

accustomed, seem to take pleasure in presenting to the world a caricature of our manners; the former are often respectable, the latter are always contemptible.

But when an author, not unknown in the literary world, after receiving in our country all the attentions to which a respectable stranger is entitled, affects to sink our nation to a low rank in the scale of intellect, and tauntingly reproaches us with the respect that we have long cherished for the literature of his country, which he represents as a humiliating servitude, we are bound, at least, to take warning from him, and free ourselves from those shackles which he boasts that his nation has imposed upon us.

The writer that I speak of is the author of a Book of Travels in the United States which he has entitled "Men and Manners in America." I leave to reviewers the unfair descriptions of our manners, with which his work abounds; I confine myself to what has a direct relation to the subject of this discourse. "In the present generation of Americans," says he, "I see no symptoms of improving taste or increasing *elevation of intellect*. The recorded specimens of this period (the period subsequent to our revolution) indicate a sad deficiency of taste, originality and imaginative power." He adds that we have degenerated, even from our immediate ancestors. Such is the cruel stigma which this author has attempted to fix upon our country. It is our duty to repel it.

That our literature cannot stand a comparison with that of Great Britain, is what I am willing freely to admit; and what no one of us is disposed to deny; but that may be easily accounted for, without recurring to a want of elevation of mind or a deficiency of mental powers. Our existence in the colonial and independent state dates from a little more than two hundred years; during the first century and a half, our country consisted of infant settlements, devoted entirely to agriculture, with a scanty population, scattered through immense forests, and debarred of intercourse with all mankind, except Great Britain and her dependencies. Those were not times in which science or literature could flourish. Literature has never flourished *any where* under a colonial system of government. Yet at the latter end of that period, Franklin arose and shone like a brilliant meteor amidst the darkness

