

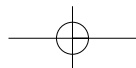
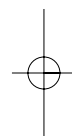
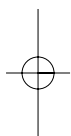
THE LIFE
OF
GEORGE TUCKER

Excerpted from
The Life and Philosophy
of George Tucker

Edited and introduced by
James Fieser
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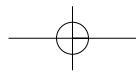
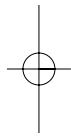
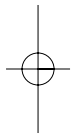
THOEMMES CONTINUUM





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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

George Tucker (1775–1861) is one of the more unique nineteenth-century American philosophers. A practicing attorney and Congressman from the state of Virginia, he was an original thinker who expressed his views in a range of literary genres. Many of these were among the first of their kind: a biography of Thomas Jefferson, a major history of the United States, a science fiction novel about the moon, and a southern U.S. novel. He also composed several influential books in economic thought and frequently wrote on the subject of slavery. While in Congress, he published a collection of essays on philosophical and political subjects, which attracted the attention of Jefferson who subsequently appointed him as the first professor of moral philosophy at the University of Virginia. Near the end of his life he published a second collection of philosophical essays. Tucker believed that the state of philosophy in the United States was largely undeveloped and, in his various writings, he attempted to address this deficiency.

TUCKER'S LIFE AND WRITINGS.

Our main source for Tucker's life is his "Autobiography," which he composed in 1858, three years before his death. Additional material comes from Tucker's letters, a commonplace book by his second wife, and an obituary penned by a close friend. Born in St. George's, Bermuda in 1775, Tucker was part of a distinguished family that had been on the island for 150 years. He describes himself as a mischievous child, an avid reader as an older boy, and a love-struck adolescent. He worked for a time as a law clerk, and at age 20 moved to Williamsburg, Virginia at the urging of his famous cousin who resided there, St. George Tucker. He enrolled in the college of William and Mary, where St. George was a law professor. His interests leaned decidedly towards social life rather than academics, and when he left college he was ill-prepared for the practice of law which he had been studying. In 1797 he married a wealthy young woman from a Williamsburg family; she died two years later, and, depressed from the loss, he moved to Richmond to escape inevitable reminders of her. In Richmond, he obtained his law license, but worked incompetently from fear of public speaking, having "neither the requisite self-possession nor fluency." He again preoccupied himself with social activities and soon became addicted to gambling at cards, a problem that was to plague him for years to come. In 1802 he

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married again – a relative of his first wife – after getting her pregnant. Around this time he launched his literary career with a pamphlet on slavery and contributions to Richmond's newspapers.

Although achieving local recognition as a talented writer, Tucker's finances spun out of control through poor investments, gambling debts, and a lottery scandal that got him jailed for a few days. He wisely moved from the area, first staying with relatives and then relocating to southern Virginia. He writes, "I was therefore kept busy for some time in making the necessary preparations – as in buying negroes for the plantations – sending them out – providing materials for my new house, and settling up my accounts." For ten years in this rural area he honed his legal skills, raised a family, improved his finances, and contributed articles to national magazines. In 1818 he moved to Lynchburg, Virginia, hoping to provide better education and social surroundings for his growing children. He was soon elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, a position he held for six years. He describes his service as unremarkable – largely because of his aversion to public speaking and his "livelier ambition to be a great chess player than to be a distinguished member of Congress." While he was in office, his second wife died from pregnancy complications, leaving him with four children. It was also while in office that he published his first books. In 1822 he gathered together several of his anonymous magazine articles and published them under the title *Essays on Various Subjects of Taste, Morals, and National Policy*. Inspired by the success of Walter Scott, he attempted to achieve fame and fortune through novel writing. In two months he composed *The Valley of Shenandoah*, a tragic novel about the decline of a Virginia plantation family. Regretfully, he states, "The work may be regarded as a failure. It had the disadvantage of ending unhappily, and its catastrophe was offensive to Virginia pride."

At the close of his third term in office, it became clear that he would not succeed in a run for a fourth. Thomas Jefferson, impressed with Tucker's *Essays*, then invited him to become professor of moral philosophy at the newly-formed University of Virginia. Still hoping for the success of his novel, Tucker hesitated a few months, but accepted the job when his dream of a literary career seemed it would remain unfulfilled. Now at age 50, he moved to Charlottesville and assumed teaching responsibilities in, as Jefferson words the job description, "mental sciences generally, including Ideology, general grammar, logic and Ethics" (Jefferson to Tucker, March 9, 1825). To this were later added belles lettres, rhetoric, and political economy. Over the next 20 years at the University his literary output was as varied as it was voluminous. With lingering hopes at fiction writing, he composed two science fiction novels. *A Voyage to the Moon*, modeled after Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, appeared in 1827, and *A Century Hence* remained in manuscript form until 1977. He assumed editorship of a University journal,

The Virginia Literary Museum, for which he did much of the writing. There were also three books on economic theory, a biography of Jefferson, and many magazine articles. He married his third wife in 1828, travelled to Europe in 1838, and retired at age 69 in 1845.

Leaving Charlottesville, he emancipated his five household slaves, and moved to Philadelphia where he became an active member of the American Philosophical Society. His literary output not waning, he published a four-volume *History of the United States*, a fourth book on economics, and compiled a second collection of previously published essays. In the midst of these projects in 1858 his third wife died, and the same year he composed his autobiography for the benefit of his grandchildren, which remained unpublished for a century. In 1861, wanting to avoid a cold Philadelphia winter, he travelled through the South. While onboard a ship in Mobile, Alabama, he was struck on the head by a bale of cotton, which knocked him temporarily unconscious. He was transported to his daughter's house in Charlottesville, where he died three months later.

Tucker was exceptionally well read in the British philosophical traditions of the 18th and 19th centuries, and his principal influences were the great Scottish writers who in general had such a strong impact on early American philosophy, namely, David Hume, Thomas Reid, Dugald Stewart and Thomas Brown. Consistent with the Scottish tradition, he was also well-versed in ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, and paid little regard to medieval and German writers. Unlike his Scottish counterparts, though, Tucker was not a philosophical system builder and instead focused on specific issues that attracted his attention. He was an essayist in the true sense of the term, composing short, self-contained articles on single subjects aimed at a broad audience. Nevertheless, there are consistent themes that run throughout his philosophical writings and give them an overall structure.

A dominant feature that unifies many of his writings is the notion of progress: the science, culture, and economy of countries all inevitably march onward. The driving force behind this is human nature itself to the degree that we are all psychologically restless, and seek for our own betterment. The United States, he believes, manifests this more distinctly than other cultures because of its resources and the unrestricted cultural and economic opportunities available to its inhabitants. Another unifying feature of Tucker's philosophy is that it is thoroughly secular, the concepts of God and religion playing no role. In his autobiography he mentions a religious experience he had as a youth while courting a young woman. This, though, seems to have not taken hold, and even his earliest writings display some antipathy towards religion. He denies the view that "the belief of rewards and punishments, in the next world, influences human conduct in this" (*Letter on the Conspiracy of the Slaves*). Too much religion, he believes, is a

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bad thing: “even religion itself, pure and exalted as is its character, may be pursued to a pernicious excess” (“On Theatre”). And, on the whole, “Although religion cherishes our best feelings, it also often proves a cloak for the worst” (*Voyage to the Moon*).

As an author and university teacher, Tucker’s principal philosophical interest was what he and others of his day called “mental philosophy” – that is, the investigation of the principles and faculties of the human mind. Modern philosophers, he argues, have freed the discipline from medieval “mysticism and folly,” just as modern chemists have cast aside alchemy. Nevertheless, he sees that metaphysicians are still ridiculed for retaining the name “metaphysics” (“On Metaphysics”). It is for this reason that “mental philosophy” is his preferred term. Much of Tucker’s interest in mental philosophy involves what has since been relegated to the discipline of psychology. Perhaps his most unique contribution in the arena of psychology is his analysis of the famous Siamese twins Chang and Eng. In one essay Tucker argues that the twins offer an unparalleled opportunity to resolve nature/nurture questions: since the twins will have had identical environmental influences, the differences between them will then result from native ability. He sketches a detailed methodology for interviewing the twins – a twin study in its truest sense. Some years later he had an opportunity to interview the twins himself, although not quite with the level of rigor that he proposed in his essay. He then published the results of the interview in the American Philosophical Society *Proceedings*.

In his more distinctly “philosophical” writings, Tucker theorizes about the concepts of aesthetics, causality, the external world, and morality. When explaining the mental operations behind these notions, he takes two approaches: some concepts and mental abilities are instinctively grounded in human nature, and others are the result of the association of ideas. He thus straddles the common sense tradition of Reid and the associationist tradition of Hume. In this regard he closely follows Thomas Brown’s philosophical approach; in fact, student lecture notes of Tucker’s early philosophy courses indicate that he began his teaching career using Brown’s newly published *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind* (1820). He most admires Dugald Stewart, though, and frequently uses Stewart’s theories as a springboard for his own.

A recurring area of philosophical interest for Tucker is aesthetics. Like many philosophers of his time, he focuses on the human faculty of “taste”, which involves an ability to perceive beauty in objects and another ability to experience sublimity when confronting a powerful force. Regarding beauty, he parts company with those who think the perception of beauty is a purely subjective response; for Tucker there are specific external qualities in objects – light, colour and form – that naturally excite our experience of beauty. Sublimity, by contrast, is a feeling of pleasure that is mixed with a sense of

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danger, such as occurs when viewing a storm. The pleasure, he argues, is the result of both an excitement we get from the danger itself, and a thoughtful reflection on the danger, which will give us an additional feeling, such as terror or power.

Tucker's most elaborate philosophical discussions are on the subject of causality. Streamlining Hume's theory, Brown argued that causality is a belief of continuance resulting when we see an invariable succession between two events. Tucker believes that "invariable succession" is too broad a criterion for causality, and that virtually any two events which we invariably perceive successively would thus qualify as a causal connection – such as a door slamming prior to a clap of thunder. Tucker believes that causality is a foundational belief that results in two distinct circumstances. In some situations, such as those explored in science, we can perceive the precise and inevitable character of the causal changes, such as the chiselling of a statue. In other situations, though, the causal changes are presently hidden from us, although they may be discovered at some future time, such as the power of bread to nourish. The first situations, which are the most common, are sufficient to trigger our belief in a causal connection. The second situations bring about this belief with an element of probability.

As a moral philosopher, we do not find in Tucker's writings a systematic account of moral obligation. He does not, for example, expound on the notions of virtue, duty, and utility as his Scottish counterparts do. He also does not speak of natural rights as does Jefferson and other American writers of the time. Perhaps because of his aversion to the "mysticism" of traditional metaphysics, his discussions of moral issues draw on concrete mental operations, such as sympathy, selfishness, and the desires for luxury and fame. Much of what he says on the subject of morality is in the context of practical moral problems of his time, such as dueling, India's practice of Suttee, and, most importantly, slavery. He thought and wrote about slavery throughout much of his life, and, as the years went by, his views regrettably degenerated. His background put him in a good position for condemning the practice. A story from his "Autobiography" is particularly illuminating: "When I was too young to be left to myself I was attended by a colored boy several years older than myself. This boy taught me to count, and to multiply as far as 12 by 12. How he acquired this knowledge, I never knew, nor in fact ever inquired." This experience, he says, gave him "doubts about the inferiority of the intellect of the coloured race." When moving to Williamsburg at age 20, he was influenced by the anti-slavery views of St. George Tucker.

Stunned by a nearly successful slave rebellion in Richmond in 1800, Tucker wrote his first work on the subject in which he staunchly rejects slavery on moral grounds. His principal argument, though, is practical: as slaves become educated, rebellions will be inevitable and place the whole

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country at risk. The most viable solution, he believes, is to establish a territory for freed blacks west of the Mississippi river. Some years later, though, he makes a subtle shift in thinking, perhaps as a result of his own experience as a slave owner. In a speech before Congress regarding the Missouri compromise, he maintains that slavery is a moral evil, but feels that relocating slaves is not viable. Instead, he argues that slavery will naturally die out when population increases, the price of labour drops, and slave ownership is no longer cost effective. If a policy of emancipation is prematurely forced on the south, he contends, "slave-holding states are bound to resist the restriction at every hazard" as a simple matter of self-preservation. A few years later in his novel *The Valley of Shenandoah*, he dramatizes the position taken in this speech – graphically depicting the moral evils of slavery, yet maintaining the impossibility of emancipation.

By the mid 1830s, the abolitionist movement took hold in the North. The effect was not only increased tensions between the North and South, but a censorship within the South of any anti-slavery opinion, even of moderate criticisms such as Tucker's. By the 1840s, Tucker had become quite frustrated with the abolitionist movement, contending that it did more harm than good. Southerners who were in sympathy with emancipation could no longer openly express their views; because of Northern imposition on the rights of Southern states, "even the love of liberty, which once pleaded for emancipation, is now enlisted against it" (*Progress of the United States*). In this same work there appears his most complex defence of what he calls the "euthanasia" of slavery. When population in the United States reaches about 50 people per square mile, he argues, slavery will no longer be profitable. Analyzing population trends, he projects that this will occur in 80 years from that time – around the year 1920.

By the mid 1850s, he staunchly opposes abolitionists and, attempting to counterbalance their arguments, he says that we should consider some of the goods that come from slavery. For example, masters develop leadership skills and the virtue of patience; well-treated slaves may be happier than impoverished freed blacks in the North. And besides, he argues, how many among us are truly free? "But, in the freest countries in existence, a very large majority of the community are subjected to the will of others, and have a very limited share of liberty. Thus, women are there deprived of most civil rights, and children of still more. Every soldier and sailor is placed under a despot, to whom he must yield implicit obedience" (*History of the United States*). In retrospect, Tucker migrated to the wrong side of the issue, and his skills as a philosopher and economist were misdirected. His motivation behind this transformation, though, is clear from his own writings: he was committed to the long-term political and economic well-being of the South, he sincerely believed that slavery would disappear on its own, and the political climate at the time prevented any moderate position on the issue.

SUMMARY OF TUCKER'S PHILOSOPHY

As noted, Tucker did not compose lengthy philosophical treatises but instead published a large number of philosophical essays. To better appreciate the scope and detail of his writings, a synopsis appears below of these works.

Miscellaneous Articles

Tucker published philosophical essays in many American periodicals over a 60-year span. Around 25 of these he himself republished in his 1822 and 1860 volumes of essays. Many others, though, were not printed again, such as those summarized below that originally appeared in the *Richmond Enquirer*, the *Virginia Literary Museum*, and the *Southern Literary Messenger*.

On the Illusions of Fancy (1804). According to Tucker, the fancy – or imagination – is governed by basic principles of association: proximity in time or place, resemblance, and contrast. In this essay he illustrates how the underlying principles of the fancy can lead us into error. He concludes that every chain of reasoning is liable to be “turned this or that way from the right line of truth,” and zealots should accordingly be modest in their opinions.

On Luxury (1804). Tucker argues here that human nature is driven by the two forces of labour and rest, and luxury is important for motivating our labour and enjoying our rest. He recognizes that luxury can make people too selfish and lazy, but he feels that this is not likely in modern societies which are grounded in industry and flourish culturally when geared towards luxury items and activities. New desires give rise to new inventions to gratify them.

A Letter from Hickory Cornhill (1806). This satirical poem, published under the pseudonym “Hickory Cornhill,” criticizes women gambling at Loo, which for a while was a trend in Richmond’s social circles.

Jeffersoniana: Hume’s Political Principles (1829). Gaining access to Jefferson’s commonplace book, Tucker transcribes passages that Jefferson jotted down from Hume’s *History* that were particularly disregarding of individual liberty. Tucker notes that Hume’s political views have indeed sparked opposition in both Britain and the United States, and Jefferson even “entertained doubts of letting Hume’s *History* hold a place in the University library.” However, Tucker argues, British concerns about Hume’s *History* do not affect Americans, and our youth may read his work “without any danger of being contaminated by his principles of government.”

Premises and Conclusions – Cause and Effect (1829). In this essay Tucker opposes the standard view of causality offered by Hume and Brown. According to Brown, causality is a belief of continuance triggered by the

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mind when we see an invariable succession between two things. Tucker objects to Brown on two principal grounds. First, a “belief of continuance” is not the same as a “belief of necessary connection”; for a true explanation of causality, we really need an explanation of the latter, not the former. Second, Brown’s notion of “invariable succession” involves a succession of perceptions which has never been *known* to fail; since our knowledge is incomplete, we may see strange things invariably succeed each other, which really are not connected as cause and effect.

The Siamese Twins (1830). Tucker argues that the Siamese twins, Chang and Eng, provide an unparalleled opportunity to settle basic questions about whether specific mental characteristics are formed through nature or education. Their educations have been identical – more so than even the closest twins – and any differences existing between the two must be from nature. Tucker suggests that a study should be conducted on them to this end. In 1836 Tucker had this opportunity and published an article on the results, which is reprinted in *Essays, Moral and Metaphysical* (1860).

Contemporary Fame (1830). Just as we might misjudge the true character of people from the distant past as they are depicted in histories, Tucker argues, we may similarly misjudge the true qualities of our contemporaries. We may be misled by extreme opinions of critics or supporters, the person’s wealth, and other deceiving circumstances that we should guard against.

Metaphysics and the Metaphysics of Language (1830). In this two-part article, Tucker describes the contributions of mental philosophy. In Part One he notes that mental philosophy is important for orators to know how to affect people’s beliefs, and the most profound writers of the past had a thorough knowledge of the subject. Dugald Stewart suggests that mental philosophy cannot be progressively improved since the mind can only be introspectively observed, not experimented on; Tucker disagrees, arguing that some experiments can be performed with sensation and memory. In Part Two, Tucker discusses language as an instrument of philosophical thought.

Etymology (1830). Tucker contends that etymological accounts of words must be based on more than the mere similarity in sound, and thus should be “assisted by the lights of history and philosophy.” The relation between Greek and Sanskrit is a case in point, and presents a mystery as to which was derived from the other.

Natural Language (1830). Dugald Stewart argued that complex spoken language is rooted in a more natural language consisting of facial expressions and bodily gestures. Tucker agrees with this and, contrary to critics, argues that this natural language among humans, which is most evident in children, is similar to that which we see in the animal world.

The Principle of Imitation (1830). Humans, as well as animals, have the ability to imitate, which is how children acquire the experience of their

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parents. Accounting for this mental phenomenon, Dugald Stewart argues that it involves two related abilities: one which allows us to mimic the outward behavior of others, and another which allows us to adopt – or sympathize with – their inward feelings and manners of thinking. Tucker agrees with this view, but argues that it fails to explain the origin of the phenomenon in general. Associationists contend that imitation is grounded in principles of association. Tucker, though, rejects this view arguing that we have a natural capacity to imitate, which is foundational to our mental makeup and “incapable of being resolved into any thing more elementary.”

The Theatre and Of the Pleasure Derived from Tragedy (1830). Tucker presents two essays together, which were sparked by a controversy some years earlier in Richmond. The first considers the moral status of the theatre; Tucker argues that plays have a moral benefit and a capacity to produce pleasure which counteracts any temporary indecency that they might display. The second addresses a problem raised by Hume: why tragic plays please us. Departing from Hume, Tucker argues that part of the pleasure is that it excites us, which helps us avoid painful mental stillness. Another part is that sympathy itself is a pleasing feeling, as long as we are not close to the person with whom we sympathize.

