happiness, not more when it forbids indulgence in what is evil, than when it enjoins the zealous and self-denying pursuit of what is good.

Were this Institution not based on the deep foundations of

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\* See a touching illustration of this in an account of the Missionary Orphan Asylum in India, and the orphan girls found in the streets starving.

Missionary Register, June 1836, p. 283. There is another in Calcutta.

charity, it would commend itself to our sense of justice. Orphans by being deprived of their natural parents become the children of the community. What more becoming than that it should act a parent's part? If he who provideth not for his own family is worse than an infidel; if on the contrary, he who watches over the interests of his offspring presents a spectacle so lovely as to afford a representation of the benignity of heaven; how much more imperative is the obligation and how much more beautiful is the spectacle, of a community covering with her protecting wings the tender brood of orphans! The laws require that in their minority, heirs should be protected by others. There is an equal necessity that the youth of those who are left heirs to the poverty and wretchedness of life should be shielded from present danger, and prepared for future action. But as in this case there is no remuneration, law has left them unprovided for, and charity must take them up.

Were the claims of the orphan not thus demonstrably a debt of love, and founded on a sense of justice, the necessity of such a provision for these destitute children, would urge it upon us. They are cast upon the community, and cannot be removed except by a practice as inhuman as it is sinful. Their support must be drawn from the bosom of society in some way. They constitute a necessary, irremovable tax. And the question simply is, in what form shall this tax be paid? voluntarily, as a gift, by which the recipients may be laid under the obligations of gratitude—remedially, as a preventive of future ignorance, vice and crime—or involuntarily when it becomes necessary for punishment and self preservation? We must pay this tax through the Orphan House, and the labours of early discipline and instruction, or through the Poor House, the Penitentiary, and the Hospital. If then by an equal expenditure, or less, we can secure good citizens, instead of such as will be injurious and burdensome, self-interest, nay selfishness itself, will plead for its adoption.

But it is not on these grounds we would rest the claims, or establish the merits of this institution. It is just and necessary that it should exist, it is much more noble, patriotic, benevolent and Christian. To have a proper estimate of the



greatness of this charity, consider the extent of that misery which it relieves, the absolute destitution, the abandoned hopelessness of those who are its objects, cast from the wrecked vessel of their childhood's home, and left struggling in their helplessness, amid the waves of life's ocean "into tempest wrought." Consider too, the extensive benefits which it confers. It finds these children orphans. it provides them with guardians; they are without covering, it decently clothes them; they are destitute of food, it daily nourishes them; they are liable to all the pains and sickness of our mortal state, here is a physician, there is a balm in this Gilead;\* ignorant, they are here enlightened in that knowledge which will fit them for entering successfully upon the competition of life; destined to immortality, they are here instructed

"To think that early he must think at last."

Their physical, moral, and intellectual well-being is thus advanced. They grow in stature, they increase in knowledge, and they should grow in favor with their God. Nor are these advantages limited to the period of their domestication in the institution; it is extended to them when they make their perilous entrance upon the world beyond. They are followed by the eye of guardianship and kind attention into the rough paths of life, that their asperities may be smoothed as far as is possible in this valley of the shadow of death. Nor is this all. As the gifts of God are imparted without any respect to rank or person, the steel is applied to the flint, that if there are any latent sparks of genius they may be elicited, and the character and value of the stone determined. When nature thus discovers under the rough and unpromising appearance of outward poverty, some hidden gem or pearl of great price, it is not abandoned, but is at once put into the hands of the artist, that it may be wrought into beauty and give forth its splendour. And have not some of the proudest ornaments of society, stars of the first magnitude in the constellation of earthly glory, risen upon the view, from the dark night of poverty and wretchedness?

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\* And here let me pay a just tribute to the care and attention of the attending Physician, in view of the remarkable health enjoyed by the children during the past year.



Consider again as characteristic of the greatness of this charity, the permanence of its results. In thus blessing children it blesses men, for

Childhood shows the man,  
As morning shows the day.

