June 6, 1876.

The National Mind.

A. K. Parsons, Class '75.
It is fitting, in this Centennial year, to pause in the hurried, onward movement of active life and cast the mind backward over the fields of experience. It is well to consider those circumstances under which our country began its career, to determine whether it is still on its true course and where its journey will end. Permit your attention to be drawn to its creating sus-
taining, or destroying force. In 1776, July 4th, after a long period of inceptive growth, the National Mind was incarnated. This vital spark was embodied in that Declaration, conceived in the patriotism of men who were forced to this act by the cupidity and tyranny of a dominant power. A power, which, by its desire to gain a tribute, lost a realm; which imposed a tax on merchandise that gave birth
to a republic. This birth, proclaimed by that Declaration, was hailed by the people with universal joy. Those who commemorate that grand event this year in Philadelphia, will do well to observe at Independence Hall that Freedom Bell, which first struck the keynote of the nation's mind, speaking in prophetic tones the inscription, which, by a strange coincidence, known only in the nation's destiny, was graven on
its side: “Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.”

This was the incarnating principle. The moment the words were sounded the growing desire for Independence was energized.

Unity, the first essential element of the national mind, was now established; and every link in the chain that welded the hands and the hearts of the people to their hopes for a country was Liberty. Not alone in their desire to be
freed from an oppressive control,
but liberty in that broadest and truest of all definitions, "Security against wrong." Liberty, first to become a nation of the world, and within that nation, liberty in the control of persons and property, liberty of speech and press; liberty in the formation of law, and the exercise of justice; liberty in foreign intercourse, home trade; in civil courts, and military camps; and liberty to wor-
ship God. Security against that long list of oppressions named in the declaration is without parallel in history; security under the protection of a government ordained by divine law and sustained by the united will of the protected. Committed to these principles, the national mind derived its strength from the unity of its purposes, and its vigor from the rectitude of its motives. It sought to found an
asylums for the oppressed of the world whereas the people should wear the sovereign crown of power. The inspiration gained from the noble ends in view gave to the nation’s mind an impulse which devoted it to the sublime height of undying devotion to the country’s good. Probity, the second essential element, was the striking characteristic of its early growth. Witness this in that line of 2,000
Pennsylvania troops which left their camp in Morristown mutiny, because they had no pay, no clothing, no food, and no prospect of relief; and when met, on their way to Philadelphia, with offers to supply all their wants, indignantly refused, because the emissaries came from the enemy's camp and the condition of the offer was desertion. They seized their tempters and delivered them up as spies and the strength of
this element in the national mind appeared in a prompt refusal of reward for this act, and when tardy relief came from their country they cheerfully returned to its service. Another sublime appearance occurred when Robert Morris and others came forward with their wealth and laid it on their country’s altar.

Patriotism, the noblest element that ever graced the nation’s mind, overshadowed all others and touched
every fiber of its substance, permeating it from the loftiest intellect of age to the very bottom where it reached the innocence of youth inspiring there the highest purposes of life. The nation's mind was then without a stain. Its integrity commanded the respect of its enemy. The justness of its cause and the defense of its life in an unequal contest gained for its support friends like La Fayette.
Its final triumph and the establishment of its principles have been evolve from such a weight of human opposition, and by such manifest accord with immutable laws that we are led to hopes of its immortality. We are told that history repeats itself. That of republics has been one of rapid rise to power, of brilliant, though brief career and inglorious decline. Washington expressed doubts of his country's
future; but that was in the days of its infancy. Jefferson wrote: "I have been among the most sanguine in believing that our Union would be of long duration. I now doubt it much, "I see the event at no great distance." That was fifty-four years ago. Ivan Golovin, an eminent Russian writer, said: "A visit to the United States has the strange property of cooling democrats. Again I tell you that the manifest destiny
of the States is disunion. I do not
give the Union eight years tolast."
Twenty-one years have lapsed
since then. If Russia can tell
better today the degree of its per-
manence. The statements were
made five years before the war,
and their cause may be traced
to the complete utterance of the
national mind in the Constitu-
tion, when a link was inserted
in that harmonious chain
which did not bear the name
of liberty. The terrible struggle between right and wrong, so vividly portrayed by Victor Hugo in the mind of Jean Valjean, faintly describes the real conflict in the nation's mind to wrench away that link and weld the broken chain. But men of our own day and clime are disturbed by fears of the nation's safety. They protest against foreign immigration. Forgetting that a nation united like this
never was, that a mixed race of people like ours never lived, they reason by analogy. I conclude that our country has passed the zenith of its power as the mountain tops which appear on the western horizon of history are already gilded by its declining glory. The setting decline is not the fall of the Sun, it is but the Celestial Empire rising in the west, whose people come in
at the Golden Gate to sun themselves for a while in our abundant light, and the gilded appearance which disturbs the allarmist, is but glimmer of his rays on their shaven crowns.