Discourse on the Progress of Philosophy (1835). Tucker delivered this lengthy talk before the Virginia Historical and Philosophical Society and published it shortly after in the *Southern Literary Messenger*. In this essay he discusses how reason and philosophical reflection have been infused into various fields of study and thus have elevated society. In politics many countries have abandoned the view that rulers are empowered by God, and have instead seen that governments are created by people to advance human happiness. In religion, superstitions have lessened and God has been depicted as less angry and more merciful. In literature poetry is more metaphysical. Psychology, particularly associationism, has dramatically advanced since “the slight and vague notice of it by Locke.” In economics, philosophy has shown that the prosperity of one country “radiates light and heat” to other countries around it. Sciences, he argues, have advanced from the use of both inductive and deductive reasoning. The growing influence of reason on society as a whole will create more equality among social classes, and “extinguish hereditary rank.” Unfortunately, though, reason is sometimes abused for bad immoral effects, as occurred in the aftermath of the Reformation and the French Revolution. In the second half of the essay, Tucker speculates about the positive impact that reason coupled with population growth will have on the cultural progress of the United States. Aware of the growing tensions between northern and southern states, he argues that “the golden chain of mutual interests” will keep particular states from seceding. If the issue of secession is pushed, though, he believes it will result in a violent civil war.

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Discourse on American Literature (1837). Tucker first wrote on the topic of American Literature in an 1814 article published in the *Port Folio*, which he included in his 1822 collection of essays. In that piece he tries to explain why Americans have not been able to compete with the British in literary production. He revisited this issue more than 20 years later in a public discourse, which was subsequently published in the *Southern Literary Messenger*. He reiterates some of his earlier points about American disadvantages, such as limited schooling and the inability of writers to devote themselves full time to their craft. However, much had changed in the intervening years, and the bulk of his essay discusses the recent and memorable contributions of American writers in a range of fields, such as fiction, poetry, history, economics, science, and essay writing. Many of these writers, he believes, are first rate and match the talents of Europeans. Where Americans have really stood out, though, is in political writing and periodical literature such as newspapers and journals. He feels that American contributions to literature are certainly bound to increase, at least in part because of the friendly rivalry that exists between states, particularly northern and southern ones, which spawn competition.

Writings on Slavery

Tucker's writings on slavery cover a period of almost 60 years and appeared in pamphlets and book chapters. His principal discussions are summarized below.

Letter on the Conspiracy of the Slaves (1801). In reaction to the failed slave rebellion in Richmond, Virginia in 1800, Tucker argues that, as more slaves become educated, the chances of such slave rebellions will increase. For our own protection, the slave issue must be resolved. One option might be to give slaves partial freedom; this would not work, though, since slaves would not be content without full social equality. A second option might be repatriating slaves to Africa; this, though, would be too expensive. Tucker recommends a third option: creating a settlement for blacks west of the Mississippi river, which would be paid for by a tax upon the blacks who occupied the territory.

Speech on the Restriction of Slavery in Missouri (1820). In this speech read before the U.S. House of Representatives, Tucker argues that Missouri should be admitted as a slave state, without Congress imposing conditions on how Missouri should construct its constitution, particularly regarding slavery. If Congress did meddle in the details of Missouri's constitution, Tucker argues, this would set a bad precedent for limiting the sovereignty of any new state. To take such dramatic measures would also alter the essential character of the U.S. government in its relation to the sovereignty of individual states. According to Tucker, even if slavery is a moral evil, this should not impact the right of a state to allow slavery: states have a right to abuse

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their power even if it means doing wrong. He considers how restricting slavery in the West would impact the ratio of blacks to whites throughout the country. He argues that, as whites emigrate to the West, black population will become more concentrated in slave-holding states. Ideally, Tucker argues, it would be good to keep the black-to-white ratio where it is now, otherwise a major increase in blacks might prompt whites to abandon the country or lead to a bloody conflict between the races. He believes that efforts to move the black population to foreign countries are financially impractical and thus provide no solution to the problem. Thus, slavery should be allowed to follow westward expansion, where the ratio will remain constant, and racial integration will be peaceful when slavery is finally abolished. This will occur naturally, he argues, when western lands are occupied, the price of labor drops, and slave ownership becomes financially unfeasible.

Valley of Shenandoah (1824). In this novel, Tucker describes the financial decline of a respected plantation family, which ultimately results in the auctioning of their property and slaves. In an early conversation, Edward, the story's hero, reiterates the principal points about slavery in Tucker's speech: "I freely admit it to be an evil, both moral and political, [but it] admits of no remedy that is not worse from the disease. No thinking man supposes that we could emancipate them, and safely let them remain in the country." We must wait "some centuries hence" until slavery will disappear on its own. In the mean time, slaves "are perhaps better supplied with the necessaries of life than the labouring class of any country out of America. They have their pleasures and enjoyments according to their station and capacity." Other sections of the novel contain conversations between slaves and their owners which, from Tucker's perspective, reflect the genuine affections between the two groups. The most moving part of the novel is an account of a slave auction, and the efforts displayed to keep slave families together.

Progress of the United States in Population and Wealth (1843). In Chapter 13 of this work, titled "The Future Progress of Slavery," Tucker argues that abolitionists have in fact thwarted efforts in the South to end slavery by attempting to impose a policy on them against their will. Slavery, he believes, will inevitably cease as an institution when labor prices and slave ownership will become "a burdensome charge rather than a source of profit." This will occur, he argues, when population in slave-holding states reaches a density of about 50 people per square mile. Looking at population trends, and accounting for various factors, Tucker predicts that this will occur in the United States in about 80 years (i.e., around the year 1920).

The History of the United States (1856–1857). Two sections of this four-volume work discuss slavery. In the opening chapter, Tucker gives an account of colonial settlement and focuses briefly on the effects of slavery on Southern life. He takes issue with Jefferson's claim in *Notes on the State of*

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Virginia that slavery negatively impacts the disposition of the slave-owner. On balance, Tucker argues, slavery tends to make slave-owners more virtuous by improving patience, mildness and clemency. At the close of the final volume, Tucker considers recent speculation about the possible dissolution of the United States over the question of slavery. He thinks that this is unlikely. First, efforts in freeing the slaves may be only a passing interest, like so many moral causes. Second, the majority of the people in the country – that is all of the south and at last some in the north – agree that individual states have the sovereignty to determine differing degrees among their citizens, specifically women and children, and, by extension, slaves. Third, neither the North nor the South could endorse a permanent split that would put at risk their access to waterways and free trade.

Political Economy for the People (1859). In Chapter 9 of this work, titled “Agricultural Industry,” Tucker discusses the economy of agriculture and considers slavery as a factor in that industry. He argues that abolitionist arguments must be balanced against some possible goods that come from slavery. Economically, work production by slaves may be equal if not greater to that of free people. Some slave-owners encourage production through rewards, rather than punishment. Slavery also can build character among slave-owners, such as manners and leadership skills. When well treated, Southern slaves may be just as happy as their free counterparts in the North. Ultimately, though, Tucker argues, slavery in the United States will soon entirely cease just as serfdom ended in Europe.

Essays on Various Subjects (1822)

Tucker's *Essays on Various Subjects* (1822) consists of 15 essays written, as he states in the Preface, “in the year 1813, and the greater part of them were soon afterwards published in the *Port Folio*, under the title of *Thoughts of a Hermit*.” He also states that the collection “is one of the few indigenous works devoted exclusively to literary and miscellaneous speculation,” and notes that it is with some “anxiety” that he awaits reaction from transatlantic critics who have not thought too highly of American productions. Many of the essays in the book are marked by a sense of American inferiority and an effort to defend the country's cultural and economic abilities.

(1) *On the Future Destiny of the United States*. In this essay, Tucker expresses his optimism about the future of the United States, its ability to stay united, and eventually occupy the entire continent. The rapid increase in U.S. population, he thinks, will intensify the country's economic power. Critics have suggested that the country's diverse population – particularly west of the Mississippi – will cause it to disintegrate before the country reaches the Pacific. Tucker, though, feels that the shared economic goals throughout the country will unite it, particularly with water navigation which will tie the areas together economically. Military power of the eastern

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states, he thinks, will be important to protect the western waterways. When population increases across the continent, large cities will emerge and manufacturing will predominate, and, in time, English will be the mother tongue of half the world's population. Like all great civilizations, though, Tucker feels that eventually the United States will decline, perhaps because of over population and the inability to secure foreign food through an adequate balance of trade.

(2) *On Simplicity in Ornament*. Tucker argues that we are naturally inclined to be affected by only the most simple and dramatically evident things. As we grow accustomed to these, we crave new excitements, and focus more on subtle details. However there's a point at which we stray too far from simplicity in ornamentation. First, our mental faculties have limits to the subtleties that we can entertain. Second, through the association of ideas, simplicity is connected with pleasant ideas of modesty and innocence; intricacy is associated with unpleasant ideas of pride and vanity. A middle ground between simplicity and refinement, he believes, is most natural. He makes this point drawing on examples from music, art, gardening, writing style and dress. For example, readers seem to prefer the ease of Addison's *Spectator* to the complexity of Johnson's *Rambler*. So too with our preference of Hume over Gibbon. The ideal middle ground, though, "is continually undergoing some change, by the steady progress of knowledge and science."

(3) *On American Literature*. In this essay Tucker examines the fact that literary production in the United States is a fraction of that in Great Britain. Some Europeans have seen this as a sign of a natural inferiority among Americans. In response, Tucker argues that we may assume that the mental constitution among Americans is the same as Europeans, because their bodily constitution is the same. There are fewer colleges in America – in only twenty of which classical dead languages are taught – and Americans attend college for fewer years. It is only from a "redundancy" of educated people that sufficient numbers of people will have leisure time to write for either amusement or instruction. Notable British authors have all been writers by profession, like Samuel Johnson, and have improved as they have refined their skills over time. Because Americans praise and emulate all things British, there is a natural hesitation to attempt to publish American works that they feel cannot compete with successful works imported from Britain. American genius, he feels, has been devoted more towards scientific inventions and, perhaps more importantly, politics and law.

(4) *On Density of Population*. In this essay, Tucker argues against the view that population density is "unfavourable to morals and happiness." Instead, it is in fact an aid to national defense by fostering a large navy, national wealth by spawning competition, and literature and the arts by creating leisure time. Although a more dense population will produce

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greater degrees of suffering through poverty, it will also create greater amounts of pleasure – particularly intellectual pleasures and benefits through improved science and medicine.

(5) *On Classical Education*. Tucker here defends school curriculums that teach Greek and Latin, which, he notes, have declined in favor of more utilitarian subjects. The act of translating, he argues, draws on a range of mental faculties that improve creativity and judgment skills. Virtually all great English writers, he notes, have had a classical education.

(6) *On Architecture*. Why do we improve and advance in all areas of knowledge, yet in architecture, countries throughout the world consider the Greek model to be the standard of excellence? Although this is partly explained by the utility of its form, according to Tucker it is perhaps more because of the intrinsic beauty of its style. For example, the mixture of circles and squares draws on a principle of variety. Nevertheless, Tucker feels that the Greeks did not exhaust all the possibilities for beautiful forms in nature. Part of our respect for Greek architecture owes to habit, a veneration for antiquity, and authority. This prompted the Romans to adopt that style, and, so it seems, later civilizations in their turn.

(7) *On National Debts*. Some people argue that national debt will ruin a country; others say that it is actually the cause of national prosperity. Tucker explains the relation of debt to prosperity and argues that loans to the government only redistribute wealth, and often draw from the most unproductive parts of the community. He writes, “a nation is always able to pay as long as it is able to borrow, and the ability to effect the one operation will always indicate the ability to effect the other.”

(8) *On Style*. Tucker believes that the writing style in a given language may progressively become more refined, but will reach a point at which it becomes corrupt. Writing style in the United States risks approaching that point all too quickly because of unique circumstances. Many recent books, such as romances, have excessive artificial ornamentation. American political and religious oratory is highly rhetorical. The easy opportunity to write in newspapers propagates a “false taste” in style. Tucker recommends a natural manner of writing with vigour and precision.

(9) *On Beauty*. Theorists such as Archibald Alison believe that the experience of beauty results from recollections and other associations triggered by the object, and not by anything intrinsic to the object itself. Tucker opposes this theory and argues that there is an initial “organic” pleasure that beautiful objects give us, which may be increased through cultivation. Light, color and form are the principal organic sources of such visual delight. Visual beauty, he maintains, is initially weaker in intensity to tactile or auditory beauty, but it is more susceptible to cultivation.

(10) *On Banks of Circulation*. Banks have been accused of damaging the economy through the creation of fictitious capital. Contrary to this view,

Tucker argues that banks increase a country's currency without depreciating its value, and can accordingly encourage trade. However, they do pose some risk of influencing political decisions through "conferring pecuniary favours."

(11) *On Rhyme*. Blank verse vs. rhyme: which is better? Contrary to defenders of blank verse, Tucker argues that rhyme is "a valuable improvement, since without impairing the substantial merit of poetry, it is a superadded beauty to the language, and affords new pleasure to the ear in a species of writing where pleasure is the principal object."

(12) *On Duelling*. Tucker considers why dueling has commanded so much respect, in spite of its severe moral and legal condemnation. He argues that it is justified by offering a civilized course of redress, when cut off by legal means. Laws against dueling "do not prevent the mischief they merely alter its form," such as with vengeful shootings and stabbings.

(13) *On Instructions to Representatives*. Should U.S. Congressmen be obliged to follow the instructions of their constituents or may they follow their own differing opinions? In principle, Tucker believes, they indeed have an obligation to follow their constituents, but may act otherwise if their constituents are misinformed and an opposing position is truly in their best interests.

(14) *On Scientific Pursuits*. Disciplines have been increasingly ranked according to their usefulness – with scientific subjects being more useful than philosophy, literature and history. This is particularly so in the United States, Tucker argues, where efficiency is needed in taking possession of an uncultivated country. Some areas of science, though, have little utilitarian value, such as botany, natural history, mineralogy, and mathematics. By contrast, many humanities subjects have important intellectual and cultural value, such as foreign languages and ancient history. He writes, "we shall never effectually wipe off the illiberal reproaches with which our intellectual character has been assailed, so long as there is a branch of letters in which we shall manifest a decided inferiority."

(15) *On the Theory of Malthus*. Malthus argued that population is limited by subsistence and that overpopulation is a natural source of misery and vice in the world. Tucker opposes Malthus's link between population and human misery. While overpopulation and poverty do create some suffering, this is counterbalanced by the benefits that result from large communities. Also, there are many causes of suffering and most of these seem unconnected with overpopulation, as we see with people in the United States.

A Voyage to the Moon (1827)

Tucker composed his *Voyage* shortly after becoming professor of moral philosophy at the University of Virginia. One of the earliest works of science fiction, the *Voyage* displays his wide-ranging interests in science, geography,

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politics, and philosophy. The hero of the story is Joseph Atterley who, depressed by the death of his wife, embarks on a voyage around the world. Shipwrecked and taken prisoner, he befriends a mysterious Brahmin priest and the two build a craft to go to the moon – powered by an anti-gravity metal that is repelled by the earth, but attracted to the moon. Journeying to the moon, the two look down on the African continent and speculate about the natural inferiority of different races. Atterley thinks that individuals are of equal natural capacity, affected by environment; the Brahmin thinks that environment is the principal source of racial differences, but feels that there is still some “organic difference” between them. Travelling over America, the two comment on the freedom and economic opportunities in the United States, and Atterley predicts its progressive cultural advance, which will travel around the globe. The two speculate on the earth’s geology, the formation of the moon, the cultural decline of India under British colonization, and the Indian custom of suttee.

Landing on the moon, Atterley finds that the people and vegetation are much like that of earth, with only subtle variations. Their customs, though, are particularly strange – and it is in describing them that the *Voyage* becomes a satire on the practices of his own time. Some of his targets are the immodest dress of vain young women, religious asceticism, church ritual, hoarding of gold, regional prejudice, phrenology, medical treatments such as bleeding, and disputes between agricultural and industrial economy. Atterley and the Brahmin visit notable philosophers, scientists, and inventors, most of whom are self-deceived charlatans but nonetheless admired by lunar inhabitants. In addition to mannerisms worthy of satire, Atterley encounters new practices that might at some point apply to his culture on earth, such as limiting population through birth control, banning capital punishment, and adopting different rules of judicial evidence. On their return to earth, the Brahmin gives a detailed account of his life. Atterley arrives in New York after a four year absence, and vows to never travel again except through books.

Essays, Moral and Metaphysical (1860)

Tucker retired in 1745 and moved to Philadelphia where he continued to write and engage in intellectual pursuits. One of the products of this period is *Essays, Moral and Metaphysical*, in which, he notes in the Preface, “A part of the Essays have been already published anonymously or separately.”

(1) *On our Belief of an External World*. The problem surrounding our belief in the external world is how we can infer their reality of external things from our subjective mental experiences of them. Tucker considers different theories and concludes that the notion of externality begins with our ability to distinguish between mental events and matter through physical locomotion: on the one hand, we have desires about things, and, on the other, we are able to physically move closer to or further away from those things.

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(2) *On Cause and Effect*. This essay – the longest of the collection – was first published as a pamphlet in 1850, in the Preface to which he states that it “is part of the Author’s Lectures on Moral Philosophy in the University of Virginia.” He notes in his autobiography that he read it to an unreceptive audience at the American Philosophical Society. Tucker takes issue with Hume’s view that causal events seem conjoined, but that we can never discover any real connection. However, Tucker claims that there are two distinct classes of causal events. With one type, such as the power of food to nourish, we are indeed truly unable to perceive a connecting tie or link between events. With the other type, such as the causal events involved in the building of a wall or the chiselling of a statue, we can in fact perceive the precise and inevitable character of the causal changes. Throughout the essay he illustrates how we can detect various causal changes.

(3) *On Simplicity in Ornament*. This essay is a version of that by the same title which appeared in Tucker’s 1822 collection of essays, summarized above.

(4) *On Sympathy*. Why is it that we feel cold indifference towards people’s good fortunes, but acute pain towards their misfortunes? Tucker argues that when viewing others’ good fortune, our natural sympathy is counteracted by a selfish regret in us for missing out on a pleasure, but, with misfortunes, we are less inclined to focus on our own pleasures.

(5) *On the Association of Ideas*. First published as a pamphlet in 1843, Tucker discusses the nature of four principles of association commonly advanced by philosophers, namely, proximity in place, proximity in time, resemblance, and contrast. What is central to mental operations, he argues, is that any repeated perceived event will generate habitual trains of thought, and the standard principles of association are simply instances of this larger phenomenon. Memory consists of trains of thought that follow the same order of time and place; imagination involves trains of thought that occur in different orders.

(6) *On Dreams*. Dreams, Tucker argues, are governed by the same principles of association that direct our waking thoughts. Four features, though, are unique to dreams. First, they are only occasional, and difficult to remember. Second, they have stronger vivacity than ordinary conceptions. Third, in dream states, we believe in the reality of the ideas suggested by our associative faculty, which we do not do when awake. Fourth, dreams have a “strangeness and incoherence.”

(7) *On Beauty*. This essay is a version of that by the same title which appeared in Tucker’s 1822 collection of essays, summarized above.

(8) *On Sublimity*. Along with beauty, sublimity is one of two components of the faculty of “taste.” Beauty involves a pure feeling of pleasure, unmixed with thought; sublimity is a feeling of pleasure that is mixed with a sense of danger, weakness or insignificance. We might experience sublimity, for

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example, when witnessing a thunderstorm or great ocean. Tucker asks, how can sublimity involve pleasure and discomfort at the same time? First, he argues, humans have a natural tendency towards excitement, and when confronted with a powerful force – as happens with sublimity – a pleasing excitement is triggered. Second, when there is no immediate danger to us, we have a sense of inward greatness from sublime things. But, when there is a sense of danger, various emotions will be sparked by our thoughtful reflection on the sublime object, such as feelings of terror, pride, power, physical elevation, as various writers have suggested.

(9) *On the Ludicrous*. What are the mental perceptions that give rise to laughter and the emotion of the ludicrous? Hobbes had been criticized for reducing this emotion to pride, but Tucker feels that there is some connection with self-love, as we see from people's negative reaction to being ridiculed.

(10) *On Classical Education*. This essay is a version of that by the same title which appeared in Tucker's 1822 collection of essays, summarized above.