In thus elevating their character, it is exalting the reputation of the coming age, for here it is emerging into life through their life. If these are suffered to pass through childhood unimproved, they will arrive at manhood in the full maturity of guilt and hardy villainy. And not only so, before you are the future parents of a remote posterity, extending from them in ever widening branches. What do I say? Before you are the future legislators of their country, who will perpetuate her liberties or betray them. In this country, in the munificence of a liberality only equalled by its liberty, you have extended to all her citizens, the equal privilege of controlling her high destinies. This universal boon will be wise,—it will not be certainly and necessarily destructive of all liberty—only by rendering all worthy of the privilege and capable of the duty. The monstrous chasm which in other nations separates the higher from the lower classes has been here filled up, and all may walk abroad in the conscious dignity of being equal among equals in point of civil privilege. But forget not, oh my country—let it be engraven upon thy councils as if written by the finger of heaven—that the humbler classes, and not the highest, constitute the broad basis of the pyramid of society, and that security exists only so long as it is preserved in soundness, that is virtuous and wise. Even here—in these orphan children, there are entrusted to you, to mould and fashion as you will, a Spartan band, which if imbued with the spirit of piety and its kindred spirit, true liberty, may yet throw themselves into some future Thermopylæ, and preserve the liberties of their country. “These are your ramparts.”

Oh my adopted country! while fear and doubt harrass and perplex me, as I look out upon the clouds and thick darkness which settle over thee, may I offer for thee this prayer—May thy youth be numerous as the drops of the morning dew, and filled like them with the pure light of heaven. May they re-

fresh and strengthen that libery which has been sown in blood, and watered in tears, and reflect thy glory in increasing lustre to every nation and to every age.

How serviceable to the public is this charity! It binds together the rich and the poor. Here they meet each other and embrace, acknowledging their common humanity and equal citizenship. By this giving and receiving, this protecting and being protected, they are cemented by an inseparable union of peace and good will. Thus have we seen the earth send up its vapors to the heavens, gathering around them in all the glory and splendor of an evening sky—and those heavens again returning them to the earth in showers and dew, which make glad and fructify the face of nature.

While we thus contemplate the future blessings of this charity, let us not forget its present and immediate good. It is before you. Look upon these children. While many perchance this day are shedding orphans' tears, they are filled with all the sportive joy of life's young dawn. Look upon these children. Are they not yours? Without parents you have taught them to feel the throbbings of filial love and filial piety. Snatched from the lion jaw of stern necessity, they have received beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. By thoroughly, virtuously and religiously educating these children, you will bestow upon them a guide and a comforter through life—you will prepare them to guide and comfort others; you will fit them for a better performance of whatever duty they may be called to discharge; you will send them forth into society to exert a happy influence on all around them.

Is not this charity twice blessed?  
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes,  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven,  
Upon the place beneath.

It rises as a fragrant incense, breathing joy into the hearts of those above.

This blessing, this joy, members of Council, Commissioners and Benefactors of the Charleston Orphan House, have been yours. Thirteen hundred and fifty-five children, ~~with~~ *have*

~~been~~ and provided for by your bountiful exertions. One hundred and fifteen children are here to-day, like wild flowers gathered from the desert and transplanted into garden soil, to fill your souls with admiration and delight. Altogether, fourteen hundred and seventy captives redeemed from the hard bondage of misfortune, and restored to their home, their country, and to happiness. Liberality worthy this city of the south, and brightest gem in Carolina's crown of glory!

In addition to the ordinary means for the temporal and spiritual comfort of these your children, an infant and sabbath school has been established, where they might receive still further instruction,—a commissioners' fund has been formed, which is expended in assisting those who have left the institution, and whose good conduct gives them claim to such relief; the City Council, with that public spirited liberality which is the true public economy, have made provision for the preparatory education of a limited number of boys who may be selected by the commissioners as worthy of a college course,—two boys are supported by the Legislature of the State at its own institution,—while another is pursuing his preparatory studies for professional life by the munificent provision of an individual, who was actuated to this deed of charity by that spirit which was imparted to him while a member of this same institution. There is also a funded bequest, the interest of which is for the education of a boy of suitable talents and disposition, for the ministry of the Gospel, in any Christian community he may prefer.

Nor have you, respected friends, labored in vain, and spent your strength for nought. While there have been instances of melancholy disappointment, to call forth your sorrowing regrets—and these, as in all similar cases, have stood forth in prominence by the very publicity of their scandal—have not the great proportion of your beneficiaries spent useful and industrious lives, amid the quiet and unobtrusive virtues of domestic life? Are not three of them filling high and important stations in the navy of their country, and may you not with parental honor claim your sons among the honored and useful members of the pulpit and the bar?

We rejoice when some vessel which has been buffeted by

the rough tempest, and of whose safety we were solicitous, having ridden out the storm, is seen entering the harbor with her colors streaming in the wind—and shall we not much more rejoice when we behold these goodly spirits saved from that storm in which they must needs have wrecked, and safely harbored in this port of peace?