The cry of “corruption” is constantly sounded in our ears, and not without reason.

The second element of the national mind has become diseased. Generosity has lost its high position in this
line of virtue for the nation does not need its assistance now. But Avarice has no business to occupy the vacant place. Generosity claimed only its expenses during eight years service in a costly war, while Avarice is unsatisfied with $50,000 for one year's pay in time of peace. Then now run away with fortunes which they have plundered from their country's
altar. Aye, the wealth which Robert Morris and his friends laid away upon that sacred place has been basely stolen and carried away in shame.

But the national mind will ever hold the deeds of those patriots in sacred remembrance, and the overmastering force of its just indignation will, in the end, overtake him who dares to violate their bequest. Today it pursues the unfortunate Bellamy.
But who can say that the honesty, integrity and honor of the national mind are destroyed?

It is but analogy to reason general disease from from a few bad cases, and event these are evidence of soundness at heart.

A certain condition of the permanency of the life principle is growth; and, in order to preserve a healthy tone, the forces which develop growth must be attended to constantly.
decay; and the worn-out matter must be removed from the path of life or death will ensue. Should our language cease to receive new words to cast off the old, it would die. The Latin and Greek are lifeless because this change in them has ceased. If decay in the human system terminates, the result is a morbid, unnatural growth; an excrescence appears and life is jeopardized.
The dangerous substance must be removed &c. the avenues of life remain free. This principle in the national mind is under the same conditions, &c. the law of natural selection applies here: those qualities best fitted to survive, live, &c. the impractical, the illiberal &c. the criminal qualities come to the surface & perish. Then let investigation go on. Let the political party hearse gath.
evup all the "dead corpses" of corruption, for final interment in the potter's field. When Mr. Clymer investigates Babcock and by accident makes a discovery in Pendleton's closet, he should not be alarmed and want to pass by, no matter what party is exposed; but the work should be thorough, and all the effete matter in the body politic should be purged, and the national mind be
Purified.

But sterner dangers than these confront us. While unity in supporting the government is still maintained, it is a unity of opposing forces which diverge from this point according to their different lines of policy. Adherence to party has supplaned devotion to country, and ambition is usurping the
Throne of Patriotism. The work of these factors will endanger the nation's life, and they need to be crushed; by a return to that policy which sweeps away party lines and demands of all public officials, capability, honesty and faithful service.