(11) *On the Siamese Twins*. First read before the American Philosophical Society and published in their 1841 Proceedings, Tucker recounts a 1936 interview he had with Siamese twins Chang and Eng, aiming to determine if they had noticeable mental differences, and, if so, whether they resulted from nature or education. He concludes that "there was a difference in their original cerebral organization."

(12) *On the Love of Fame*. Some philosophers feel that the desire for fame derives from some more fundamental emotion, such as pride or the esteem of others. Tucker, however, believes that it is a simple and primary emotion. It exhibits itself very early in life and directs everyone to excel in some capacity. Though often directed towards "frivolous or unworthy objects" it nevertheless keeps us active and thereby "performs a most important part in the economy of human life."

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At the end of his life Tucker himself estimated his total literary production at about ten thousand pages, half of which were published anonymously. Although many of these anonymous pieces are now recognized as his, others remain unidentified. The most complete bibliography – which is lengthy and exceptionally detailed – is that by Robert Colin McLean in his book *George Tucker: Moral Philosopher and Man of Letters* (1961). The bibliography here is more selective, and lists Tucker's principal works by subject matter.

Philosophy

Books

Essays on various subjects of taste, morals, and national policy,

Georgetown, D.C.: J. Milligan, 1822, xi, 350 p.

Notes: collected articles published in 1814–1815 in the *Port Folio*, under the title of “Thoughts of a Hermit.”

Essays, moral and metaphysical, Philadelphia: sold by all the booksellers, 1860, 288 p.

Notes: collected articles and pamphlets.

Articles and Pamphlets

“On the Illusions of Fancy,” *Richmond Enquirer*, September 29, 1804.

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“The Siamese Twins,” *Virginia Literary Museum*, No. 34, Feb. 3, 1830, pp. 529–531.

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"Manuscripts of the lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres of the Political economist and the University of Virginia's first Professor of Moral Philosophy and Chairman of the Faculty, at the seventh session [manuscript] 1830–1831"

Notes: Accession no. 3723, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.

Student Lecture Notes

"Lectures on Moral Philosophy," [signed] Merit M. Robinson (d. 1850), session of 1831/32, University of Virginia. Joseph Carrington Cabell Papers, MS Division, University of Virginia Library, no. 38–111.

"Notes, etc. on the Lectures on Moral Philosophy by George Tucker Esquire. Metaphysics," [signed] Merit M. Robinson (d. 1850). Cabell Deposit, Box 23 38–111, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library.

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Notes: Accession no. 3780, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.

"Notes taken in Moral Philosophy class at U. Va., and initialled by the instructor, George Tucker [manuscript] 1828 Oct. 3."

Notes: student notes by Robert Thruston Hubard (1808–1871), accession no. 7093–I, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.

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The life of Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States With parts of his correspondence never before published, and notices of his

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- opinions on questions of civil government, national policy, and constitutional law.* Philadelphia, Carey, Lea & Blanchard, 1837, 2 v.
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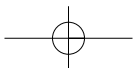
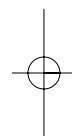
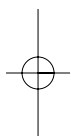
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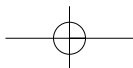
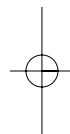
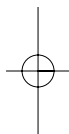
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TUCKER'S LIFE





1

MAJOR EVENTS IN
GEORGE TUCKER'S LIFE

- 1775: Born in St. George's, Bermuda, August 20, 1775.
1789: Family moves to Hamilton, Bermuda.
1792: Works as law clerk for attorney George Bascomb.
1795: Leaves Bermuda, moves to Williamsburg, Virginia; enrolls at William and Mary.
1797: Marries Mary Byrd Farley (first wife) in April; enrolls for one year as a law student at William and Mary.
1798: Receives B.A. diploma from William and Mary.
1799: Wife Mary dies, May 25.
1800: Moves to Richmond, Virginia.
1801: Obtains law license and practices law; publishes *Letter... on the Subject of the Late Conspiracy of the Slaves*.
1802: Marries Maria Ball Carter (second wife) in February; son Daniel George Tucker born, November 23 (dies October 1838).
1803: Involved in lottery scandal.
1804: Daughter Eleanor Rosalie Tucker born, May 4, 1804 (dies 1818 of whooping cough).
1805: Daughter Maria Farley Tucker born (dies 1893).
1806: Moves from Richmond, stays with friends and relatives for two years while planning to move to southern Virginia.
1807: Imprisoned by loan company while visiting Richmond.
1808: Moves to Pittsylvania County, Virginia; builds house and purchases slaves; practices law and manages his land across the border in the Sauratown mountains of Stokes County, North Carolina. Daughter Eliza Lewis Carter Tucker born (dies 1893).
1810: Daughter Mary Leila Tucker born in October (dies 1851 of breast cancer).
1811: Publishes *Letter... on the Navigation of the Roanoke*.
1813: Daughter Harriet Washington Tucker born in May (dies 1816 of whooping cough).
1815: Member of Virginia State House of Delegates.
1816: *Letters from Virginia* published, attributed to Tucker.
1818: Moves to Lynchburg, Virginia.

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- 1819: Begins first term as U.S. Representative from Virginia, March 4 (15th District 1819–1821).
- 1820: Delivers congressional speech on the restriction of slavery in Missouri, subsequently published.
- 1821: Begins second term as U.S. Representative from Virginia (6th District 1821–1823).
- 1822: Publishes *Essays on Various Subjects of Taste, Morals, and National Policy*.
- 1823: Wife Maria dies during pregnancy in February; begins third and final term as U.S. Representative from Virginia (6th District 1823–1825).
- 1824: Delivers speech on the claim of the heirs of Beaumarchais, subsequently published; publishes *The Valley of Shenandoah*.
- 1825: Finishes final congressional term March 3; moves to Charlottesville, Virginia, begins job as University of Virginia professor of moral philosophy.
- 1827: Publishes *A Voyage to the Moon*.
- 1828: Marries Louisa Bowdoin (third wife) in December.
- 1829: Co-founds and co-edits *Virginia Literary Museum and Journal* which ceases in 1830.
- 1837: Publishes *The Laws of Wages* and *The life of Thomas Jefferson*.
- 1839: Visits England and France; publishes *The Theory of Money*.
- 1841: Composes *A Century Hence*, published posthumously.
- 1843: Publishes *Progress of the United States*.
- 1845: Resigns professorship at the University of Virginia, frees slaves, moves to Philadelphia.
- 1856–7: Publishes *The History of the United States*.
- 1858: Wife Louisa dies; composes autobiography.
- 1859: Publishes *Political Economy for the People*.
- 1860: Publishes *Essays, Moral and Metaphysical*.
- 1861: Dies in Sherwood, Albemarle County, Virginia, April 10; Interment at University of Virginia Cemetery, Charlottesville, Virginia.



2

**MARIA BALL CARTER TUCKER:
COMMONPLACE BOOK (c. 1817–1819)**

Maria Ball Carter Tucker (1784–1823) was the second wife of George Tucker. They were married in February 1802, had six children, and Maria died during pregnancy prior to her 40th birthday. While the Tuckers were living in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, Maria began a commonplace book as a way of expressing grief over her lost children. Much of the journal consists of excerpted material from books that she found especially consoling, such as Bible verses, sermons, and poems. Amidst these, though, are records of her own thoughts and, most importantly, a brief account of her and her husband's lives. The location of her original handwritten manuscript is currently unknown, although a typewritten copy of it is preserved in the University of Virginia Library (MSS 38–522). The typescript copy consists of 27 pages, which are numbered in handwriting – perhaps by a library archivist. Little, however, can be inferred about the original order of the material in either the lost manuscript copy or the typescript pages. Little also can be inferred about the actual dates of some of the recorded events. The University of Virginia library catalogue indicates that the journal covers the years between 1815 and 1819. The date of 1815 is the result of an apparent transcription error by the typist who dates the death of Eleanor Rosalie Tucker at 1815 rather than her actual death date of 1818. A more likely dating of the work is between 1817 and 1819. The selections below are from the typescript copy and include all of the material in the journal that appears to be composed by Maria Tucker – rather than transcribed by her from printed works. The selections are printed in the order in which they appear in the typescript, irrespective of the actual dates of composition or the chronology of events recorded. I have inserted possible dates in brackets where appropriate.

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COMMONPLACE BOOK
OF
MARIA B. TUCKER
WIFE OF
GEORGE TUCKER.

[c. 1817–1819]

[1818]

On the 7. of December 1815 [i.e., 1818] it pleased Almighty God to inflict on me the severest blow which Human nature is doomed to undergo! On that memorable day at 10 o'clock in the morning my eldest and most dearly beloved daughter Eleanor Rosalie resigned her pure spirit into the hands of *Him* who gave it, and left forever a world which she seemed born to enlighten and embellish. Oh day of woe registered in my hearts blood. Which has obscured the splendor of the Sun, and changed in my eyes the whole face of Nature! Deep deep and past all cure is the wound my peace has received! I submit to the Will of the most High. I murmur not at this direful decree. Humbled to the dust "Strip of my glory" the very thoughts of my heart broken off yet do I cry from the depths of my afflicted soul "the Lord giveth the Lord taketh away" Blessed be his Holy name forever!! ...

November 15, 1817.

This day I number thirty three years! One half of the ordinary term of human life. What have I been doing to entitle me to the blessings which surround me? Alas nothing! My days have passed in a vain shadow, my heart has been the sport of the idle pleasures of the world. A few very few moments alone, have been dedicated to my God! to the wonderful contemplation of the glorious mission of his son! Why am I thus negligent of this great duty? My soul is conscious of its importance, and her omissions, and still forms resolutions of future reformation, and good work, but alas time glides away, and she is left as she was found, infirm of purpose, defective in execution. Why am I thus feeble, why am I perpetually sinning and repenting? Perhaps I do not sufficiently implore the strengthening grace of the Holy trinity. Teach me oh Lord to bow before thy throne with fervour and humility – purge my heart of the follies and impurities of this deceitful world, and grant me, of thy infinite wisdom and goodness that stability of mind which will lead me to the paths of righteousness and finally conduct me to the presence of my saviour! May the succeeding years of my life

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redeem the time that I have lost – may I be enabled to choose that “better part” which will obliterate my past errors, and render me worthy of all the bounties my great Creator had bestowed.

November 23, 1817.

My only son is fifteen years old this day. Grant oh most merciful God that his future years may be distinguished by his piety and obedience to thy Law. Grant that he may vanquish the head strong passions of youth and by steadfastly pursuing the paths of righteousness become worthy to inherit the crown of the virtuous, immortality! I devoutly thank thee, most Bountiful Father, for his preservation and good conduct up to this time, and Humbly pray that the same spirit may be in him, which was in Christ Jesus, to whom, with thee, and the Holy Ghost, be everlasting praise and glory. Amen. ...

On the Thirteenth day of July eighteen hundred and sixteen it pleased the Almighty to withdraw from this world, to a better, Harriet Washington the youngest child of George and Maria Tucker, aged three years, three months, and ten days.

“Early bright, transient, pure as morning dew
She sparkled, was exhaled and
Went to Heaven.”

Oh lovely lost regretted darling of my heart can I ever cease to dwell on thy memory with all the bitterness of grief? Still does fancy recall the music of thy heavenly voice – the arch smile, the bewitching play of thy exquisite features! Harriet my child where art thou? Religion bids me hope, in the bosom of him who requested the “little ones to come to him”, and that thou will intercede for thy unhappy sinful Parents who still suffer in this “mortal coil” and must pass through the Valley of Death ere they can again be united to thee! “How impotent is all human consolation in the hour of woe – we find that the arguments we applied to others are of no service to ourselves. There is something in severe grief that baffles all their ingenuity. Do what they will, they still leave the thorn to rankle in the breast.” Time and Religion can alone extract it!

[1818?]

In the year 1817 this poem was recommended to me by my angelic Rosalie. She witnessed the deep anguish which seized me, whenever the rec-

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ollection of my sweet Harriet occur'd in our conversations. I read it, and was comforted! Alas who, or what, can now console me for the still more insupportable loss of herself?

Extracts from Young's "Resignation"

...
These passages occurred to me in a moment of sorrow I transcribed them, and the exercise was most salutary to my mind – indeed no one could read them without benefit.

Meditations on the sorrows of Life March 1819.

From my earliest recollections I have been familiar with scenes of affliction. My Parents whom I conscientiously believe to be among the purest of Gods creatures married early and became the joyful possessors of 16 fine children alas! their joy was of transient duration. They saw ten of these cherished children laid in the grave, and by a train of natural, though not the less distressing events, have been for more than two years separated from their two oldest a Daughter and a son the first of whom is the sad writer of these pages. I was the third child and became the eldest in consequence of the early death of my two sisters Elizabeth and Sarah. Until my twelfth year I resided with my excellent Grandmother the only sister of the great and good Washington.¹ She was a woman of Practical piety, and to her early lessons and admirable example I owe in a great measure the deep seated and ardent devotion to Christianity which has enabled me to support the many heart-breaking trials which the Almighty Disposer of events had allotted me in this world! My childhood passed without any remarkable incident save my sensibility being early and painfully roused by the frequent scenes of sickness and death which occurred in the family – one circumstance however I will record as evincing at a very juvenile period a degree of deep and bitter feeling not often seen at that age. My dear afflicted parents had been deprived of a lovely and promising infant which I had loved most ardently, at least as ardently as a child of eight years can be supposed capable of doing. Some time afterwards I was sent to a dancing school in the town where I dwelt and In the course of the evening was taken out to dance. As soon as the music began playing and the party turned round in the cotillion my fancy brought back to memory the image of my precious little dead brother and my parents despairing looks, and bursting into tears I retreated to a corner of the room and tho' followed by my partner a fine little boy my senior by four years and all the girls of my acquaintance I

¹ i.e., George Washington, first president of the United States.

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refused to join them again and had not resolution to explain the cause of my grief, and they soon desisted teasing me for my participation in an amusement which my deep sobs and flowing tears assured them I was not fitted to enjoy.

At twelve years my venerable Grandmother paid the debt of nature and I was then claimed by my parents with whom I continued to live until my marriage. Never did a young creature have greater reason to praise and glorify her maker than myself. The doting fondness of my father's mother might in truth be said to anticipate my every wish; wants I never knew. Placed in that happy medium between poverty and wealth in a populous and friendly neighbourhood, occasionally visiting our friends in Fredericksburg and the surrounding counties and partaking of theatrical and other amusements – my youth glided away unmarked by any incident worthy of record except the friendship I early formed for Eleanore Parke Costie the granddaughter of Aunt Washington and the beloved protogee of the General. Mamma papa and myself with my Uncle George Lewis and his only daughter Mary went the spring my poor Grandmother died, to felicitate our illustrious relation on his return to the rural delights of Mount Vernon as he had just resigned the office of P.U.S.² It was on that occasion that I first beheld the celebrated Miss C. whose loveliness of form mind and manners I had never seen equalled and never shall see surpassed. I felt instantaneously devoted to her and although six years her junior I had the flattering and delightful conviction that she entertained for me a very lively affection. Two years after this visit she became the wife of my maternal Uncle Lawrence Lewis a circumstance that at that time made me superlatively happy, and at this date (20 years since) I recollect it with a thrill of joy. She is still to me a valued and tried friend tho alas 12 years have elapsed since we met! In my nineteenth year I was addressed by my excellent and inestimable partner – and after a few months engagement we were united indissolubly by the Rev^d James Woodville of Culpeper county. My husband was a native of the little island of Bermuda – he had visited Virginia in order to take the advice of his good friend judge Tucker on his destination in life who warmly advised him to enter as a student of William & Mary and qualify himself as a lawyer at some future day. He acceded to his counsel, and in a short time formed an attachment to Miss Farley of Wmbg³ an amiable pretty woman possessed of a handsome fortune both in this country and the Island of Antigua. She only survived a year and dying without heirs her west indies property fell to her three sisters in consequence of some want of form in the instrument by which she devised her property – and of which her sordid relatives gladly

² i.e., President of the United States

³ i.e., Mary Byrd Farley of Williamsburg, George Tucker's first wife.

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availed themselves, altho' they were all wealthy and all of them signed their names to the last will of their amiable sister. My husband finding the scenes of Williamsburg perpetually renew his regret for his lost happiness, determined to try the efficacy of travelling in alleviating his afflictions, and accordingly made a visit to his native Island and from thence undertook a voyage to the West indies. After a years absence he once more relanded on the shores of Virginia – and in the course of the ensuing autumn he met by appointment his sister in law Mrs. W.C.C.⁴ (under whose protection I then was) in the pleasant village of Fredericksburg. At that period I was just fifteen. My Aunt had prepared me to esteem Mr. Tucker and being naturally romantic, I felt for him a greater interest than I had ever before experienced for any of his sex. My imagination represented him as an amiable unfortunate man deprived of Wife and fortune by one sad stroke of fate, and I listened to all his observations with an intensity of feeling that could not escape his penetrating eye. He soon distinguished me by the most pointed and delicate attentions – in short, I became the second object of his tenderest affections – he sought and won my heart, and our union took place in the year 1802 under every suspicious circumstance. The following year I was blessed with the birth of a son a fine lovely boy whom we called Daniel George – after his Bermudian G.F. and as we were established in the town of Richmond in the enjoyment of a select & refined society and possessed of all the real comforts and some of the superfluities of life we glided down the current of life as free from the cares of life as our mortal state admits. The following year a little girl was added to our domestic blessings. And o let me dwell on the recollection of that lovely cherub who from the first moment that I clasped her to my heart till the awful one in which she was taken from me forever, was one perpetual stream of enjoyment and felicity to every member of her family. “Fair as the new born star that gilds the morn”. She shone upon us all, and was hail'd as the loveliest sweetest of infants in a family ever remarkable for beauty and comeliness. I shall here subjoin a few pages written by her disconsolate Father after we were as he emphatically says “stript of our glory”. (Here is to be inserted the pages entitled “Recollections of Eleanor Rosalie Tucker”)⁵ Finding our mode of living in the metropolis of Virginia too expensive, and warned by an increasing family of the necessity of adopting a more economical one we determined to retire to a cheap and remote country place and bring up our family in a plain frugal style until fortune should smile on our exertions and enable us to

⁴ i.e., Mrs. Champe Carter, sister of George Tucker's first wife Mary, and Maria's aunt.

⁵ i.e., George Tucker's pamphlet in memory of his daughter, *Recollections of the life of Eleanor Rosalie Tucker: addressed to her surviving sisters*. Lynchburg [Va.] Printed for the author [by James Boyce] 1818, 45 p.

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return to more congenial scenes. We soon put our design into execution and selling off all our costly furniture etc. we settled in Pittsylvania County at a pretty country seat which we named Woodridge and there I passed 10 quiet peaceful years the “world forgetting, by the world forgot”, employed in rearing my lovely daughters, who were at one time five in number seeing my dear husband gradually disencumber himself from the many heavy debts he owed when we left Rd.⁶ and his encreasing reputation and popularity were solid sources of happiness which kept me in a state of perpetual satisfaction. At length we thought our situation in life authorised a removal to a more polished residence our children began to require the advantages of education & society our two eldest daughters one twelve years of age the other in her fourteenth lovely promising girls, were daily in want of instructions that could not be procured in our neighbourhood. After mature deliberation we fixed on the town of Lynchburg, it was in the district which had once chosen Mr. T. a representative to the V.L.⁷ and of course he wished to remain in it. Mr. Reids academy was in high reputation, and there were other tutors who could also be had at the hours which were not dedicated to his course of studies. Accordingly Lynchburg was to be our future home. Here we came and fixed ourselves in a small neat tenement and for some months were as happy as we can ever expect to be in this sublunary state. Alas we little foresaw the dread the overwhelming misfortune which awaited us! Our Lovely Rosalie was become a woman in mind and person. Grace was in every action, sensibility, genius, beauty embellished her angelic face. Already was she celebrated far and near altho only fourteen years old, and the fondness and devotion of my heart to this darling child was returned with a warmth and fervour of filial affection which often attracted the admiration of our mutual friends. Oh how did my heart glow within me when the oft repeated praises of my beloved angel met my enraptured ear – how did I indulge my imagination in looking forward to the applause and love she would hereafter excite, when her education was completed and she was ushered into that high and refined society which she seemed destined to move in, and to adorn! Sad and woeful is the reverse that has overtaken me! My expectations are forever blasted. Young, lovely, blooming as the flowers whose names she bore. The storm has fallen on her & has crushed my hopes forever. Yet I will not murmur. In the language of the wisest of men I will think that she was early taken away “lest that wickedness should alter her understanding and deceit beguile her soul” that she “so pleased God as was beloved of him that he translated her pure soul to his immortal habitation” Ever since her death there has been a void in my bosom impossible to

⁶ i.e., Richmond.

