

that surrounded him. As Britain justly boasts of her Newton, America is equally proud of her Franklin.

The next period of between thirty and forty years, from the commencement of our revolution to the last peace with Great Britain, was also unfavourable to literature. It languished even in Europe. In this country, the first part of it was consumed in the struggle with the mother country for our independence, and in organizing a bold and novel system of government, which other nations have since adopted as a model; during the latter part of it, we were distracted by the intrigues of France and Great Britain, and ruined by the piracies of Great Britain and France, which ended in a war with the former, in which we came off victorious. I must also acknowledge, that during the whole of that period, such was the force of ancient prepossessions, that we had not yet even thought of shaking off the mental yoke which had so long weighed upon us; we seemed to be satisfied with our political emancipation, and despaired ever to be able to wrestle with great Britain in the fields of literature and science. Towards the end of that period, however, Fulton appeared, who conquered time, space, the winds and the tides, and his genius has changed the face of the world. Two such men as Franklin and Fulton are sufficient to illustrate any nation. I do not speak of our warriors and statesmen, they do not come within the scope of this discourse. Even Washington's great name shall be passed over in silence.

We have had, in fact, no literature until the peace of December, 1814. The war which preceded it, inspired us with a spirit we had never felt before. We had resisted in arms, unaided by friends or allies, the whole force of Great Britain; we now thought for the first time of an independent literature. The task was not an easy one; what cost Great Britain centuries to achieve, we could not expect to perform in twenty years; but we have begun, and are gradually advancing. Before the time that I speak of, it might, perhaps, not improperly have been asked: Who reads an American book? In less than twenty years after our first beginning, we have produced books that are read all over the world, that are translated into various languages, and are honourably noticed in the scientific and literary journals of all Europe. As the