

days, with the achievements, deeds and thoughts, of a Van Buren, Harrison, Polk, Tyler and others, who shed their lambent light upon the Presidential chair of a still later day.

Look at it in a common-sense view—lay for a moment all prejudice aside, and you will readily perceive that the ties of nature and the dictates of policy demand that we cherish with veneration and grateful recollections the memory of those men who have laid the foundation of this great republic.

When we commence to ridicule and expose the vices of those men, when we treat them as if they had no virtues, and when we immortalize their sins and follies in satirical anecdote, as is frequently done, it shows plainly that we are losing that true principle which should form an element of every American citizen.

Yes, we are living in an age too deeply overwhelmed by the vast flood of corruption to notice and cherish the deeds, to hold in grateful recollections the sufferings and trials our forefathers endured in laying the foundation of this powerful nation. We are all willing to admit that there was glory in the stubborn and firm resolution with which our country during its infancy, under the guidance of a Washington, fought for and maintained its rights; but now we console ourselves with the thought that no such *foolhardy, insane* risks made under the guidance of the commanders of a later day have marred their warlike renown. But, then, why should costly glory be sought when a cheaper article can be found?

As we go sailing down the stream of time, tossed hither and thither by the turbulent waves, we readily forget the past in our ambitious desire for spoils, and look with a longing into the distant future. Would we but stop and notice the vast difference between the early life of this republic and its later, we would be startled in the extreme. Formerly, our ablest men held our highest offices, while now they do not, and confessedly, *can not*.

We need no example to substantiate this assertion. Merely notice yourselves, who formerly filled our positions of trust and honor in our government, in our commonwealths, and who to-day hold the same positions.

Can we then with a clear conscience, say that each day our political virtues are becoming purer, while we observe the man who to-day holds the helm of our government, while we see him floundering in the vast flood of corruption, surrounded by men whose characters are tainted with atrocious crimes, whose hearts are hardened by nefarious plots against their country and whose imaginations are dazzled by visions of diadems in treasury vaults?

Can we, citizens of a free government, with free thought and free speech, stand by and see our country carried into the yawning chasm of innovation and overthrown by men destitute of sufficient wisdom, of decision of character, of inflexible integrity.

I again ask you, observing all this, can we boast of our political virtues.

It is a self-evident fact that, in these late years, our officials have become corrupt in the extreme. We are gradually learning to heed not the cry of corruption. Accounts of defalcations, swindles, forgeries and briberies, which at one time were startling in the extreme, and which sent a shudder of fear through our veins, are now read as they appear in the columns of the press, with that degree of coolness and unfeeling which alone should warn us of the terrible future. We are now able to see for ourselves that an ascertained desire for office is a demonstration of unfitness; that the present holding of office is *prima facie* evidence of unworthiness. We find our positions of trust throughout our land filled with men who are each day accumulating wealth and honor and filling their storehouses to the tune of our country's disgrace.

Men whom we send to our State and National legislatures, have deserted the principles which they professed to main-