⁷ i.e., the Virginia Legislature.

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describe – ten months have passed away, but it seems but as yesterday that I resigned the treasure of my heart to him who gave it. The loss of my little Harriet which took place two years before was a heartrending stroke, but she was so young only 3 years when she was taken from me, that I looked on it as irrational and unchristian to mourn “as one without hope” when I still possessed such children as Rosalie and Maria George Lelia & Eliza. But now to lose my first born daughter, my friend, my companion, oh hard and bitter is the blow, but I will bear it, and praise the lord forever!

A mothers wish for her children.
 May cloudless beams of Grace and Truth,
 Adorn their unexperienced youth:
 From specious ill, the bosom sin,
 And all the rife that lurks within,
 O Saviour of the world! defend
 Be thou their guardian and their Friend;
 Teach them the path thy saints have trod,
 And make their souls alive to God:
 The world shall then no force retain,
 Her syren voice shall charm in vain:
 Her fascinating smiles shall cease,
 And holy lives give inward Peace.

There is a horrid nameless state, when hideous sensation combines with mental agony – when the sudden expansion of intellect, and preternatural strength of frame deepen the struggle that alike involves both. When one overpowering idea, wild and indistinct, yet intense and absorbing, throbs in the brain – flashes before the eyes – sings in the ears. While the heart is alternately compressed with a *sick sick load*, or palpitating with a *thousand lives*, and tortured in them all. Such was my situation oh God when thou took from me one of my hearts dearest treasures. But I am now resigned to the blow. Blessed by thy Holy name forever.

O Sensibility source of inexpressible woe who would wish for thy possession! When the heart wells to bursting, when the scalding tears chase each other adown the pale face, and the glorious orb of day looks dim through the deep gloom of the heart, who would not refer the cold callous mind of a Diogenes. Alas the being possessed of the dangerous gift of feeling had better neer been born!!

“Indifference clad in Wisdoms guise
 All fortitude of mind supplies”
 So says Swift, and so thinks M.B.T.

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When one great and overwhelming calamity is parcelled out into minute portions, and brought before our minds in distinct features, when not a trivial circumstance can occur without recalling what we were stubbornly struggling to forget, not a moment can strike without sounding the knell of departed happiness: our resolution is in vain, and every step we take the ground seems struck with daggers. The continual blows of accident are what the heart is least able to bear.

Oh Rosalie it was thou who made this world so sweet to me. The spell is now broken and I awake to the dreadful conviction that happiness is flown with thee forever! My child my Glory! ...



3

GEORGE TUCKER: AUTOBIOGRAPHY (1858)

In 1858, three years before his death, George Tucker composed an autobiography, for the benefit, as he states, of his descendents. The bound manuscript, currently in possession of the University of Virginia Library, is in two parts: a 35 page section with a beginning date of composition of January 1, 1858, and a subsequent 17 page section with a beginning composition date of February 19, 1858. He unfolds the events of his life chronologically, beginning with his Bermuda childhood and ending with his retirement activities in Philadelphia. The work exhibits the same engaging characteristics that we find in his journalistic and academic compositions, and may be one of his greatest literary achievements. He focuses on dramatic events, scandals, interactions with famed people of his time, and, throughout, offers a candid psychological analysis of his behaviour.

The following is newly transcribed from the manuscript. The work was previously transcribed in a 1961 issue of the *Bermuda Quarterly* that was devoted to Tucker on the 100th anniversary of his death.¹ Also included in that issue is a brief sketch of Tucker's life by Tipton R. Snively and a chart of Tucker's family tree from 1515 through 1917. Their transcription of the autobiography appears to have been made by the editors of the journal from a photographic copy provided them by the curators of the University of Virginia's Library. I am indebted to that transcription for guidance, particularly in deciphering the more illegible portions of the manuscript. The transcription below differs from the *Bermuda Quarterly* version in several particulars of spelling, wording and punctuation. Two areas of departure are noteworthy. First, Tucker's manuscript makes heavy use of dashes, which were sometimes intended as periods and other times as dashes as we now use them. There is thus much room for interpreting when many sentences begin and end. Second, around ten of Tucker's sentences are garbled, sometimes in their original composition, and other times through revisions and insertions. These required some editorializing, usually the

¹ "Autobiography of George Tucker" in *Bermuda Historical Quarterly*, 1961, vol. 18, nos. 3 and 4, p. 82-159.

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deletion of a word or two. I have indicated the more extreme instances in footnotes.

The lengthy autobiography contains no section divisions. To assist in following the dominant themes of the text, I have created section titles and inserted them within brackets in appropriate places. Accordingly, the contents and organization of the work is as follows:

1. Bermuda: 1775–1795
2. Williamsburg: 1795–1800
3. Richmond: 1800–1806
4. Pittsylvania: 1806–1818
5. Lynchburg and Washington: 1818–1825
6. Charlottesville: 1825–1739
7. European Excursion: 1839
8. Charlottesville: 1839–1845
9. Philadelphia: 1845–1858

All of the footnotes below are mine.

[AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GEORGE TUCKER (1775–1861)]

1858. Jan. 1.

Having recently finished a *History of the United States*,² I propose, at the age of eighty two, to record the leading incidents of my own life. Though I have not been sufficiently conspicuous in the world for my biography to excite the curiosity of my contemporaries generally, yet a faithful narrative of the leading events of my life cannot fail to be interesting to my descendants, now comprehending three generations. For them therefore the following pages are written. My aim will be in this retrospect to give them, in some measure, the benefit of my experience, to call forth their sympathies for me in what I have done or attempted or perchance have suffered, and at all events to make them know me more thoroughly than they have yet done. They alone can find pardon for that vanity which is likely to be the effect, if it was not the cause, of this undertaking.

[1. BERMUDA: 1775–1795]

I was born in the little Island of Bermuda on the 20th of August 1775. My family was among the first settlers of the Island, had always been among the

² George Tucker, *The history of the United States, from their colonization to the end of the Twenty-sixth Congress, in 1841*. Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1856–1857, 4 v.

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most considerable of the Island, and some of them still hold property there which they have held for more than 200 years.³ My father⁴ was a merchant of great probity, and always distinguished for his public spirit, and my mother, Elizabeth Tucker, who had been a great beauty, with limited advantages of education had excellent sense, and great elevation of character. It appears from genealogical tables that my mother's family was descended from the same stock as my father's – the first settlers of the little Island, but their divergence in the course of two centuries had been so great that their relationship was no longer recognized.

The events of our childhood are commonly of little interest to others, the joys and sorrows of that age are as acutely felt as those of any other age, but happily they are of short endurance. The delights which I experienced, and the vexations and disappointments are as fresh in my recollection as if they were of yesterday. Being the first born son, for a sister had preceded me, I was much petted, especially by a sister of my mother, and in consequence of the indulgence shown me I became delicate and even capricious in my appetite and probably in other things. I very soon gave evidence of that disposition to produce petty annoyances which is not an uncommon trait of character, and which in my moral lectures I found some difficulty in analyzing. It seems to be the reverse of the sympathy of our nature, of which however, I think I have never shown any deficiency. Two or three examples of this disposition to find gratification in the slight pains of others will explain the character of the feeling, as it exhibited itself in me.

I was sent to school with a hornbook while yet in petticoats, to an old woman in the neighbourhood. In the indulgence with which I was treated I was in the habit of putting my hands in the old woman's pockets, and finding there, among other articles, crumbs of bread, I used to take them out occasionally and put them in her mouth, to which they were always welcome. One day, however, my *espièglerie* suggested to me to substitute for a crumb a piece of broken china, and I heartily enjoyed the old crone's inefficient mumbling, before she discovered my trick. I had a cousin, Richard Jennings Tucker, about my age to whom I was much attached. Our intimacy thus early began, lasted through life, though our characters tastes and pursuits were entirely different. He was of an amiable easy temper, over which I had a great influence and which on at least one occasion I greatly abused. Near our school there was an old lime kiln dug in the ground, and which had been filled up to within some four or five feet of the top, Having

³ See Thomas Addis Emmet, *An account of the Tucker family of Bermuda* (New York, Bradstreet press, 1898).

⁴ Daniel Tucker (1746–1812), George Tucker's father and first mayor of Hamilton, Bermuda. Daniel Tucker had three successive marriages. His first wife, Elizabeth Tucker, was George's mother.

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formed my plan I said to him one day – Dick, you can't think how curious it is to walk with your eyes shut; let me hold my hand over your eyes and try it. He readily consented, and I, cautiously leading him in a roundabout way to the lime kiln, then took away my hand and down he pitched. As the ground he fell on was soft he was not hurt except in his feelings, which however soon resumed their habitual gentleness. To another cousin my love of mischief was exhibited in a way still less defensible. Finding that he was very credulous, I told him that a mole which he had on his neck was a certain sign that he would be hanged, and I so pressed the subject that the anticipation of his sad fate, of which he had no doubt, brought him to tears. It was with some difficulty, as I learnt the next day, that the assurances of his mother had been able to remove the impression which my unfeeling love of mischief had made. When my father was carried by business to New York where he was expected to remain a year or more, a housekeeper and companion was provided for my mother – and a better disposed, more thrifty and saving person never existed. She was as saving of what was committed to her charge as of her own little property of which she was a downright miser. I was then ten years old, and was in a state of daily warfare with Miss Molly Caron. the door of a store room or large closet which was her exclusive domain was never opened that it was not invaded by me, ravaged and rifled of sugar or cake or some other confectionery, climbing up to the highest shelves, and ferreting out what she had most skilfully secreted – in spite of her remonstrances and often open resistance. Her extreme parsimony may be judged from a single fact. In the sangaree or mixt porter prepared for the children we insisted on nutmeg. To still our clamor without the sin of extravagance she used to grate on the beverage a little of the bottom of a small mahogany waiter used by the children, and it was some time used before it was discovered. One of the modes in which my mischief-loving propensity sought to tease this worthy soul, was to get a flint and steel (the predecessor of lucifer matches) and threaten her calico dress by the sparks I industriously raised. With this flint and steel I chased her from room to room she scolding and remonstrating in vain to the infinite amusement of the children and servants. – In all these the motive was disguised both from others and myself by the love of fun which seemed to be the ruling motive.

Being possessed of great animal spirits, never-ceasing activity and some ambition of enterprise, I encountered many disasters, some of which were of a threatening character. I may briefly mention such as are now recollected. At a very early age I contrived to get into a small biscuit keg, and it was some trouble to my mother and much to myself before I was released. I once fell into deep water before I could swim but was promptly rescued. In some experiments with gun-powder I burnt my face badly. Once in the flutter of delight when about to attend a great boat-race, I fell into a bush of the prickly pear, or cactus, a most formidable thorn which readily enters the

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clothes and the skin and then breaks. On ridding me of my clothes thus pinned on me, I suffered greatly, besides losing the spectacle I had so fondly anticipated. Being allowed to use a small sword and to call it mine, in my careless handling of it I passed it through one of my feet. One day some boys and myself finding a dray near a small slope of ground, we found much pleasure in letting it run down with us on the inclined plane. At length I was thrown off and one of the tracks of the dray and the boys ran over me. I was not sure of the fact myself, but was much hurt, and felt the injury for months afterwards, but studiously concealed it from my parents to avoid their censure. One of the most painful accidents I ever experienced was from the fruit of the [blank space]. Some boy of the school said that in the middle of the nut or seed were two little leaves or membranes, and that if they were taken out the fruit might be eaten with impunity. Finding on trial that the nut was quite pleasant to the taste and two or three others ventured to eat it, though most of the boys prudently abstained. In no long time an excessive and deathly vomiting was produced. I who had eaten most liberally, encouraged by the pride of doing what most of the boys were afraid to do, was carried to a neighbouring house for relief. Some cordial mixture was brought me in a wine glass, but it was scarcely swallowed before it gushed forth in a violent jet. My sufferings were intense. On another occasion when greatly heated I applied for water, which kept in a large earthen jar was cooler than it often is in that Island, and I fell senseless. On the return of my consciousness I found my mother who had been sent for sitting by me.

My vainglorious propensity also exposed me to inconvenience and danger. Ambitious to take the lead among boys, and at all events to win their applause, I often ventured on acts from which their prudence or timidity shrank. Thus I was in the habit of running slate-pencils up my nose, until I could hide a piece certainly three and, as it seems to me now, four inches long. I found too that I could chew glass without cutting my mouth, and this was another mode of exciting astonishment. This trait of character was probably the consequence of my being much petted and flattered, especially by the relative of my mother, to whom I was supposed to have a close resemblance – and the love of praise or the esteem of my fellow mortals, a feeling common to all human beings, was however particularly strong in me. It has been my great stimulus to activity, and has been perhaps, as often the source of pain and disappointment as of pleasure. It has been strongly manifested from childhood to old age. When I was too young to be left to myself I was attended by a colored boy several years older than myself. This boy taught me to count, and to multiply as far as 12 by 12. How he acquired this knowledge, I never knew, nor in fact ever inquired – but at the first school I was at after I left my hornbook seminary, seeing the larger boys standing up to be examined in the multiplication table, which had been given them as a task, as soon as I perceived what they were about, I stood up with them and

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to the surprise of all, answered every question readily and correctly. I have often thought that to this direction having been given to my mind when it was most ductile, may be referred that propensity to enumeration which I have ever shown. I have all my life given much of my time to this mental exercise. I count everything, the omnibuses I meet with, and often idle people in the street, and thus I have become fond of statistics. From this incident, together with some others affording similar evidence, I have always had doubts about the inferiority of the intellect of the coloured race, tho' I admit that the arguments in support of that hypothesis are very strong.

The same ambition which impelled me to make a display of my acquirement in figures, manifested itself in various ways. I dictated the sports of the boys, and sometimes invented them. When about ten or eleven years of age, it was the practice of the boys, in the mild season, as soon as they were let out of school to betake themselves to a snug bay not half a mile distant to bathe. Tho' all were impatient to reach the water some were restrained by fear of overheating themselves. I was ambitious of first reaching the water, and I never once missed that honor, though to effect it I once jumped in with such clothes as I had not been able to rid myself of on the way. I aimed also to excel in my studies, and was always in the foremost rank. A Teacher having been sent for to England by my father and others, I was at about eleven put to a Latin school. After making some progress, my miscalculating ambition prompted me to attempt a Latin ode. I did not hesitate to show it to Mr. Ewing my teacher. After he had looked at it he coolly said, "George, you had better write poetry in your own language before you attempt in a foreign one." This was my first intellectual failure.

Notwithstanding these marks of self confidence, I have exhibited a notable want of it at critical times, especially in my efforts as a public speaker. I gave a signal proof of this *mauvaise bonte* when a boy. I was sent to a dancing school when scarcely more than eight years of age, when the efforts of my too partial friends seemed calculated to make a little coxcomb of me. I was fitted out in a rose-coloured suit of coat, waistcoat and knee breeches – the gift I think of one of my godmothers, – and a cocked hat. One of my cousins, who was grown, was permitted to give a ball to the scholars, which of course I attended. It was opened according to form by minuets, a slow formal dance, calculated to show a sort of fantastic grace, but otherwise very formal and dull enough. The master of the ceremonies then selected the dancers according to rule, and I was paired with a large woman of nearly twice my height. I was sufficient master of myself and made the required bow at the beginning, led up my partner, and we began sailing round the room in opposite directions, when on coming opposite to a vacant chair down I sat in it and sought relief from my agony, and this was the last minuet I ever attempted tho' often afterwards solicited to dance one, and tho' I was thought in later days to have excelled in dancing.

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On a subsequent occasion my ambition or love of praise gave me greater boldness. When about 12 or 13 there came a juggler in the neighbourhood, whose sleight of hand and magic lantern excited the wonder and delight of the children. I conceived the desire of imitating him. I worked hard at the magic lantern, but without success. Many of the tricks of legerdemain I thought I could perform, and I was permitted by my parents to have an exhibition for a few relatives and friends, all of whom were required to pay for tickets of admission. I echoed the jugglers speeches – tried several of his feats in some of which I succeeded and upon the whole was applauded for my success. According to some systems of fanciful philosophy, there is a good and an evil genius attending every man and his actions are swayed by one or the other as the power of each chances to predominate. Many of the occurrences of every man's life seem in accordance with this hypothesis as well as that which supposes a tutelary genius to each one. In an incident of my childhood, I seemed to have been beset by genii, but fortunately the good one finally predominated. When a small boy – I now judge from circumstances that I was seven or eight – being in a dry goods store, owned by my father and my Uncle Robert, I happened to see in a bundle, the paper of which was slightly broken, what I took to be a nut. Watching for an opportunity, I stole one out, and to my great disappointment, found it to be a nutmeg. Under a lively sense of shame, from an awakened conscience or a mortified pride, I did not rest until I stole the nutmeg back again. I do not know whether this early transgression, and the repentance which followed it had any influence on my character, but I have never since invaded the rights of property, further than to take a rose from a garden abounding with them, and have ever aimed to do justice to men's reputations – even of those whom I personally disliked.

When I was fourteen, my father, zealous to promote the growth of the new Town of Hamilton, which he fondly and patriotically believed would greatly advance the prosperity of the little Island, removed from the upper extremity of the Island (Somerset) to the centre – in the vicinity of the projected metropolis – and here commenced a new era in my life.⁵ I had passed some years at a grammar school, – or rather at two or three schools – where I acquired some knowledge of Latin and Greek and mathematicks. I had always been fond of books – which taste has never intermitted – and the time thus spent has been the happiest of my life. The delight I experienced from Tom Jones, Roderick Random, Gil Bias, the Vicar of Wakefield and the Arabian Nights which I read by stealth – to say nothing of

⁵ The manuscript reads: "At the age of fourteen, zealous to promote the growth of the new Town of Hamilton, which he fondly and patriotically believed would greatly advance the prosperity of the little Island, he removed...." In the above, I have followed the editorialized wording of the *Bermuda Quarterly* transcription.

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Newberry, children's books with which I had been amply supplied, is still fresh in my memory. This taste might be regarded as my ruling propensity, and my next was a fondness for female society and a lively ability to the charms of their beauty and conversation. So decided was this preference that I scarcely remember the time that I did not think myself in love with some girl or woman – who might perchance be old enough to be my mother. At this period of life I was disposed to be as quarrelsome with my own sex as amorous with the other – and I gave abundant evidence of a temper at once irritable and obstinate, and I fear of perverseness of disposition. I became too, I know not how, a sceptic in religion. From all these dangers I was saved by the benign influence of a virtuous attachment. My tutelary genius was Anne Jane the daughter of Dr. Thomas Tudor Tucker, once a member of Congress from South Carolina, and afterwards Treasurer of the United States. She was born in South Carolina but was brought up in Bermuda by a maiden aunt, a most estimable and capable woman to whom she and her brother were sent after the death of their mother. But let me not anticipate.