We all laud, and justly, the man who by his skill or efforts contributes to the comfort and pleasure of society—and what praises are due to those who deliver it from the sources of moral pestilence and death, and by the same means replenish it with worthy and virtuous citizens?

The man who by his wealth has founded some institution, or erected some noble building to adorn his city or country, deserves, as he receives, the gratitude of posterity; but how much more available to the beauty and exaltation of society is that expenditure, which fills it with noble spirits, elevated natures, and souls garnished with all the lineaments of virtue? Such reward, friends and benefactors of this asylum, such reward is yours.

“Think not the good,  
The gentle deeds of mercy you have done,  
Shall die forgotten all; the poor, the wretched,  
The fatherless, the friendless, and the widow,  
Who daily own the bounty of your hands,  
Shall cry to heaven, and pull a blessing on you.”

In the bright visions of the future glories of this my adopted country, I see the alumni of this institution enrolled among her brightest sons, and most useful and devoted daughters—filling with noble and high-minded citizens, the marts of commerce, the plantations of agriculture, the ranks of war, and the seats of legislative wisdom. Is this all a vision of the fancy? Or is it ever to be realized? This depends on the continued and increased efforts for the preservation and improvement of their asylum, of you, Honorable Members of Council, of you, especially, respected Commissioners, on you, still more immediately, though not more truly, officers and instructors, and above all, upon you, the children for whom all these efforts are put forth.

I have had other and fitter opportunities for pressing upon

you, my dear children, your duty to your Saviour and your God. Let me take this occasion, with all the interest which its publicity affords, to infix within your minds this one encouraging truth, that to you the successful pursuit of the advantages of social life, is as open, as free, and as hopeful, as perhaps to any other class of youth. The prospect of entering upon the possession of wealth, without personal exertion, too generally enervates the character and deprives it forever of that power of self-government, and that spirit of confidence which will undertake and accomplish whatever is attainable. It is in the school of adversity, it is under the teaching of stern necessity, it is when there is no other prompter to genius than its own innate aspirations, that these inestimable qualities, which the wealth of Cræsus could not purchase, are secured. It is good, my dear children, to bear the yoke in your youth. So says scripture. So speaks experience. There is, believe me, no hopelessness around your future. You need not look forward as to darkness and despair. On the contrary, there is every thing to breed within you high purposes of future eminence. If, children, you will only now, in the days of your youth, seek God, hear the voice of instruction, improve all the advantages you enjoy, and cherish a spirit of strict rectitude, what is there you may not in future life attain? Honest, upright, industrious, humble, unassuming and Christian in your deportment, who will not rejoice to take you by the hand and help you up the steep ascent to competence, to wealth, to honor, and to glory?

Do you wish to become respectable in the mechanic arts of life? Almost all who are or have been so, have pressed their way through the extremest difficulties, have begun on nothing and lived on little, until they have secured to themselves competence and ease. Or do you pant after the fame of those who have fought their country's battles, and braved for her danger and death? We might point you in addition to others to be mentioned, to Henry Knox and Philip Schuyler, both eminent among our revolutionary patriots. Do you cherish the holy purpose of being consecrated to the ministry of heaven? Have not some of its brightest and most burning lights, trimmed their lamps in youthful obscurity, receiv-



ed their education at the hand of charity, or soared aloft on their own unaided wing to the greatest height of usefulness and labor? I might instance Jeremy Taylor, the Milton of the English Church, and in Morrison and Carey, the modern apostles of China and of India.\* Do you aspire to eminence in the noble science of law? Sir Edward Coke, the author of "the Institutes of the laws of England," and one of the most eminent of her lawyers, was still young when he was left to be his own master. And Blackstone, author of the Commentaries on the laws of England, and the founder of their science, was early in life deprived of both his parents. This loss, says his biographer, "proved in its consequences, the reverse of misfortune to our author: to that circumstance probably he was indebted for his future advancement, and that high literary character and reputation in his profession which he has left behind him; to that circumstance the public, too, is probably indebted for the benefit it has received and will receive as long as the law of England remains, from the labors of his pen."† Do you desire to enrol your name upon the list of philosophers and other scientific and literary worthies, who shine so resplendently in the intellectual heavens? The father of Adam Smith died some months before his birth, while his own constitution during infancy was weak and sickly.✕ Our own Washington Irving was left fatherless to pursue his own fame and fortune when very young. And above all, Sir Isaac Newton, the prince of philosophers, was in his infancy without a father, was so weakly as to have his life despaired of, and was sent at an early age to a distant school.✕ The celebrated German metaphysical philosopher Kant, was the son of a harness maker, and early lost both his parents.