Patriotism is not dead, but it lies like one under the influence of an opiate.
It is no longer animated by that high spirit of activity which reared the shaft on Bunker Hill. Witness the supreme effort to revive it in the attempt to complete the Washington Monument. In this we may read the history of its feeble decline. The design by Robert Mills which aimed to rear a marble shaft six hundred feet within the dome of heaven.
at a cost of one million, one hundred and twenty thousand dollars was commensurate with the patriotic spirit which sought to honor the nation's hero. But the spirit waned and weakened. The shaft is now but one hundred and seventy feet in height as efforts repeatedly made to raise funds to complete it have failed. Patriotism sleeps. But it is sleep which will not prove
fatal; the commotion of this centennial epoch in American history, which profoundly stirs the nations mind, will rouse it to life, and it will drive the usurper, Ambition, from its throne. The achievements of the national mind are recorded on that living page of history whose name is America, and the record extends beyond her boundaries to every
foreign shore. It is a record of wonderful development of its educational power; of surprising growth in literature, philosophy and the fine arts; of incomparable skill in mechanical and engineering construction, where its enterprise, invention and execution stand unrivaled with the work of nations gray with age; of partial mastery of the forces and
obstacles of nature, using the former to surmount the latter. Witness the example of its work on the sea; coursed above by its powerful agent, steam, and tunnelled below by electric fire. But there is morbid growth in the national mind which demands consideration. Naturally we find this in the department of its greatest activity. The
organ of its utterance, the printing press is the instrument of this production. We need a literary fanning machine through which to pass all printed matter as it leaves the press, so that, like grain, it may be winnowed before it is fed to the people. How worthless papers and papers would fly like chaff before the wind; how books would lie, like rubbish,
dead weight on the sieves; and the grains of smut would be cleared away and our literary bread would be clean. The demand for this is equal to the desire for national purity, as there are dark stains to be removed before this hope can be realized. During the past two years the national mind has been dragged through
the most slimy pool that was ever exposed on the printed page; 3d without the establishment of a single fact for the people, or the production of any good for humanity; and by editors who bet on the immorality of the people as speculators do on the rise of the market, and then boast of their increased circulation as the gambler
does of his gains. Refer to that issue of the Chicago Times in which the first page is devoted to a statement of its circulation as compared with the Daily Inter-Ocean & Tribune showing a heavy increase during the period of the Pecheur scandal. May the quickening wrath of an offended Being strike remorse to the souls of those
who plant their poison-crop of obscene matter in the innocent minds of growing youth, infecting the very germ of the national mind where it springs to life in its purest soil: acts paralleled in our history only by the murderous policy of Great Britain when she scattered her spurious counterfeits of continental money among
the colonies. The result of this fiendish deed was the destruction of their currency, and the consequence of these depraved acts will be the death of morality. For a fitting illustration turn to mythology, where the dying Centaur gave to the wife of Hercules a charmed philter with directions to use it in case she were likely to lose the love of
her husband. A mistaken occasion arose & she presented to him a garment suffused with the charm; but if proved to be the venom of the hydra &d, though he tore off the tunic, the poison clung to his flesh &d, the record says, consumed even the marrow in his bones. Morality needs to be saved from such ghastly destruction. If it were
possible to establish a court of censors in the interest of truth, justice and humanity, to pass judgment on all printed matter before it is issued that court should at once be founded. You ask, where, sir, is then your boasted liberty of press? In reply I repeat, “security against wrong.” That liberty of press which is the death of morality and the
min of purity is a liberty from which we must hope to be saved.

We need a council for the care of public morals more than the ancient states of Greece. That condition of public sentiment which permits the posting of placards advertising bawdy shows, which will tolerate the existence and license the use of public brothels, calls...
loudly for the adoption of statute laws that will purge our cities and wipe from the face of our fair land the sicks of iniquity which blight the national growth and poison its mind.

It is time for the national mind to apply the lessons of history; to avoid those perils which have caused the fall of
nations; to change, somewhat, the direction of its present course, which leads to the wreck of its noblest elements, and return to that broad highway on which it commenced the journey. The national mind is not simply the expressed will of the people; it is not alone the entire intellect of the nation: this is only its broad base as it rises.
to the highest realm of
the spirit world where
its summit is crowned
by those immortal souls
who first uttered its
thought and colored
its life, who guard it
today and whose influ-
ence will guide it
safely through all dan-
gers to the fulfillment
of its destiny.
WHEELS.