After the peace of 1783 my father formed a mercantile partnership with seven others, mostly his brothers, an only uncle Jennings with his son, and an eminent lawyer, George Bascomb. They raised a respectable spare capital for that time and place, and had a good credit in London, by means of which they proposed to carry on an extensive business with the new States, the West Indies etc. They purchased several vessels, and were sanguine of a large and profitable business in the carrying trade. But the invincible repugnance manifested by England to a trade with her former colonies on terms of reciprocity, and the counteractions by the United States of this illiberal policy, disappointed their fond expectations. At the same time they did a considerable business. They established dry-good stores in different parts of the Island, and were extensively engaged in the trade to Newfoundland and the British West Indies. They invited persons from Nantucket by means of whom they employed several persons in the Whale fisheries – and their operations were on so much larger a scale than had been before seen in the Island, that they were always spoken of as “The Company”. But the profit of the establishment was not equal to the *eclat*. As by the original terms of the partnership each partner was to contribute his personal aid and as every partner was to give his personal services to the concern, they all drew the supplies required for their families from the funds of the company (to be accounted for in a final settlement) which occasioned a drain that its profits, though large, could not meet. After a trial of this plan for a few years, they transferred the management of the concern to three of the partners, who received salaries for their services, but this expedient hardly repaired the losses sustained by their first error. They continued their business a few years longer before they wound up their affairs, but they would probably have all done better if they had never formed the connection. It was to

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imitate the affairs of this Company that my father went to New York in 1785 and remained there a year – and it was when they subjected its affairs to the management of three that he moved to the centre of the Island to carry on business on his own account, and to aid in the establishment of the Town of Hamilton.

When fairly established in our new residence, I felt that a new era in my life had commenced. Though not quite fifteen, I was nearly as tall as I ever became. I had made some proficiency in my studies, and what tended to give me yet more confidence, I had read a good deal in history and belles lettres as well as novels. Blair's lectures⁶ was the first book which awakened in me the habit of serious reflexion. I became a member of a literary society, all of my associates being greatly my seniors, and in our weekly discussions of questions, each of which was given out the previous night, I took an active part, and according to my recollection, experienced none of that want of fluency or self-possession which so tormented and thwarted me in subsequent years. I was in short a leading member – and took a prominent part in shaping the rules and proceedings of the "Calliopean Society", a fine name of my own devising. I here went to another Scotch Teacher, (Dalziel called Deall) where my studies were confined principally to Greek, in which he gave me the most flattering encouragement; and feeling my want of that knowledge of science which is taught in colleges, I availed myself of the instructions of a Connecticut lawyer, lately settled in Bermuda, to supply the deficiency. As he resided in the town of St. George's, I accordingly was sent thither to board – 10 miles from my father, and my practice was to study all day in a closet about 4 or 5 feet square, and in the evening attend my teacher who examined me in my studies. I ate my meals in the same little closet, and found this course of life both pleasant and profitable. Mr. Meigs having expressed to Governor Hamilton (the same who was captured at Detroit by George Rogers Clarke) that I was ill provided with books, he kindly offered me the use of his library, which was a pretty good one, and of which I availed myself – but without much benefit, by reason of an injudicious selection. I remember that among other books, the Governor recommended Plutarch's lives, but I objected on the ground that I meant to read it in the original – which however I have never done – and I think only partially in the English translation. I was then a private and voluntary student about a year, and at the age of 17 I was placed in the office of Mr. Bascomb to study law, that having been the profession which I had a year or two before

⁶ Hugh Blair (1718–1800), professor of rhetoric at the University of Edinburgh, and author of *Lectures on Rhetoric* (1783), a standard textbook which was reprinted around 100 times during the 18th and 19th centuries.

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selected. In this interval, I was always, according to custom, more or less in love. I thought myself deeply smitten by a young lady of St. George's – a distant relative – and soon after we removed from Somerset, when I was about 16, she being on a visit to that part of the Island, I wished to engage her as a partner to a public ball, but to my infinite mortification, she told me that she was engaged to a cousin, some four or five years my senior. At the same ball, this young lady's cousin and namesake (they were both named Nancy Tucker) merits an especial notice.⁷ She had then arrived at that age when female beauty begins to develop itself – and her own portion was little beyond the average. She had a grave thoughtful aspect bordering on melancholy, but was most remarkable for acquirement and an excellent understanding. She was nearly of my own age and somewhat under the ordinary size – her stature being 5 feet and 1 inch. It has so happened that I was never in love with a tall woman. I had always found much pleasure in her conversation, and greatly esteemed her modest retiring manners and gentle virtues – but she inspired no tenderer sentiment. Some hours, however, before the ball, she informed me that her cousin had not dealt with me fairly by saying that she was pre-engaged as a partner – but that she had asked “Cousin Harry” to be her partner, from her unwillingness to be mine. She was then at an age when girls thinking themselves women cannot bear to have boy-beaux. I did not know whether this communication was dictated by her aversion to disingenuousness, for all were convinced of the purity and elevation of her sentiments, or by friendship for me – but I felt grateful for the communication, painful as it was – and I was so put out by it, that, to the surprise of all, I sat moping and discontented, and never danced once during the night. I think that from this time I felt an interest in this young lady which I had never felt before. I met her often in the neighbourhood where she lived, and in St. George's where she visited her Uncle Henry Tucker; and by degrees hardly perceptible to myself, that interest increased, and my esteem which had always been very great, insensibly softened into love. Yet I never said a word to her to indicate my feelings, but I presume that my conduct must have plainly shown it. While this change was taking place in my affections, a proportional alteration occurred in my character. I was softened and humanized towards all – and for the first time I experienced the pleasure which religion can inspire in a youthful bosom susceptible of enthusiasm. The conversation which I had with this pure and exalted *spirit* on the subject of religion contributed to my transformation,

⁷ The manuscript reads: “At the same ball, this young lady's cousin and namesake (they were both named Nancy Tucker – This young lady whom I have already mentioned, merits an especial notice.” In the above, I have followed the editorialized wording of the *Bermuda Quarterly* transcription.

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tho' I believe that love, by its mysterious benign influence, would have produced it, if we had never conversed on religion.

At length my feelings became too strong to be confined to my own bosom – especially as they were now tinged with fears for my success (from which true love is scarcely ever exempt) – for supposing that she herself favored my suit, as I fondly believed, I did not know but that her father,⁸ then a member of Congress from South Carolina, might have had a more ambitious match in expectation – and that both he and her guardian aunt might have considered me too young, and not yet provided with a profession, to approve of my suit. These fears, however, rather heightened than weakened my attachment, and I decided on making a declaration. One evening, in one of my frequent visits to her neighbourhood, I met her at the house of an Uncle – The Hermitage – and being about to go home about sunset, I attended her. But I found myself incapable of saying a word of the feelings, when they so deeply agitated me. We entered her residence, where the only inmates were her grandmother and aunt, and her brother when not at school. We entered a snug little parlour, hung around with family portraits and other pictures. She seated herself in a chair at the end of a table. I placed myself then half standing and half sitting, and took hold of her hand, which she did not withdraw. Encouraged by this circumstance my feelings were most tumultuous – but so delightful that I feared by speaking to put an end to my ecstatic happiness. If pure, ethereal, unselfish love was ever felt, I felt it then. We so continued I know not how long – perhaps twenty minutes – perhaps not over ten – but my delight (not entirely unmixed with fear and something like reverence) was as high as it could well be. How long this delicious trance would have lasted before either of us had broken silence I know not, but it was interrupted by someone coming into the room, as we thus remained motionless and silent, hand in hand. This was the only occasion I ever had of declaring my sentiments, and that declaration was never made. My subsequent feelings were engrossed about the state of her health. Being very fond of sea bathing, she once went into the bathing house when she had a cold. That was made worse, and in no long time it was perceived that her lungs were affected. By this time her appearance had greatly improved, and the hectic fever which glowed in her cheek had now made her at least in my eyes a brilliant beauty. Her decline was a rapid one, and I followed her to her grave without having told her or any one else of the passion which absorbed me. This was my first serious affliction. It occurred after I entered on the study of the law.

⁸ Perhaps Thomas Tudor Tucker (1745–1828), U.S. Representative from South Carolina from 1789–1793.

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At this time I had become a decided republican in my politics. This was the result of several circumstances. I had soon felt a lively interest in the French Revolution, and heard the Marsellaise sung with enthusiasm. Besides, Dr. Thomas T. Tucker visited his children about this time, and my respect for his character, heightened to veneration by my feeling for his daughter, had an influence in recommending his principles; and lastly my tutor, Meigs, was a zealous republican, and my daily intercourse with him had some influence tho' this was the weakest of the three causes, tho' others might have regarded it as the principal one.

I was just seventeen when I entered Mr. Bascomb's office. I found there two companions about my own age. Cornelius, Mr. Bascomb's son, was somewhat grave and reserved with a respectable capacity – and Daniel Bascomb – a nephew, a good natured, amiable, laughter-loving fellow as ever was. At intervals of my legal studies I read such books in Mr. Bascomb's library as attracted my curiosity, and some of them proved very instructive. My practice was to go home to dinner and return in the afternoon, and the distance being about two miles, I thus walked 8 miles a day. Few incidents of this part of my life were of sufficient interest to merit notice, with a single exception. There came to the office one day an idiotic vagabond, who roved the country; at large, treated kindly and fid by the humane, and teased and laughed at by boys. His name was either Saul or Solomon Mitchell as he was always called Solly. As soon as he presented himself, Daniel Bascomb, always in search of fun, said, "Solly can you read?". "Yes", he answered, "I can read" – on which Bascomb handed him a book upside down, and to our astonishment he read it more readily than we could do, and as readily we found as when the book was properly placed. It is true that while he gave to the letters and syllables their appropriate sounds, he ran one word into another, and evidently attached no meaning to the sounds he made, but his prompt and nearly correct utterance of their sound excited our wonder. This however was greatly diminished when we were subsequently informed that Mitchell had not been born an idiot, but that a fall from a tree which he had climbed had produced a fracture of his skull which had deprived him of reason. He had doubtless been taught to read before his accident occurred, and the association between the printed characters and their appropriate sound had remained unimpaired, and what was not to have been expected, were unaffected by inversion. Such was the explanation that I have given of it. The fact was a curious one, and deserves to be recorded.

I continued in this office nearly three years, until Mr. Bascomb was taken suddenly ill, and after a few days expired, leaving no equal at the bar in the little Island and equally highly respected for his virtues as his talents. This was in 1795, and as war then existed between France and England, and the cruisers both public and private were constantly sending in prizes, the Admiralty Courts were crowded with business, and the fees were very high,

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the few lawyers in the Island seemed in a fair way to make fortunes. Bascomb was commonly of Counsel for the captors, and my tutor Meigs, who came to the Island to practise the law and to finish the business of his friend Johnson, also from Connecticut, was generally employed by the captured, especially if they were Americans, claiming the rights of neutrality. When Death suddenly arrested Bascomb's gains, Meigs' republican zeal, which he took no pains to suppress or conceal, drew on him the animadversion of the Governor and Council, and they either took away his license, or permitted him quickly to withdraw from the Island. The captors and their friends, thus deprived of their main-stay by Mr. Bascomb's death, in looking around for the means of supplying his place, pitched upon me not then 20 years of age to undertake the business, and proposed that my associates should continue in the office, and give me what aid they could. But the project was a wild one, and I should have been entirely unable to sustain myself in a situation for many of whose duties I was entirely unprepared. It was decided that I should finish my studies in London or the United States.

While my destination was thus undecided, my father came to me one morning and told me that an excellent opportunity was then offered to send me to England to finish my studies. That Major Hicks of the Army was to set out in three days, and had kindly offered to be my guardian and friend not only on the voyage, but after our arrival in England, and tho' the notice was short, the necessary preparations for my voyage could be made. The offer was a most tempting one. I had all my life been most desirous of seeing London – and a recent intimacy with an officer in the engineer department, Mr. Lauzun, had lent new force to my wish. But I had then made up my mind to settle in the United States, and presumed that there I ought to finish my legal education, and I did not hesitate to decline the offer – tho' I confess not without regret that my sense of duty was thus in conflict with the gratification of my curiosity and my desire to partake of the pleasures which London would afford me. Before this took place I lost my mother – and this was my second serious affliction. She was a superior woman in tact and good sense – and bitterly have I reproached myself for the pain which my carelessness and disobedience, and occasional perverse ill-humour must have caused her – tho' I had always been persuaded that I was her favorite of the ten children she left – and possibly this opinion, leading me to presume on it, encouraged my misconduct. Her beauty was said to have been extreme. Mr. Bascomb when he returned to Bermuda after finishing his legal education in New York had been one of her admirers and suitors – and judge Tucker of Virginia⁹ has often told me that she had inspired his first

⁹ St. George Tucker (1752–1828) was a law professor at the College of William and Mary, a justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia (1803–1811), and U.S. District Court judge (1813–1825).

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love. To this gentleman, then a Professor of law at William and Mary College, as well as a state judge, inquiry was made concerning myself, the result of which was that I was to go to William and Mary to finish my law education.

I had long felt that the little Island on which I was born was a sort of imprisonment which I was most impatient to break through, and in my solitary rambles on the sea shore, or in the narrow woods to be found there, I indulged my fancy on the various novelties I was to meet, the acquaintances I was to make, and the scenes I was to mingle in. I longed to see rivers and running streams, as well as rural life in general. I longed to see the women of other countries – time having now softened down my grief into a tender remembrance – and I was ambitious of political distinction, and overrating the merit of my republican predilections, I was not without hopes of attaining it. A single circumstance will at once show my relish for natural scenery and the very limited opportunity I had of indulging it. Though my disposition was highly social few boys spent as much time in voluntary solitude. It was a common practice with me to loll on a rocky recess which faced the ocean, and which on one side was sheltered from the sun. Here I delighted to look on the ocean – always, I think, the most interesting feature of natural scenery – and contemplate the objects of interest and wonder which lay beyond the narrow horizon that bounded my view. Near this spot, the tide when near its height entered a little opening and after passing a few feet fell down an abrupt part of the rock, so as to make a miniature cascade less than two feet in height. To witness this waterfall, I have waited an hour or longer for the tide to rise high enough to exhibit it, and I have thought of comparing this cascade with the Falls of Niagara, as one may pass from an elephant to a flea.

While I was preparing to go to Virginia to qualify myself for the practice of law, three of my young countrymen were about to go to the Temple on the same errand – and to escape the risk of being carried prisoners to France, they proposed to come to the United States, and thence take passage in a neutral American. They were Cornelius Bascomb whom I have already mentioned – James C. Esten, who had been educated at Yale College in Connecticut, and who was an American in his attachments, though not quite so much a republican as myself – and William Hall Durham, with whom I was most intimate though we differed most widely in our political feelings, he not only being a thorough Englishman, but a Tory in his principles. We all four differed in our political principles by plainly marked gradations, of which Durham and myself were the two extremes. It was arranged that if on going to Virginia it should be found that my taking the same course as my companions would not injure my prospects of success in America I was to rejoin them in the succeeding Spring. It was July 1795 when we left Bermuda I being then in my twentieth year. For the benefit of

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a voyage in a neutral vessel we embarked in a vessel from Newbury Port, commanded by Capt. Knapp – and after a passage of 18 days in which we encountered such a storm as rarely occurs at that season, we arrived at Philadelphia, and took up our quarters at the Indian Queen in third Street, then in high repute.¹⁰

At the age of twenty, when my character may be considered formed, I may here state some features of it not already noticed. My temper was at once irascible and obstinate. I thus often engaged in disputes and fights when a boy – and sometimes the result was that all personal intercourse ceased between us. Yet this was my obstinacy of pride or of temperament, without the retention of malice and I well remember that not being on speaking terms with a boy who sat next to me at school it was our practice, when either had an orange, apple or other fruit, a portion was quietly placed between us on the form we sat on by the one, and as quietly taken up by the other – and it has happened two or three times in my life, that when suddenly meeting in a public place with one with whom I had a serious difference, we have both by an impulse of good feeling, seemed to forget our former estrangement, and shake hands as cordially as if nothing had happened. With the mischiefs of this obstinacy was associated the benefit of perseverance – or constancy of purpose – of which I remember some examples. When a small boy, in consequence of some crotchet, suggested probably by some book I had read, I prevailed on two or three of my brothers and sisters to pass a night with me in a square box, just large enough to hold us – and in this inconvenient position we passed the livelong night. When I was fourteen, having nearly or wholly attained my full height, I was ambitious of attending a grand Anniversary ball given by a Club at Somerset Bridge of which my father was a member – but the ages prescribed for the youth of my sex proscribed me. This ball was a great affair, at a time and place when so many things were small, and I felt the exclusion deeply. But I resolved not wholly to lose my coveted gratification. I accordingly repaired to the building in which the ball was to take place, and posting myself about halfway up the steps which led from an entry up to the garret, I was able to see the company dancing – and ever and anon some of the ladies whom I knew would speak to me. I was well provided with refreshments, and there I sat, feasting my eyes, and divided between regret and admiration until morning, according to the fashion of the day, put an end to the amusement. On another occasion, and about the same time I took it into my head to visit all the eight country churches of the Island – each parish

¹⁰ The following two lengthy paragraphs were inserted by Tucker in the blank facing pages of the manuscript. Although he did not indicate the exact spot for insertion, he seems to have envisioned them as a conclusion to the narrative of his Bermuda days.

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having one – and I think I accomplished my profitless purpose in one day, tho' it was sometimes difficult to get admission into the church by raising one of the windows. My brain was always teeming with projects – commonly of things that aimed to be useful, or which exhibited ingenuity. At a very early age I was anxious to see the gradual changes which took place when the chrysalis becomes a butterfly – and had my windows filled with the worms which become a large red butterfly that abound in the Island. Their transformation was here seen in all its stages. I often made mixtures of liquids and of plants to see the changes they would undergo – and reading of a mode of producing an explosion by mixing iron filings and sulphur, I procured the materials and made the experiment without success. At a later period – while I was a student under Meigs or Bascomb, – my projects were of a higher character and engrossed my mind in my daily walks. Reflecting on the time and labor which was lost in sawing, rowing a boat and the like, I thought of substituting a continuous circular motion – and planned a circular saw, of which I had never heard, that I proposed to use in cutting down trees – and instead of oars to propel a boat, I proposed to use a paddle wheel and actually prevailed on a jobbing carpenter, whom my father employed by the year, to set about making the circular propeller. He was rather indolent and dilatory, and proceeded so slowly with his work that it was not completed when I was unexpectedly called upon to leave the Island. My fancy luxuriated in the idea that with a pair of these paddle-wheels, which I proposed to work with a treadle, my boat which to draw the least water was to be of tin, was to skim over the water, surpassing in swiftness anything that floated. My intended boat, in structure was Fulton's steamboat in miniature – and this project, which I did not abandon after I came to Virginia, has always been a matter of pride with me, as I felt assured that I must eventually have applied steam to my boat, which was so extensively used as motive power. And drafts of my boat may be still seen in one of my old commonplace books made as early as 1793 or 1794. I once thought I had found out a way of ascertaining longitude. This was to compare the time when the sun, moon, or other heavenly body was known to be at a certain altitude – say in the zenith in a place whose longitude was known, and with the time at which the same heavenly body was seen at the same altitude, in the place whose longitude was sought, and by then turning time into distance, we should have the longitude sought. My theory was just, but I did not then know that the difficulty of the plan consisted in obtaining a measure of time sufficiently accurate – and that Harrison by making a chronometer of unprecedented accuracy had obtained the large bounty given by Parliament for the discovery of a mode of ascertaining longitude. I attempted to make a balloon – which were then a novelty. It was made of paper about 12 feet in diameter, and was to ascend by rarefied air. In consequence of too much wind and some want of manual skill my balloon took

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fire in the first experiment. I twice repeated the experiment without complete success, and in the last my balloon, lighting on the top of the building was near setting fire to it. My schemes were sometimes dictated by public spirit, which my father's example had imparted to me. It being known that aloes had risen greatly in price in London, due to their extensive use in the breweries as a substitute for hops – it seemed to me that as the plant which produces the drug is indigenous in Bermuda, it would be a valuable product for the land in the Island whose chief product was in its cedar timber for ship building. Tho' aloes plant consists of thick pulpy leaves, which, cut in the hot season, yield a juice, whose watery parts are evaporated by fire or solar heat, leaving the aloes of the shops. The process of collecting the juice and drying is troublesome and tedious – requiring neatness and care. A piece of ground was planted out by way of experiment. The drug was duly prepared and sent to market – but the price had greatly fallen – the use of it having been prohibited or at least discontinued. The quantity made also fell short as well as the price. Our labor was not remunerated, and the scheme was abandoned.