Do you emulate the glory of a patriot and statesman? The father of George Canning died the year after his birth, and left his family after having been long oppressed by the hard hand of vexatious need, unprovided and wholly destitute.‡

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\* Chrysostom, the most celebrated of the Fathers, was deprived of his father in infancy.

† Blackstone, vol. I, p. 5.

‡ See Speeches of George Canning, Vol. I, p. 7.

Henry Clay was in like manner early deprived of his father, and owes all his education to a common school. William Wirt, the late Attorney General, lost both his parents young. The father of John Hancock deceased during his infancy, and he was cast on the kindness of a relative. Alexander Hamilton, whose life is so interwoven with the history of the American Revolution, and with the formation and adoption of the Constitution of the United States, was deprived of his mother when a child, while his father lived in pecuniary dependence. Andrew Jackson's father died immediately after his birth, and his mother while he was yet young. And Washington, the father of his country, was also made to feel in his early youth the want of a father's care.

If then, children, any of you fail to arrive at competence, honor, or eminence in future life, it will be, not because you are orphans, but because you have failed to embrace fully the privileges you now enjoy, or to cultivate the habits and virtues to which you are now so constantly urged.

And now, children, under the encouraging influence of this truth, you will retire from this scene to the festivities of this hallowed day. Yield your hearts to the pleasures of the occasion, and with your joyous acclamations let your bosoms swell with gratitude to Him who has provided for you a home and a parent's kindness in the hearts of Christians; and when you retire this evening to your couch, pray to your Father in heaven that he may make you partakers of his heavenly spirit, adopt you into his heavenly family, and evermore bless and befriend you.

And now, fellow citizens, need I say more to encourage and stimulate you to continued and increased liberality towards this most useful and laudable institution? The first step towards reaction and failure in any design is the supposition that we have already attained. When this takes possession of the mind, it relaxes its energy and checks its further efforts. Think not then, you have completed your institution, but forgetting what has been already accomplished, press forward towards the mark of ultimate and entire perfection.

What has been done towards the establishment of a library worthy the Institution? Has it a philosophic and other



suitable apparatus? Are its schools well supplied with all that is necessary to advance their objects? Is it possible or desirable to provide for the specific education of the children in the different branches of art and business? Could their labors in the acquisition of such an education be made available to their own support and the enlargement of the plans of the Institution? This question I can suggest with more confidence, as I find it was urged upon your attention by our late Hon. Mayor.\* Could any further means be employed for awakening and fostering talent? Could instruction be imparted to the children in that, oftentimes most useful, and at all times most delightful and elevating, art of music? In an institution in Germany, out of two hundred orphans, all except *two* had acquired this knowledge. Would not a committee of correspondence with other similar institutions in this and other countries, and by which their comparative advantages might be known, probably lead to many valuable suggestions? Were the fund of the commissioners sufficiently increased, might it not be found of incalculable importance in assisting, in their entrance upon the business or duties of life, those who have left the Institution, but who are still friendless and penniless?

What immeasurable good might in this way be accomplished! How great is the opportunity still afforded of improving and advancing the interests of this asylum! How boundless the sphere for talent and benevolence!

And shall these not be forthcoming? Having done so well, will you not still more abound in this labor of love! When the Empress Catharine founded the hospital for foundlings at Moscow, a person unknown sent a box containing fifty thousand rubles, accompanied with these words: "He who takes the liberty to offer this, will have completely obtained his desire, if, by means of this gift, Russia shall at some future day, have one more reasonable subject, one happy man, one virtuous citizen." Let *your* liberality this day, let your future beneficence while you live and when you come to die, attest to heaven and earth your just sense of the value and importance of this noble and productive charity.

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\*Report to the City Council by Hon. R. Y. Hayne.

And what a field, my christian friends, is opened to your labors in the Sabbath School connected with the Institution? Is it true? Can it be, that from so many churches, there are not enough of interested, zealous, devoted followers of the Son of God, to hear the cry of the orphan, whose spiritual destitutions are as great as their physical and intellectual necessities, and to impart to them that knowledge in which standeth eternal life?

Methinks it is enough, after what you have heard, to suggest these things to your minds, in order to enkindle there a readiness to do all, and more than all that is desired. The sight of these "poor orphans, whose minds were left as unclothed and naked altogether as their bodies, and who were exposed to all the temptations of ignorance, want, and idleness," of whom you are the common guardians, will appeal to your sympathies and call forth charity, more powerfully than any pleas of mine.