It may not be uninteresting to my descendants to know something of the *physique* of their ancestor. I was 5 ft. 10 inches in height, and tho' somewhat slender, well proportioned. I had great animal spirits, and unceasing mobility. My face being somewhat of a feminine cast, I was more than once prevailed upon by girls to dress myself as a woman and one night at a private ball in St. George's, Governor Hamilton – who assumed the privilege of doing pretty much as he pleased – insisted on my putting on a turban and dancing a country dance in it. This fancy was in consequence of my supposed resemblance to a cousin, whom it was said he afterwards addressed. I had cultivated drawing which I had taken up of myself, and had been home instructed on the violin so far as to have begun to play in concert. I had also instructed myself in architecture – but I do not recollect that I ever wrote a rhyme before I left the Island – with the single exception of the following epigram, which however, I did not venture to communicate. It was I think as follows

“On a young lady who sang sweetly, but had a bad breath.
To catch her song when I draw near
I vow I ne'er can tell,
Whether she most delights the ear
Or most offends the smell”.

It is proper to state that before I left my native Island, I made it a point of duty to visit all my numerous relatives scattered over it, some of whom I had not seen for years, for the women then were not in the habit of going much out of their neighbourhood. These adieus being made, I set off to seek my

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fortune in a world of which I had seen nothing, and without any certain knowledge of where I was to fix myself, or of what was to become of me. With the sanguine temperament with which I was born, I entertained no doubt of my success in life.

[2. WILLIAMSBURG: 1795–1800]

Philadelphia was the first city I had ever seen – or even large town, St. George's in Bermuda containing less than 120 houses – and my curiosity was in a course of unintermitted gratification. But being very giddy, as well as inquisitive, my companions, who were all my seniors, and comparatively sedate, had enough to do to keep me in check. In one of my strolls I came to the Coffee House in Second St. I entered one of the boxes which then existed, and seeing there a string to which a handle was appended, I pulled it. When a waiter appeared to ask what I wished, I ordered a glass of lemonade. When it was brought, I found on attempting to drink that something solid touched my lips. I told him there was something in the glass – which he remarked was ice. My greenness being thus exposed, I drank the lemonade, paid for it, and retired. Though I was in this city but three days, so various had been the new ideas suggested and so rapidly had they passed through my mind, that they seemed to be longer than any previous week of my life. Our notions of time do not directly depend upon the pleasure or pain which accompanies them, but on the quantum of mental action of which we are conscious of having felt – and generally time seems longer when our feelings have been painful, because the mind is made intensely active by pain. When however our pleasurable feelings have unwonted intensity – as had been my case in Philadelphia – the illusion of overrating the time is the same. I had two hundred dollars in cash, having scarcely ever had before more than five dollars at once – and spent my money pretty freely in the shops, – but among my purchases was a handsome japanned ink stand – which not having been sent to my lodgings and not remembering where it was bought, I never got.

I reached Williamsburg by stages, and to my great disappointment found that judge Tucker¹¹ had gone on his judicial circuit. It was necessary that I should see him, as if he thought my studying the law in the Temple would not impede my success in the United States, I was in the Spring to join Durham, Esten and Bascomb. I had another reason. My two hundred dollars were nearly spent, and I wished to get money from him. I was

¹¹ St. George Tucker (1752–1828) – see earlier note. For a study of the Tucker families of Virginia see Phillip Hamilton, *The making and unmaking of a Revolutionary family: the Tuckers of Virginia, 1752–1830* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003).

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delighted with Mrs. T's kind reception of me, her manners and conversation. Our friendship thus begun never intermitted through life. The town, however, had such an air of decay and dullness as to produce great disappointment and depression. I did not then know that it was the abode of as much sociability, refinement, and really luxurious living as are rarely to be found united. After some consultation, it was decided that I go upon the Judge's track, and endeavour to overtake him. I accordingly took the stage for Richmond, and my youth together with my own social disposition, soon made my affairs known to my fellow passengers, and one of them learning that I proposed to hire a horse in Richmond to prosecute my intended journey, anticipating the difficulty I might meet with as a stranger, kindly told me of a livery stable where I might be accommodated and authorized me to use his name. I did, and procured a little stallion – who proved both gentle and hardy, and as, from information I had no time to lose, I set off at break of day for the Country of Cumberland. My equipment and appearance deserve notice. I had no baggage with me, nor apparel except what I wore. The convenience of saddlebags I knew nothing of and made no attempt to provide. I was handsomely dressed in a black coat and waistcoat, in white cassimere breeches and silk stockings with shoes. I had intended to provide myself with a pair of boots – but found that the state of my finances would not warrant the purchase. I well remember the forlorn and desolate feeling I had as I passed through Manchester, and found myself travelling in a country covered with forest, in which there was not an individual that I knew. My costume, I saw attracted the attention and curiosity of all I met, and I presume that I was often taken for some runaway clerk from Richmond – and I found that my hardy little nag had brought me 55 miles the first day. I stopped at a little country road side tavern, greatly fatigued but I obtained little rest by reason of the bed bugs. I was up betimes the next morning, and proceeded to Bizarre, the seat of Richard Randolph where I hoped to find the judge. I cantered up to the front door, evidently exciting the wonder of Mrs. Randolph (as she has since confirmed) and learning that he had left that morning, for the Point of Fork, where he would stay that night I proceeded on without alighting, and finding a safe guide in the wheel tracks of the Judge's sulkey I followed on some time in the Night (it was fortunately moonlight) – and stopping at a farm-house got a good night's lodging. I was up betimes next morning, and reached the Point of Fork just as the Judge and his servant having breakfasted, were about to renew their journey. In my haste to jump out of the ferry boat I got sadly mired in the soft soil of the river, in which I left one of my shoes – and in this condition I introduced myself to the judge. After reading the letters I brought he gave a most affectionate welcome to Virginia, and, having heard my story, was decidedly of opinion that, with my views, it would be better for me to remain in Virginia than to go to England. It was accordingly decided that I

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was to return to Williamsburg. He also furnished me with a few dollars, and gave me an order on his merchants in Richmond for a small sum. The mud on my silk stockings as well as my unsuitable equipment for riding induced me to inquire of the landlord, if a pair of overalls or pantaloons could be there procured, and as good luck would have it, he said some traveller had had a pair made a short time before, which for some cause he had not taken, and they were for sale. They were of brown linen. They fitted me very well, and I was delighted to be their purchaser. I felt no small Surprise to find that in this remote and lonely spot (as I then considered it) there were three persons of my name, all arriving by different roads – for besides the judge and myself there was a Mr. John Tucker, a brother of Mrs. Coles of Albemarle, whose father had long before migrated from Bermuda, and who I understood was a distant relation of ours.

My cares and anxieties having now all disappeared, I proceeded on my journey more at my leisure, and as I travelled through Goochland about dinner time, I saw a great collection of persons of both sexes at what I supposed was a public-house and without hesitation, I joined them. The meeting proved to be a barbecue at which the gentry of the neighbourhood had assembled to feast and dance. They gave me a hearty welcome, and I shared in the dance as well as the dinner; and was favored by several hospitable invitations. I did not however make known who I was, simply stating that I was from Philadelphia before I came to Richmond, for it was when there was great excitement about Jay's treaty, and people were bitter against the treaty and against England.¹² I left them in time to reach a public-house, where I lay in bed while my shirt was washed, and the next day I reached Richmond, and the day after Williamsburg. Soon after I reached the Raleigh Tavern,¹³ since known in History, the Landlord Maupin, a worthy old citizen, took me aside, and opening a desk, took out the head of a marble statue, which he told me was that of Lord Botetourt, which the mischievous students had thus mutilated, and which he had carefully preserved from the respect felt for Lord Botetourt, who had been a very popular governor under the regal government. It was, after some years replaced, and the statue now embellishes the College green.

I continued here until the College opened in October, when I entered as a student. But I found the society of the place so seductive, that I gave no

¹² The manuscript reads: "...Jay's treaty, and that there people were bitter..." In the above, I have followed the editorialized wording of the *Bermuda Quarterly* transcription.

¹³ Williamsburg's Raleigh Tavern was an occasional site for political meetings. In 1773 Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, Francis Lightfoot Lee, and other lawmakers discussed the creation of a standing Committee of Correspondence, which facilitated Colonial unity.

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attention to my studies – the only time bestowed on them being while I was in bed before breakfast. I boarded in the House of a Tailor – James Moir, and never were people kinder than he and his wife. I had about 12 or 15 fellow boarders – most of whom afterwards attained distinction as professional or public men. While they often laughed at me for confounding the V and W, I found that I knew many things both from books and observation of which they were ignorant so that on the whole I was treated by them with respect. The two with whom I was most intimate were James Patton Preston – who served in the war with England – was wounded at the sortie of Erie – and was finally governor of Virginia. He was equally brave and benevolent and had such a weight of character as to give efficiency to his frequent interpositions as peacemaker. The other was Benjamin Howard, subsequently in congress and Governor of the Missouri Territory. He it was, however, whose powerful arms had with a brickbat knocked off Lord Botetourt's head. He had extraordinary physical powers, and one morning having visited the little market in Williamsburg, he had the ambition to jump over one of the bars on which meat was suspended – and one of the iron hooks on the other side which he had not seen went through the calf of his leg. He however had the strength and firmness to disengage himself. It was some weeks before he recovered from the accident. I had a third friend, William Adair – an Englishman, who was a lawyer – but tho' he was well educated and a good writer, yet for want of a ready elocution did not succeed. The Town of Williamsburg had then a very refined and intelligent society, and I soon had the entrée into the best houses – so that my time was passed wholly at dinners, or in social chit chat in the evening, when Adair was commonly of the party.

It is not easy to suppose a place in which the pure pleasures of society were more enjoyed than in this place. Some 12 or 15 families, in easy circumstances were constantly exchanging dinners and evening parties, in which visitors from a distance were commonly found, and where wit intelligence and good living were found to an extent rarely met with. Sometimes they amused themselves with charades, *bout rimer* and the like trifles. Judge Tucker, who was a ready versifier, had made us all rhymers – and some of our effusions were quite respectable. Occasionally we even indulged in games of forfeit, in which the old took part as well as the young, such was the ease and simplicity of manners which then reigned there. In these reunions it was the common practice for both ladies and gentlemen to sing, artistic music being not yet much cultivated there – and this recalls a joke at my expense. I had heard a song called the Galley slave on the stage in New York, and on my return ventured to sing it. Every stanza concluded with the words “as I tug at the oar”, and my own labor at the song was evidently uphill work. Adair, who had preceded me in singing, and on whom I had (as I was too apt to do) bestowed some ironical compliments, now readily

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seized the opportunity of avenging himself, and coming up to me said “Tug away Mr. Tugger” – which raised a roar of laughter, which was the more hearty as I had been the aggressor.

There chanced to break out a fire in the house of a widow, in straitened circumstances, and after having made myself in my efforts to save the furniture, I then set about a subscription to repair the loss. I was tempted to send an account of the incident – so interesting where it happened – to a Richmond newspaper. But to my great mortification, my communication was not inserted – tho’ that from another student was. This was my first failure as an author.

Among the homes I visited was Mrs. Dunbar’s a charming handsome widow – the daughter of Col. Byrd, who had four daughters, three of whom were married, and the remaining one, Mary Byrd Farley, lived with her. These ladies had handsome fortunes left them by their grandfather in Antigua, which together with their other attractions, had drawn around them a host of suitors. The last, Mary, had also her full share – she had great symmetry of form, and almost all her features were faultless. In the course of six or eight months we were engaged, and in April 1797 we were married. I ought here to record the considerate kindness of Mr. Wm. Hall, who had married one of my mother’s sisters. As soon as he heard that the day of my marriage was fixed, he sent me a remittance of \$300 to be returned at my leisure. My father had sent me at the same time a bill on Baltimore for \$400, which to his annoyance, as well as mine, was protested, so that without Mr. Hall’s kindness, I must have been dependent on my Williamsburg friends and acquaintance. This excellent man died about a year afterwards, and I was induced to attempt to honor his memory by an elegy, which I sent to the *Bermuda Gazette*,¹⁴ and which I heard criticized in no flattering terms by persons who did not know that I was the author. This was my second failure as an author.

I was seized with an intermittent fever a few days afterwards, having also had one in the preceding autumn – which seemed to have given the first shock which my physical system had ever received. To recover from the effects of these intermittents, I should have mentioned that I made a visit to New York in the summer, where I was delighted to meet my countrymen and friends, Rich. Tucker and John Harvey his partner. I had letters from Dr. Tucker which introduced me into good society – and I paid my respects to Mr. Jay, then Governor of New York, and to George Clinton who had been Governor.¹⁵ On my return in November I witnessed the presidential

¹⁴ George Tucker, “In Memoriam,” in *The Bermuda gazette and weekly advertiser*, [St. George’s] Bermuda: J. Stockdale, 1797.

¹⁵ George Clinton (1739–1812), New York governor from 1777 to 1795; John Jay (1745–1829), governor from 1795 to 1801.

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election in Philadelphia, and found that in electioneering there was as much laudatory, as calumnious falsehood. During the night, I heard the following dialogue going on in the State House yard. Says one of the Voters, "I should like to vote for Mr. Jefferson, if he was not a slaveholder" – to which the other replied, – "Oh there is now a plan on foot to do away with slavery in Virginia" – (Alluding to a plan of colonizing the slaves then proposed in a pamphlet by judge Tucker) "and as to Mr. Jefferson, it is a well known fact, that his negroes sit down with him at the same table every day" – "If that is the case", said the voter, "I will vote for him," and he received the Jefferson ticket for 15 electors. It is known that that ticket failed in getting two of the Electors by which Jefferson lost the election. Hearing that General Washington – the President – was expected in Philadelphia, I determined to get an introduction to him, if possible. I accordingly applied to Mr. John Vaughan to whom my father had given me a letter of introduction the year before, a man remarkable for his benevolent and hospitable attention to strangers, and he introduced me to Mr. Reid,¹⁶ a senator from South Carolina, by whom I was introduced. The President then received company once a week in a house on Market St. – in a large oval room. He was dressed in a suit of black velvet, had a very majestic imposing appearance, and made some remarks to every one who was presented. He asked me if I was related to St. George Tucker of Virginia – but these few words and being shaken by his hand I then estimated very highly, and have always remembered with lively interest. I considered myself well rewarded for protracting my stay in the city three days.

At the succeeding session I entered the law class, but though I was a regular student of law at my lodgings, I never attended the Professor's lectures, conceiving myself well grounded in the elements of the science, and at the end of the course, I was honored with diploma of B.A. – but having attended the academical course but one year, the statutes requiring two, my diploma was *ex speciali gratia*. I had not intended to be married until I had obtained a license – but Mary's health being seriously threatened – her disease was internal inflammation, – it was thought that a voyage to the salubrious climate of Bermuda was advisable, and our marriage was hastened for that purpose. We went North in the summer to get a conveyance, and at Philadelphia we embarked in a small Yankee vessel, and after an uncomfortable voyage arrived at Bermuda in August. After a delusive promise that my wife would regain her health, we returned to Virginia in the following May, intending to try the effect of the Virginia springs. In the meantime we lived with Mrs. Dunbar at Williamsburg.

¹⁶ Jacob Read (1752–1816) U.S. Senator from South Carolina from 1795 to 1801.

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In the summer, instead of going to the Springs, we accepted an invitation from Mr. and Mrs. Champe Carter (Mary's sister) who lived in Albemarle. We passed some weeks there very pleasantly – visiting about – and I then saw for the first time Mr. Jefferson, then Vice-President. I was struck with his easy politeness and familiar conversation. His library, his philosophical instruments, and his workshop were then objects of curiosity, and augmented the interest which his character and his position as the head of the republican party excited. We attended the races at Fredericksburg, and thence returned to Williamsburg without any change for the better in my wife's health. I had decided to settle in Alexandria, and to prepare for house-keeping, had imported (or rather my father had) such articles as could be bought in England to advantage – all of which I soon after sold when death put an end to our schemes.

During the winter I was induced to go out to Dan River, where my wife and her sisters had a large tract of land (the Lower Saura Town)¹⁷ partly to make myself acquainted with the property, and partly to collect a portion of the rents due from its numerous tenants. As the land was not divided, I was regarded as a proprietor by them all, and was not a little flattered by their homage, and by their efforts to get their rents, which had been recently raised by our Steward, lowered to their former rate. He collected for me in gold and silver about \$700 (an inconvenient addition to the weight of the portmanteau carried by my servant). I returned through Mecklenburg to call on Sir Peyton Skipwith, the father of Mrs. St. George Tucker¹⁸ – and here occurred an incident which I never think of without deep mortification, but which I narrate that my descendants may see me as I was. Having a letter from Mrs. T. to her father, and entertaining for her the highest respect as well as value for her good opinion, I felt the liveliest curiosity to know what she said of me. This desire so tormented me that I alighted from my horse, the day I expected to reach Sir Peyton's, and under a tree I managed to read that part of the letter which respected myself. When I found it was in terms of extravagant eulogy, I felt humbled to the earth. "What," thought I to myself – "while she attributes to me every quality which deserves esteem or admiration, I am found mean enough to pry into her letter." I would have given much to recall the act – and I found that I had paid by my wounded

¹⁷ Sauratown mountains, Stokes County, North Carolina, named after the Saura Indians. The Dan river, which flows through the mountain range, is thought to be named for Danapaha, an early Saura chief.

¹⁸ Sir Peyton Skipwith (1740–1805), seventh baronet of 17th century British lineage. A wealthy plantation owner, by 1798 Skipwith's holdings in Mecklenburg County, Virginia included over 5,000 acres of land and nearly 100 slaves. Skipwith's daughter, Leila, married St. George Tucker in 1791, this being her second marriage.

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self esteem for the knowledge of her good opinion thus obtained. I stayed two days at Prestwoud¹⁹ – very well entertained of course – and in a few days reached Williamsburg where I received the same cordial welcome that I ever received there.

In making the above free statement of a culpable act and of my penitence from the moment it was committed, I wish it to be understood that I do not mean to follow the example of Rousseau in his confessions, in which his bold avowal of acts of flagrant vice and baseness, and the false glosses he occasionally sets upon them are calculated, by weakening our aversion to worry, to do more harm than good. I shall therefore not often rend the veil which we instinctively seek to conceal our blame-worthy acts from others, and even from ourselves.

There was no drawback to our happiness except Mary's indisposition, which had now fearfully increased. After much suffering, which she bore with angelic patience, she expired on the 25th of May 1799 – having first expressed to her physician Dr. Barraud,²⁰ her wish that deeds should be prepared by which I should have her Estate. This consisted of one fourth part of a sugar estate in Antigua, of 13,000 acres of land in North Carolina on Dan River, some small tracts in Virginia and a share in the Dismal Swamp Company,²¹ which deeds were prepared and executed. But not being in the presence of the Governor as the laws of both Antigua and North Carolina required, they were void by the laws of those countries. It is proper to mention, in justice to myself that when I was in Bermuda the year before, a lawyer of Antigua, Mr. Hicks, offered to prepare conveyances for me, presuming that I wished to dispose of my wife's interest in that Island, but that from a feeling of delicacy, I declined it – by which I failed to gain \$25,000 – the estate having afterwards sold for \$100,000. There being a considerable sum due from that Estate, I some months after made a voyage to Antigua where I passed two months, settled my accounts, and proceeded from thence to Martinique and St. Vincents to meet my old friend Durham, then well established in the practice of the law, and who accompanied me to Bermuda where I continued until the following spring, when I returned to Virginia as a permanent residence.