Were there, however, one individual present whose heart was untouched by their misery, or unaffected by their tale of silent suffering, to such an one would I say: Hadst thou a mother? Hast thou ever felt the kind warmth of a mother's bosom?—the sweetness of a mother's kisses?—the tenderness of a mother's embrace?—and the unchanging devotedness of a mother's love? In sickness did she comfort you? In health did she delight in you?—weeping with you when you wept, and rejoicing with you when you rejoiced? Did she live in your life, prosper in your prosperity, and feel every joy doubled by participation with yourself? Has she become to you, as it were, an abiding presence?—a ministering angel?—a heaven of the sweetest and purest recollections? a pole-star to guide your weary way through life's toilsome journey? And is the sanctuary above made more dear because it is the dwelling place of that now sainted mother? These children never knew (or knowing ceased to know) what it is thus to enjoy and bless their mother. Like the orphan in the Greek tragedy, they may say—

for the time when in a mother's arms,  
I in her fondness should have known some joy

Of life—from that sweet care was I estranged,  
A mother's nurture.\*

Hadst thou a father?—whose name and image you saw stamped upon yourself, who looked upon you with pride, who felt in yours his own existence prolonged and his own character perpetuated, who gloried in struggling with the hard adversities of life that he might clothe and feed and nourish you, who called you his own son, his hope and promise, who inculcated the spirit of manliness and truth and godliness, and brought you up to usefulness and honor? And did you love that father? Did you reverence him in your infant days even as God? Did you obey him as an unerring guide? And do you now look back upon him with high and holy thankfulness to God who gave you such a father? These children can never know a father's care.

No more they smile upon their Sire! no friend  
To help them now! no father to defend.  
The day that to the grave the father sends  
Robs the sad orphan of his father's friends.†

They are left alone to pilot their boisterous way over the stormy sea of life, under an angry sky in a night of darkness, with blackening tempest all ahead.

Like your blessed Saviour, rebuke that selfishness which would forbid these children to come even to your heart and awake your kindest interest. Take them up in your arms and bless them. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. And if there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye this work of heavenly charity to which by the providence of God you are so sweetly summoned.

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\*The Ion of Euripides, line 1427-1430. See vol. I. Transl., by Potter.

†Homer Iliad, B. 22.

## ADDRESS,

BY THOMAS NEIL, AN ORPHAN BOY.

COMPOSED BY DR. JOHN B. IRVING.

“Pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the Fatherless in their affliction.”

The melody of the tuneful choir, the prayer of the ordained Minister of God, have already ascended to the throne of Grace!

Shall I essay, poor little orphan as I am, to add the feeble tribute of my appeal to HIM, “from whom alone proceeds every good and perfect gift,” to incline your hearts yet more, my christian friends, towards the righteous Charity, associated with this most interesting occasion?

The Orphan’s story is soon told. Affliction meets him in the cradle! Sorrow marks him for her own! and the history of *one of these* little creatures of your compassion, is the history of *us all*.

I know not whether I can relate my own afflictions, but a dark dream has sometimes swept across my brain; a wild—a dismal dream that will not break!

I was an infant almost when my Father died; but I remember, ere his eyes took an unearthly lustre and did fade, he folded me in his arms, and pressing his pallid lips upon my cheek, told me he had nothing to bequeath his poor boy, but a father’s blessing, and a father’s kiss! These were his last, his *only* legacy!

My Mother, borne down by sorrow, misery, and want, like Hagar with her child, going forth into the wilderness, took *me* into the wilderness of the world. But alas! she led me not long. In a short time she laid, also, in the stillness of everlasting repose! Her hands were stretched in motionless and marble coldness by her side. Yet her face was so serene, life’s soft warmth still seemed to linger on her lips! I kissed her! ’Twas the *first* time she returned not my caress! I spoke to her, she replied not—yet she was so like my mother still, I could not think that she was dead, until they bore her away, and I stood by the side of her closing grave! I thought my little heart would break as I turned from that terrible spot!

The earth to me was like one vast and dismal cemetery ! It had closed over all that had fondly loved me, and I was houseless, unfriended, and *alone*—like the young twig, that had scattered its *last leaf* to the merciless wind, left to endure the wintry storm without the shelter of the Parent Stem !

To the blackest night, however, the brightest morn may succeed ! 'As the sun may carry pestilence in his beams, the night may scatter healing from its sable wings !