¹⁹ Prestwoud Plantation, near Clarksville, Virginia. The plantation mansion was built by Peyton Skipwith in 1795 upon land which, according to tradition, Skipwith won in a poker game.

²⁰ Dr. Philip Barraud (1758–1830), Norfolk physician and friend of St. George Tucker.

²¹ The Dismal Swamp Company was formed in 1763 as a business venture to drain a half-million acres of swampland in lower Virginia. George Washington was one of the original 12 partners, and Thomas Jefferson was a later investor. The company collapsed in 1814, about ten years after Tucker sold his shares in the business. See Charles Royster, *The Fabulous History of the Dismal Swamp Company* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).

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I arrived at Norfolk with my brother James, whom I was anxious to place in a counting house in Baltimore. We thence proceeded to Baltimore, where the letters I carried from Norfolk introduced me into the best society. Among other houses I visited Mr. Caton's – became acquainted with his accomplished wife the daughter of the Venerable Carroll, and there saw her two eldest daughters, just coming into womanhood, who afterwards made distinguished matches in England. I have often thought that I had probably contributed to this result. Having recently visited Antigua, I mentioned to Mrs. Caton a remarkable instance of the success of a managing mother in disposing of her daughters which had occurred in that Island. A Mrs. Elliott, who was very ambitious and had three daughters, of great personal attractions, carried them to England with the avowed purpose of marrying them to titled men. Her husband, who was far from being rich, eked out his moderate income by managing several estates, whose owners were in England, and thus was able to provide the means for his aspiring wife to carry her schemes into execution. She was entirely successful. One of her daughters was married to Lord Le Despenser – the oldest baron, I was told in England. The others I believe, married only baronets – but they all of course, obtained the coveted title of "Lady". The story seemed to make a strong impression on Mrs. Caton – and the subsequent history of herself and daughters was the exact counterpart. She carried those daughters to England, and they all married titled men – but of much higher rank than the Miss Elliotts. These cases are at all events strong illustrations of what can be effected by a single will, when long and perseveringly devoted to a single object.

I lodged in the same house, at Baltimore, as Mr. Adams, the President, then on a visit to that town. I was desirous of getting an introduction to him, tho' I did not support him in politics, but I did not succeed. He is the only President from Washington to Buchanan with whom I had no personal intercourse.

[3. RICHMOND: 1800–1806]

I returned to Richmond in June, determining there to settle myself, and to endeavour to make amends for the time I had lost. I was then nearly 25 years of age, and tho' I had never long intermitted my law studies, I had not yet obtained a license to practise. I rented a small house where I slept and breakfasted, and took my dinners at the Swan,²² kept by Morse. I here met the judges of the Court of Appeals, over whom the Venerable Pendleton presided, and whose appearance and conversation greatly interested me. He

²² The Swan Tavern, Richmond's first tavern, which collapsed in 1832.

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was then, I think, past eighty, and both his intellect and spirits were unclouded. Judge Lyons too, Irish by birth told me many amusing anecdotes of former times. My circle of acquaintances gradually extended, and at length there were few houses worth entering in the city, in which I had not been the guest. This popularity and devotion to society was very injurious to me, and had almost proved fatal. Among other rules of conduct which I had prescribed for myself, on settling in Virginia, one was not to play at cards, or otherwise game. For some time I rigidly adhered to my purpose, and tho' I several times accompanied friends to the Faro bank, I never was induced to bet at it. Nor did I ever do so afterwards. But my forbearance was not complete.

Among the houses where I was an habitual visitor, was that of George Hay,²³ a lawyer holding a high rank as a lawyer in Petersburg, which place he had recently left to reside in Richmond the seat of government. His wife was very gay, fond of society, and as well as himself much addicted to card playing. I was one night persuaded by them to hand at loo – their ordinary game – to make up the moderate number of four, and we played nearly the whole night. My compunction for this first error was very lively, and tho' I lost but three dollars, I often afterwards recollected that this loss was more felt by me than the loss of a hundred dollars in later times. The ice having been thus broken, I played again, under the like protest of not breaking up their party, until by degrees I became a devoted loo player, and there seldom passed a night which was not spent either at that game or whist. My downward progress may be inferred from the following statement of what occurred two or three years subsequently. I had asked a few gentlemen to dinner and in the evening, according to custom, we sat down to cards. I then received a note from Mr. Hay, inviting me and my party (of which he was acquainted) to join his – saying that on this occasion (it was at the close of the legislative session) “ceremony should give way to sentiment”. Instead of declining the invitation in silence, or peremptorily refusing it, I read his note to my guests, and they all decided not to accept Mr. Hay's invitation, but to leave me. I then repaired to Mr. Hay's, and as a judgement on my delinquency, I had from beginning to end one unremitting succession of losses. Besides parting with what money I had about me, I had to borrow largely of my friend Preston, and the next day I drew of my friend Edmund Rootes, who commonly kept my cash, for \$276 for “preferring sentiment to ceremony” – which order, often referred to by Rootes, may be still in existence. How I extricated myself from this vortex, in which so many have perished, we shall hereafter see.

²³ George Hay (1765–1830), appointed U.S. district court judge in 1825 succeeding St. George Tucker.

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In the succeeding autumn (in 1800) Richmond was surprised by a threatened conspiracy of the slaves. The plot, tho' apparently communicated to all the male slaves in the town and its vicinity, was kept not only from the knowledge of the whites but also from that of the coloured females, and was at length betrayed by a single one of their number, who a few days before its intended explosion communicated it to the Governor (James Monroe) and his council, who secretly took measures to defeat it. The plan of the conspirators was, by a sudden nocturnal irruption into the city, to seize the arms in the capital – amounting to many thousand – to possess themselves of the money in the banks, to set fire to the town in different places, and in the confusion thus created to massacre the whites, reserving however for a worse fate the ladies most distinguished for beauty. On the appointed day they had collected in a considerable number, but by reason of a sudden and very heavy rain, a stream between them and Richmond was so swollen that they were unable to cross it, and they reluctantly postponed their purpose. Meanwhile the measures taken by the Executive now made known to all that the plot was discovered, and no time was lost in apprehending those who were known to be its leaders, or who had shown by their course that night that they were concerned in it. Many were convicted and executed in the course of a week or two; he who had made the discovery was set free and was sent abroad after having been advised to change his name, and no vestige remained, of the threatened calamity – except in the fears long entertained by the women.

I was induced, by this exciting event, to make an experiment in authorship – and in the form of a letter to a member of assembly on the recent conspiracy, I proposed a plan for the colonization of the people of colour, on some part of this continent beyond the limits of the United States.²⁴ For the first time I succeeded and was rewarded with the public approbation. My little pamphlet was reprinted in Baltimore, and I was at once ranged in the class of men of letters.

Though my evenings were, with few exceptions, spent at the card table, my mornings were given to reading, and sometimes to writing for the newspapers.²⁵

In the course of the following year, I obtained a license to practise law, but what was a far greater difficulty to be overcome, was to speak in public. While I was at College, it became my duty to speak on one side of some questions given out for discussion, and on making the attempt I utterly

²⁴ George Tucker, pseudonym "A Citizen of Virginia," *Letter to a member of the General Assembly of Virginia on the subject of the late conspiracy of the slaves with a proposal for their colonization*. Richmond: Printed by H. Pace, 1801, 21 p.

²⁵ Articles by Tucker appeared in the *Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*, and in the *Richmond Enquirer*.

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failed, and stated, by way of apology, that my ideas had all taken flight like a flock of frightened birds, which received a laugh in the Society. I then found that though at the age of fifteen I had taken an active part in extemporary discussions, at the age of twenty five I had neither the requisite self-possession nor fluency. My friend Judge Tucker now employed me on a case in which he resisted the requisition of a mutual fire insurance company, and prepared argument for me. It was a most trying effort to appear in the case, and while speaking hardly knew whether I was on my head or my feet. But with my native obstinacy, I determined to persevere. Once or twice I volunteered off-hand remarks in the inferior courts, in which I succeeded more to my satisfaction, but these occasions were too few to overcome the impediments which I had to encounter. But my professional efforts were now interrupted in another way. During the summer that I had passed at Mr. Champe Carter's in Albemarle, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Carter (his brother) visited there accompanied by their Daughter,²⁶ then about fifteen. Without being a decided beauty she had a face distinguished for sweetness and intelligence, conversed sensibly and sang sweetly. This young lady accompanied her aunt Mrs. Champe Carter to the Fredericksburg races, where by Mrs. C.'s invitation I met them, and where I found the young lady much improved, and very interesting. And in the following Spring (1801) she accompanied her aunt to Richmond, when I made my declaration, which was favorably received, and we were engaged. Among the incidents burnt into the memory by the encaustic power of Emotion was the following, on our way to Fredericksburg to Richmond by the stage, we came to a bridge (across the Mattasony I think) – which being pronounced by the driver not entirely safe, Mr. and Mrs. Carter and the other passengers got out to walk across while Maria and I, so engrossed by our feelings as to be heedless of danger, remained in the stage, and forgetful of all besides exchanged vows of “unalterable affection”. From this time my thoughts and interest were divided between my correspondence with this young lady, the concerns of my brother James whom after great difficulties obtained a temporary place in a House in Baltimore, the commercial world being then in a state of general embarrassment, and my law studies. I sometimes wrote for the newspapers, and Mr. Wirt having then published the British spy anonymously, I answered his letter in the *Theory of the earth*, to which he replied and I rejoined – and I was supposed to have come off victor in the contest.²⁷ Writers were then comparatively few, and one well received essay

²⁶ That is, Maria Ball Carter.

²⁷ The *Virginia Argus* was a semiweekly Richmond newspaper that began November 19, 1796 and ceased October 19, 1816. Tucker's two articles appeared as letters to the editor in September, 1803 and October 19, 1803 under the pseudonym “An Inquirer.”

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was sufficient to give a literary reputation. I often had the pleasure then of seeing my effusions published in the *Virginia Argus*, or subsequently in the *Richmond Inquirer*, running through other papers at distance.

We were married in February 1802, and in the succeeding autumn went to housekeeping in Richmond my furniture, for the sake of getting it both cheaper and better, having been obtained from London and New York. My course of life continued unchanged. I was in a constant round of company, and still habitually played cards.

In November, we had a son born, and that for the time made us supremely happy; but there were too many drawbacks to our felicity, for me long to possess even contentment of mind. I was then approaching the age of thirty, and I as yet derived no profit from the profession I had selected, and in fact I had achieved nothing of utility to myself or to any one else. My days were spent in idleness with loungers and jesters, and my nights at the cardtable. I felt at times severe compunction for this abuse of my time, but was incapable of the effort required to abandon it. My property, yielding an income altogether insufficient for my support, was gradually melting away. I became querulous and morose in my family, and my ill-humour was sometimes extended to her who had sacrificed the most brilliant prospects in life to me, and whose angelic sweetness never complained or seemed to suffer except from my occasional petulance. Judge Tucker who was now a judge of the Supreme Court stayed with us during the sitting of the Court saw my course with concern – and among other expedients for relief, endeavoured to excite my political ambition, and wished me to offer for a seat in the state legislature. But I was not equal to this effort. I had other friends of respectability and influence – some of whom took more interest in my affairs, from her connexion with General Washington!²⁸ In 1801 Mr. Jefferson was elected President, and Judge Tucker wished me to offer for the place of District Attorney, then vacant by the death of Thomas Nelson, and Mr. Hay who had by his pen supported the republican offered his influence, but besides that I felt myself incapable of properly discharging the duties of the office, I thought that Mr. Nelson's brother had a higher claim, with which according to my notions of delicacy at that time, I ought not to interfere. The place of Commissioner of Bankruptcy having been offered by the President to Mr. Hay, and peremptorily rejected, it was, at his instance given to me. This appointment was most acceptable, not only as affording me respectable employment. The pay of the Commissioners was \$6 a day each, and as the cases were numerous – commonly or I may say always prompted by the bankrupts, by way of spunging off their debts, we were almost always in

²⁸ Tucker states below that Maria, his second wife, was George Washington's great-niece.

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session. Tho' I appeared still as a man of pleasure about town, I soon showed in this office that I was not incapable of business; but in the following year, the law was repealed by the recommendation of him who wielded its patronage, and my emoluments ceased, except what were from finishing the business already undertaken. I had previously found employment, but unattended with compensation, as one of the Directors of the Dismal Swamp Company,²⁹ of which I owned the fourth of one of the ten original shares. I visited the Swamp in 1801, and passed a week in the neighbourhood very pleasantly with Judge Wm. Nelson – a most amiable as well as well-informed man, – and who, forgetting the disparity of our years, made himself my familiar companion. Finding that this company would make no dividends – having preferred to buy up the interests of the numerous partners – nor get an act of incorporation – both of which measures they afterwards adopted, I sold out my interest for \$500–\$1,000.00 tho' it was intrinsically worth twice as much.

In the following year, 1803, I had a most substantial evidence of friendship, and which, if rightly improved, might at once have seemed to me an extensive and profitable practice in my profession.

The court of Chancery, in consequence of its accumulation of business, had been divided into three Courts one of which was established at Williamsburg, and all the causes in which the defendants lived within its jurisdiction were sent thither from Richmond. As I had decided to attend that Court all the cases of Mr. Call, of General Marshall, to whose business he had succeeded, of Messrs. Hay, Brooks and Williams were transferred to me, and they were sufficient to give me perhaps the largest practice in the Court. I was of course disposed to profit by the opportunity, and diligently studied the cases, but my previous want of professional experience, and my difficulties in public speaking stood in my way, and almost disqualified me. My first efforts in court were little satisfactory to myself, and in some of the most important cases other counsel were added or were substituted, and my pecuniary gains were small.

About this time having been made one of the Trustees of The Richmond Academy then projected, and a lottery to raise the requisite sum having been proposed, the management of it was undertaken by one of the members, and on winding up the concern, it was found that the profits had been altogether absorbed in the expenses. On the second class or issue of tickets, it was proposed to me to manage it. I was fain to undertake it believing that I could certainly make it profitable to the Institution. I accordingly undertook it, distributed the tickets far and near, and kept a strict account of every ticket – making myself responsible for all which were not otherwise accounted for.

²⁹ See earlier note on the Dismal Swamp Company.

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As a considerable sum thus passed through my hands, which was blended with my own funds in the bank, and my family expenses considerably exceeded my income, I gradually became a debtor to the Lottery, but I succeeded in securing to the Academy almost the whole amount (\$5,000) which the scheme contemplated. The agency, however, proved a source of great subsequent trouble, and was near seriously affecting my character. The disposition to gamble which my card playing propensity had greatly fostered, now induced me to offer, while the lottery was drawing, to let any one having the ownership for a day of any one of the tickets which I individually owned, at a rate agreed on. In other words I hired out my tickets for a day, giving to the person hiring such prize as they might draw. The last drawn ticket was the largest prize \$5,000. On that day, then, still having one or two undrawn tickets – they hired very high, in proportion to the increased chance of profit, and some adventurer gave me upwards of \$100. But when all the tickets were drawn to some 4 or 5 the owners thought it prudent to divide the large prize among them. But by way of gratifying their curiosity it was found that the fortunate ticket which I had owned, was the last drawn because it was found stuck in the joint between two parts of the wheel, which had been very carefully made by one of the Commissioners. As my share of the great prize was little more than \$300, no one could suspect me of having contrived that this ticket should be the last, particularly as I had no more agency in the drawing than any other of the Commissioners.

In the years 1803 and 1804 my expenses were partly met by sales of property. Besides my interest in the Dismal Swamp I sold several small tracts of land in Norfolk county which had been part of Colonel Farley's property. And finding that my right to a fourth part of the Saura Town Estate was contested by Mrs. Shippen – now Mrs. Izard – and doubting the result I wrote to Mr. Corbin and Mr. Champe Carter who held, in the right of their wives, the residue, and representing besides my claim under the deed, in my favor, that a large balance would be due to me on a settlement of the profits of the Antigua estate – I proposed an exchange of releases, to which they agreed. And when they were executed my right to two thirds of the Saura Town lands claimed was placed beyond question.

I had purchased a valuable lot in Richmond for \$1,500, and in 1803 put a little office on it, which being modelled after a Grecian temple, obtained the name of the "little Capitol" – tho' it was not the Capitol which I had imitated. I even contemplated selling my lands on Dan River and building a dwelling house on my lot. But what promised much greater profit, I had joined my father-in-law and two other gentlemen in purchasing the property of Munford Beverly, by which it was expected that my share (which was a sixth)" would probably yield a profit of \$10,000. The purchase was indeed profitable, but by reason of delay and mismanagement, it afforded me little relief, and it was several years before it afforded me any. In consequence of

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some essays which I had written in the newspapers on banks, against which there was a strong prejudice in the ruling party in Virginia, after the Bank of Virginia was established, I was soon made a Director – and so continued for two years. There was one or two vacancies in the executive council, and by the advice of my friends I was a candidate. The salary about \$1,000 being with my income from rents and stocks, sufficient for my support without any aid from my profession, which I began to regard as hopeless. I however obtained an insignificant number of votes, to my great disappointment and mortification. I soon however recovered my wonted spirits – but with a change of views. I began to think in 1804–5 that it would be prudent in me to leave Richmond, and to remove to the neighbourhood of my land on Dan River – for as that lay in North Carolina and I did not wish to leave Virginia, I decided not to settle on the Saura Town land. But a more important resolution was to leave off card playing, by which I found the best years of my life had been wasted. Having fixed on a day for quitting, it so happened that for the week before I was every night successful, and had won upwards of \$300. I however felt some repugnance or false shame in letting my new purpose be known, and a night or two afterwards on being invited to a party at loo, I well remember the remark of one of the party, as soon as they were seated at the card table “now I wish the night was a week long”. This remark served to make me more sensible of the self-denial I had imposed on myself. However, when a card was dealt to me – for I had seated myself at the table – I excused myself from playing that evening – not choosing to expose myself to the railleries or remonstrances of my associates, and I never played afterwards, during my residence in Virginia, on my own account, tho’ I sometimes would represent a friend, during a short absence from the room – and I found a pleasure even in this vicarious sport. Among other mischiefs of gaming, is that it often leads to serious quarrels, and on several occasions, I was involved there in disputes, which led to explanations either demanded or given by me on the following day. The most trivial circumstance will sometimes bring on such altercations. Thus one night at a loo party, after I had played the ace of trumps, I thru down the two remaining cards which were of the same suit (clubs). It so happened that my competitor had a club which was higher than my lowest, but lower than my highest – and tho’ according to strict rule, I subjected myself to have my lowest card played to my adversary – yet I had evidently considered that the rule did not apply to the case where both cards were of the same suit and had thrown them down together, merely to save time. One of the company immediately insisted on the rule. The pool or amount depending was a large one, and I, disgusted and indignant at the attempt remarked, “I thought I was playing among gentlemen” – on which Mr. Lewis, a very respectable member of assembly from Gloucester, remarked with temper and dignity, “Mr. Tucker it was improper to make that remark tho’ the money is undoubtedly yours.”

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On which I made an apology to the company, and took the money, which was no longer contested. I had been very fond of chess as well as cards, and as I recollect, I continued to waste as much time at the former game as ever.

In the midst of such misapplication of my time, I would occasionally exercise my pen – sometimes in the newspapers, and sometimes by daily exercises in writing on whatever topic that chanced to present itself.