Seldom does misfortunes visit the world, abstracted from every quality of good ! When all is most dark and threatening around, the Father of the fatherless, the God of all comfort, in order to bring them closer to himself, graciously permits the weak and perishing creatures of his power to experience his goodness—to see some Star shining in the darkness, to cheer their drooping spirits—to hear some kind voice telling of a home, where the wretched may fly for comfort, and the weary for repose !

Here, with choking utterance, I turn to you, my generous benefactors, and ask, but for your timely sympathy and support, *where* should I have been now—*where* my little innocent associates ! Alas ! you may as well ask, where the scattered leaves of Autumn lie ; the yellow leaves, that for a moment flutter in the wind, and then settle down amongst their withered companions on the cold, cold ground ; the last sad refuge “ of the fallen, the faded, and forlorn ! ” Ah ! well may it be asked, *where* should we have been *now*, but for this blessed institution ! In some hovel of poverty and crime, perhaps, uttering blasphemy and lies instead of the Morning and Evening prayer you have taught us to pronounce ! Oh ! it is awful to think, into what an abyss of misery, here and hereafter, we might have been plunged, unless, like the wearied dove, we had found from the destroying deluge of sin, a shelter in this holy ark !

I am told the age in which we live, is one of unexampled benevolence—that Angels have assumed the forms of humanity—that the Sick are visited in their affliction—the Poor have the gospel preached to them ! We can bear blessed testimony, I am sure, that God has put it especially into the hearts of the humane, to provide for the destitute and fatherless !

What is it that prompts you to bestow a thought upon the Orphan? What is it that makes the heart melt with tenderness at the cry of the poor and the needy? What is it that gives to pity, its sweetest tear—to love, its most delicious smile—to feeling, its most generous impulse? What is it that pleads for *all these little ones* so strongly in the bosom of the virtuous? It is *thy* voice, O Nature! Queen of a sunny sky, waking up the affections in the coldest bosom, until they bloom and blossom as the Rose!

I feel, we can look to you, generous friends, with confidence, for the means of a temporal education, and for an eternal hope.

In the temple where we worship, it is written “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.” It is the mandate of Jehovah. Who shall gainsay it? And oh! what a harvest of merit and of consolation, is thus given you to gather! Without your mediation, it is easy for our heavenly parent to provide for those whom he has promised “to preserve alive,” but he has chosen rather to associate you with Himself, in the beauty of his own holiness; putting you as *Clouds* in the midst, to pour down on others, parched by the burning drought of the world, the dews and fertilizing rains you may receive from Him.

Every encouragement is afforded you to continue your alms and your prayers in our behalf. Already has the Almighty blessed our Institution, by sending forth into the world from among our humble band, characters conspicuous for their talents and their worth, and who knows what future Statesmen may exist even now within our walls, to be formed or lost according to the increase or want of your generosity! Let us hope that many signal distinctions are in store for us, and is it expecting too much, that the instruments of good to society will not be confined to *one sex* alone, but that even from among the more *helpless* objects of your bounty, there may, also, go forth with the blessing of God, many a modest Rebecca—many a devout Hannah—many an humble and pious Mary—many an affectionate Rachel, that beloved and loving wife, that beautiful mother of Israel!

Love, then, these little Orphans for your own sake. Regard them as your brethren. Cherish them as your offspring.



Consider them, as our blessed Saviour himself did, in order that when he shall appear again in his glory, and all the Angels of Heaven with him, he may say unto you on the great day :

“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : naked and ye clothed me !”

You will wondering say, “Lord, when saw we *thee* an hungered, and fed thee ; or thirsty and gave *thee* drink ; naked and clothed *thee* ?”

But the King upon the throne of his glory, will answer and say, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto the *least of these* my *little ones*, you have done it unto *Me* !”

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#### ORPHAN'S HYMN.

BY MRS. C. GILMAN.

OH ! Thou, who hear'st our orphan sighs,  
When lowly at thy throne we bend,  
Let this our happier hymn arise,  
And to thy mercy seat ascend.

Our infant hours began in gloom,  
No ray of worldly joy was near;  
Cold want destroyed our early bloom,  
Pale sorrow called our early tear.

But, Charity, thy genial light  
Burst thro' the shade and cheered our way,  
And kindlier still, revealed to sight  
The glories of the Gospel day.

Great God, for those whose fostering love  
Has gently nurtured our young powers,  
We pray, that blessings from above  
May lightly wing their earthly hours.

And when the solemn day draws near,  
That calls our rescued souls to thee,  
Together may we all appear,  
And mingle in eternity.



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