Two incidents which occurred during my residence in Richmond seem to merit notice. In the winter of 1804, we went to Williamsburg on a visit to judge Tucker, and while there, I took occasion to go to Norfolk to make sale of some lands which I owned in an adjoining county, and while I was there a fire broke out of a most destructive character. To arrest its progress some buildings were to be blown up, and when notice of the explosion was given, I placed myself for safety behind a large post, but still wishing to witness the spectacle I so changed my position that one eye could see the building to be blown up. I paid dearly for my curiosity – fragments of the house struck my exposed eye, one of my hands, and wounded me in one thigh. I was knocked down senseless, but on coming to, and finding a cut over my eye, I was delighted to find that my sight had not been affected. After a while I was taken up, and it being apprehended that the fire would reach the house in which I lodged, I was on the suggestion of my friend Miss Wheeler, (since Mrs. Decatur) carried out of its reach to the house of Mr. Conway Whittle, where I was treated with the greatest kindness, during four or five weeks that I remained there before I was able to return to Richmond. My wife was anxious to join me, after the accident, but the persuasions of Mr. and Mrs. Tucker, together with my own letters, assuring her that I should soon be able to leave Norfolk, prevented her. When I came out, besides that my eye was disfigured, I could not straighten my leg so as to walk, and I was shocked on my return to Richmond to witness the surprise and painful sympathy manifested by my friends when they first met me. But in no time the marks of both injuries entirely disappeared.

The other was rather a disaster threatened than one actually experienced. At that time party spirit was at its height, and some of the more fiery and zealous republicans carried their bitterness and violence so far that all of their party could not join them. I had always hated intolerance, and was moreover on friendly terms with many of the opposite party – the federalists. I therefore belonged to the moderate party. At a political meeting (?) I made some motion, the object of which was to preserve to the minority their rights at the approaching election, which some wished to destroy. And my motion having been opposed by Lewis Harvey a rising young man of talents, and a violent democrat, and some sharp language having passed between us, we both withdrew from the crowd when he said that my purpose had been to defeat the object of the meeting. I told him that he stated what was not the fact. Upon which he gave me the lie, and I immediately struck at him, but my arm

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was arrested by Dr. Brockenborough, his brother-in-law, who had followed us out to prevent the rencounter which he apprehended. We were separated by the bystanders, and both bound to the peace in a heavy penalty.

I had always determined to preserve my honor untarnished, according to the prevailing code, and had several times demanded and received satisfaction, though I had never fought a duel. On the present occasion I did not seem required to regard myself as the aggrieved party, since I might have been considered to have given the first provocation, and the assault I had offered might have been considered equivalent to the lie. But I was not willing to resort to these subterfuges – as I regarded them. I had received what was regarded among gentlemen as the grossest insult, and I was determined to demand satisfaction, as soon as the effect of my recognizance had ceased, which I had no doubt it would be promptly given. But as I had no skill as a marksman, my determination was, if practicable, to fire at a distance which would remove all disparity. I therefore employed the interval in so arranging my papers and accounts as to make them intelligible to all. This preparation was made with a heavier heart, as my wife was then in a delicate situation. But on the day which our recognizances expired the mutual friends of Harvey and myself interfered, and brought about an honorable accommodation. We were reconciled, and were good friends as long as he lived, which was but a year or two afterwards. I found the next day that my course had given so much satisfaction to the federalists – which I had neither anticipated nor aimed at, – that some of them urged me to offer for the assembly.

A word now on my literary occupations. Thomas Ritchie about 1803 had settled in Richmond and had there established the *Enquirer*, that was to support the republican administration and party with an ability not yet experienced by them, and on the purest principles of the party. It was in short to be a model party paper. With a view of giving it some eclat at the start, Ogilvie, a democratic Scotsman and an enthusiast in French politics and philosophy, proposed an association called “the Rainbow”, consisting of ten persons, who were in rotation to write a paper for the *Enquirer*. The members were Ogilvie himself, Ritchie, Wirt, Hay, Meriwether and Skelton, Jones, John and William Brockenborough, Peyton Randolph and myself. We went through two numbers to each, and the contributions stopped with Wirt, whose pen had been most exercised and the most successful. My first Essay was “On the Illusions of Fancy”, and the second on Luxury in which I aimed to shew that it was a salutary and even indispensable concomitant of civilization, and that when its means were furnished by industry and art, it could not enervate a people, and only added to the stock of human enjoyment.³⁰

³⁰ George Tucker, pseudonym “X”, “On the Illusions of Fancy,” *Richmond Enquirer*, September 29, 1804; “On Luxury,” *Richmond Enquirer*, December 22, 1804.

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I often, moreover, wrote anonymous articles for the press – political or moral, and when they were of a satirical character, I commonly resorted to irony – but I at length gained unprecedented success in an effort before untried. The example of card playing which was then general among the gentlemen of Richmond, at length extended to their wives – and at the evening parties, the card table was regularly set for the ladies. Their game was always loo, and the rate of their play gradually increasing, it often happened that by the course of the game itself, and by betting on the highest trump, a lady would gain or lose 50 or 60 dollars in a night. My wife yielded to the fashion, and happening one night to lose about forty dollars, I took the alarm, and after representing to her the dangers and discredit of the practice, which began now to be loudly denounced by those who did not indulge in it, I told her she would greatly oblige and gratify me if she would not again play for money. With her wonted sweetness and reasonableness, she made me the promise which she faithfully kept. Soon after this, one night when I was in some way prevented from attending a loo party, it occurred to me that it was a fit subject for humorous satire, and I sketched off a letter in rhyme, under the character of a gentleman from the country, Hickory Cornhill Esq. who coming to Richmond, and attending a loo party of ladies, describes it to his neighbour in the country. Finding by my experiment on my friend Edmund Rootes that it was likely to take with the public, I sent it to the *Enquirer*, and its success was extraordinary.³¹ For a week or more it was talked of and quoted by every one, even to the boys in the streets, and then scandal was busy in designating the individuals thus held up to public ridicule. Finding that the resentment of some whom I respected was provoked, I sent a card to the newspapers³² in which I truly stated that when the article was written, the characters were all drawn from fancy without any personality being intended or thought of. That after it was finished I saw that it might be applied by scandal-loving people to individuals, but that such not having been the intention of the writer, he did not feel himself bound to alter his course on that account, and that the fault, if any, was either in those whose malice made the application or in those whose conscience acknowledged the justice of the satire. This seemed to silence the complaints, if it did not remove them. Some time before John Randolph had given me a copy of Anstie's *Bath Guide*³³ – which I had never before seen – and it is probable that clever specimen of

³¹ George Tucker, pseudonym "Hickory Cornhill," "A Letter from Hickory Cornhill, Esq., to his Friend in the Country," *Richmond Enquirer*, January 9, 1806.

³² George Tucker, pseudonym "Hickory Cornhill," "A Card of Apology, to All whom it may Concern," *Richmond Enquirer*, January 16, 1806.

³³ Christopher Anstey (1724–1805), *The new Bath guide: or, Memoirs of the B--R--D [i.e., "Blunderhead"] family. In a series of poetical epistles*. London, J. Dodsley, 1766, 104 p.

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humorous satire had not only led me to adopt the same measure (the same as that of Goldsmith's retaliation) but to write a satire on the reigning follies of Richmond, as Anstie had done of Bath. As in no long time afterwards the ladies discontinued the practice of loo-playing, Hickory Cornhill obtained the credit of effecting the reform – tho' doubtless a practice not suited to the domestic habits of the ladies of Virginia, and unfriendly to some of the virtues and graces of the female character, would have died out of itself. Fashion would have been no more constant in this amusement than it is in the dress and decorations of the ladies.

My residence in Richmond brought me into contact and made me well acquainted with some of the leading men of Virginia. Besides Judge Pendleton and most of the other judges of the supreme and general court, there was George Wythe – a patriot of the Revolution, and for a long time the sole chancellor of the State. He was when I knew him a man of few words, and to the mildness and gentleness of a zephyr in his manner he had the firmness, the simplicity and self-denial of a Roman. He was often called the Cato of America from his abstemious habits and lofty patriotism. This pure and venerable man was poisoned by his nephew, to whom he had by will left his estate. He lived long enough to revoke the bequest.

Mr. Monroe was, when I went to Richmond to live, Governor of the State. I carried a letter of introduction to him, and my own residence being near his, I saw him often, and passed mornings in his conversation. He was naturally a dull, slow man – but possessed of high administrative talents. He was however extremely credulous, according to his wishes, and gravely maintained, in one of our conversations, that Bonaparte after he had made himself First Consul, had thus possessed himself of power to establish republicanism on a firm basis in France, and would lay down his power, as soon as his virtuous and patriotic purpose was effected. This was his logic – “Why sir,” he said to me, “don't you admit that he is a man of intelligence?” “Certainly” – “Well, is there any way in which he could so certainly acquire true fame and glory as in securing political freedom to his country?”

Judge Marshall, too, I often met in society, and frequently shared his hospitality. He had always shewn me kindness, seeing doubtless my high respect for him – and his good feelings were probably quickened on account of Maria, who was the great-niece of Washington. No man could be more beloved and respected than he was in Richmond, with the exception of a few of the most violent democrats. Nor could it well be otherwise. He had in his manners the simplicity of a child, and a mild and amiable demeanour that was ever manifesting itself. He was a zealous politician on the federal side – and would when engaged in political argument, occasionally exhibit a warmth of temper that hardly seemed to belong to him. Mr. Wickham was one of the most agreeable and companionable men I ever knew. He had travelled much in Europe – seen the best society, and to a large stock of information and good

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sense he added a good deal of wit. George Hay was also a sensible and agreeable man. His house was a place of resort every evening – and the society there among the best in the city – would have been of the highest order, if it had not been invariably absorbed by card playing.

[4. PITTSYLVANIA: 1806–1818]

Having decided on leaving Richmond, and on removing to the neighbourhood of my land on Dan River, in the autumn of 1806, I sold off my furniture in Richmond, at good prices, thanks to the efforts of my friends, and having purchased a piece of poor land with a small house on it in Pittsylvania, near my land in N. Carolina, I proceeded to enlarge it, and to make it a comfortable residence. I was therefore kept busy for some time in making the necessary preparations – as in buying negroes for the plantations – sending them out – providing materials for my new house, and settling up my accounts. On a settlement with the trustees of the Richmond Academy lottery, I prevailed on them to let the money due for the prizes remain in my hand, and made an arrangement with my auctioneers to pay the money as the prizes were presented, for which I conveyed my Richmond lots as security. Among other preparations for a country residence I attended the sale of Mr. Ralph Wormsley's library, and bought a great many valuable books at low prices. My family now consisting of a wife, son, and two daughters, passed the winter, by invitation, with Mr. Lawrence Lewis at Woodlawn. I thence made a short visit to Washington having walked across the frozen Potomac. In the spring we left Woodlawn for the county of Frederick, where Mr. Carter then resided, and in the Fall³⁴ we went to Pittsylvania, as a permanent residence. My new house was not then finished, but was tenantable, and now began a course of life in strong contrast to that which I had led in Richmond. The greatest change was in the society. Our new neighbours were friendly and civil, but extremely plain and unpolished in their manner and style of living, and quite untutored in the ways of the world. One of them who had made money by the cultivation of tobacco, and began visibly to show signs of pride of purse, seeing some family portraits which I had, was ambitious of possessing the like, and inquired of me whether he could not get his likeness by sending to Philadelphia for it. My wife felt the change very sensibly, but happy in her family and of a contented temper, she submitted to the privations she endured. As to myself, from a life of idleness and empty pleasure I became a close student of law, and determined to spare no efforts to obtain that practice which I had hitherto found unattainable. Yet I remember that at the first court which I attended, on listening to a description then going on at

³⁴ That is, the Fall of 1808. During the previous two years Tucker prepared for the move, staying with friends and relatives.

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the bar, and struck with the flowery rhetoric then exhibited, I thought to myself, that I am hardly able to engage with these competitors, and must move still farther back. I persevered, however, gradually got business, and the small fees which I received gave me far greater pleasure than any money I had ever before received. I found a great solace in the friendship and society of Peachey Gilmer, who practised in the same courts as myself, whose previous history had been very similar to my own, and who had a most fertile vein of humour and wit, besides the more solid qualities of integrity and generosity. I contracted also a close friendship with William Leigh, afterwards an able and popular judge.

I had not been long at the bar before I met with one of those coincidences which seem far to exceed the ordinary calculation of chances, and yet from which no life is entirely free.

A gentleman of the bar, Mr. Dabney, who was officiating for the day as the States Attorney for the County, politely invited me to address the grand jury – this being the ordinary mode of giving a new lawyer an opportunity of introducing himself to the knowledge of the public. I was obliged to decline the offer, for I had given but a slight attention to criminal law, and still less to its forms. I felt mortified however at my incompetence, and resolved to efface the reproach. I accordingly made myself acquainted with the penal statutes of the State, especially of those which the States Attorney is required to give in charge to the grand jury – and before the succeeding quarterly, or grand jury court, I had prepared an address to the grand jury with great care, and a dictum that was polished without being magniloquent. Thus provided I went to court determined to solicit the opportunity which I had previously rejected. The address to the grand jury is the first business of the day, and the attorney for the commonwealth was a very eccentric man James Stuart, whom I did not know, and while I was speaking to Dabney to propose to Stuart that I should address the jury for him, Stuart stalked into the bar, and without preamble or explanation, told the Court that he resigned his office of attorney for the Commonwealth. Of the four justices on the bench, one of them I had known, and had carried a letter to when I – came to County – Colonel Isaac Coles. He was highly respected and had great influence. After consulting his associates he asked me if I would accept the office, to which having assented I was forthwith appointed, and entered at once on the discharge of its duties by addressing the grand jury. After a little while the hubbub of the Court ceased, and I found that my fine address was listened to with evident signs of surprise and approbation. When it was over I received high compliments from the liberal members of the bar, but I could not honestly suffer them to remain in ignorance that the language they had heard was not an impromptu effusion as it appeared to be, but the result of careful preparation. I continued in the office for several years, until I was obliged to resign it, on becoming a member of the legislature.

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By the diligent attention which I now paid to my professional duties, my practice steadily increased, and gradually became one of the best in the Court in which I practised. I improved too in facility of speech. I practised in four County Courts – viz. Pittsylvania, Henry, Franklin, and after 2 or 3 years in Halifax. To attend these I was obliged to ride – generally on horseback, about 340 miles every month which required me to leave my own quiet, happy home, every week – and during the quarterly Courts, more than half of each week. But with all this bodily fatigue, I regard this as the happiest period of my life. I enjoyed the time spent with my wife and children the more for these separations, and above all I had the pleasing reflexion that I was doing my duty, and sometimes I exulted in the fact that I had not lost a case at the preceding court. But I am obliged to admit that it was the conviction that I had succeeded against the law or the justice of the case rather increased than lessened the pleasure that was thus afforded – for such is the nature of human pride on the mind of the practising lawyer.

I lived at Woodbridge, as my residence in Pittsylvania was called, ten years – during which time I never missed a court – and I proceed to notice the incidents that best deserve mention. As the part of the country in which I then lived was compelled to carry its agricultural products to Richmond and Petersburg, a distance of from 175 to 200 miles, in consequence of there being no market town on the Roanoke river, and in fact but a broken and imperfect navigation of that River, I set on foot a scheme to improve that navigation so as to communicate with Norfolk. With this view I wrote and published a large pamphlet of 100 pages to shew the benefits and practicability of the scheme.³⁵ I then prevailed on the legislature of Virginia to appoint commissioners from each of the counties in the State interested in the navigation to go to the legislature of North Carolina and there confer on a plan of improving the navigation of the Roanoke and its branches the Staunton and Dan which were partly in Virginia and partly in North Carolina. In the succeeding winter four of the commissioners (out of 11 or 12) alone attended at Raleigh – but one of them returned home forthwith – leaving only three to fulfil the purpose of their appointment. These were Isaac H. Coles, a member of assembly from Halifax, my friend Gilmer and myself. We met with a very kind and hospitable reception at Raleigh, and in North Carolina generally, remained at work at the seat of government, and being invited to take a seat in the legislature, Coles addressed the senate and I the House of Commons. Our proposal was promptly met, and such a law as we wished, and corresponding to one already passed by the State, was enacted by North Carolina, and I forthwith proceeded across Virginia to the County

³⁵ George Tucker, pseudonym “A Citizen of Virginia,” *A letter to a member of the General Assembly of North Carolina, on the navigation of the Roanoke and its branches*. Richmond: Printed by John O Lynch, 1811, 66 p.

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of Frederick, where my wife and children were on a visit to her parents. My journey was memorable by meeting with two or three shocks of an earthquake, and in Richmond by witnessing the awful tragedy of the burning of the theatre, from which I had a narrow escape, and where I was instrumental in saving several females from the flames. I had fortunately quitted the house while it was on fire, tho' I did not know the fact, being prompted by what I suffered from the cold about my feet, having dined out that day and wearing, as was then the practice, thin shoes and silk stockings. The play was over, and there appearing to be much delay in bringing on the afterpiece, I remarked that "the pain of cold feet was greater than the pleasure of seeing out the play and I would go home" – but the cry of fire prevented my reaching my lodgings, and hurried me back to witness a spectacle of human woe which I have never seen equalled.

This scheme of improving the navigation which railroads have since rendered valueless, gave me so much popularity that I was urged to offer for the assembly. I canvassed the County with industry, and received a respectable vote considering that I was comparatively a stranger, and was moreover a lawyer, against which profession the people of the county had imbibed great prejudices. The following year, 1814, I offered again with sanguine hopes of being elected, but my rivals had both represented the county before, and I lost the election by a small number of votes. I then determined to give up the pursuit. But my friends redoubled their efforts in my favor, and told me on the day of election that I should simply declare to the people of the county, as a salve to their pride, that I would serve if elected; I did so, and was successful.

I was among the active members of the legislature, but I did not acquit myself in the character of a debater as well as I expected. As a writer I was more successful. I drafted some reports which were well received.

In the following year 1816, we experienced our first serious misfortune, in the death of our fifth daughter. We had indeed lost our fourth, but she died a few weeks after her birth, which took place during my absence from home. But Harriet was a most interesting child, and at the age of four had given indications of great natural gifts. Her mother was for a long time inconsolable. The child died of the whooping cough. More timely and abler medical aid would probably have saved her. Having been again elected to the legislature, my wife joined me there, and the visit had a very benignant effect on her spirits. I drafted a report on a committee, on the Constitution of Virginia, for which the chairman Philip Doddridge,³⁶ who was its reputed author obtained great credit. Another paper however drawn by me probably had a

³⁶ Philip Doddridge (1773–1832), member of Virginia state legislature and U.S. Representative from Virginia from 1829 to 1832.

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decisive influence on my subsequent destiny, and therefore deserves an especial notice.

As Mr. Madison's administration was drawing to its close, and he had always been a great favorite with me, I thought of proposing a valedictory address to him from his native State. I accordingly prepared one, but after it was finished understood from a member to whom I had shewn it that one of the delegates from Fairfax had done the same. I accordingly had an interview with that gentleman, and after a civil offer by each to give way to the other, we agreed to leave the choice of the two to a common friend – Thomas Maury. He selected mine, which was offered and adopted, not however without some drawback from the gratification which was thus afforded me.³⁷ By way of enhancing Mr. Madison's merits in declaring and conducting the recent war against Great Britain, I had stated that he was opposed by a "numerous, zealous, and compact minority" (nearly all New England having been in the opposition). The address was opposed, and the words quoted were particularly objected to – perhaps from the word "compact" sounding like "packed" – for I could imagine no other reason – and for the sake of unanimity I proposed to strike out the word most objected to "compact". But the majority conceiving the opposition to be factious, would not suffer it to be altered and it was thus passed with 17 dissentients. During the discussion – Doddridge, with whom I had been on friendly terms, but who was a warm federalist and opponent of the war, after adverting the previous political harmony of the session, remarked that if a fireband of discord was to be introduced, he was glad it was "by a foreign hand". This was the second time that I had been thus taunted. On this or the former occasion, I forget which I replied, "It is true I was born a subject of Great Britain, and so was General Washington and Mr. Jefferson – but I am as true and devoted a citizen as any other" – and remarked that I probably had more American blood in my veins than any member of the floor. "My family have been residents of an island attached to this continent ever since the settlement of Virginia". As we were about to adjourn a member came up to me, and offered me his cane, if I wished to break Doddridge's head. But I replied that I did not consider my honor assailed by his remarks, ill-bred as they were. Doddridge and myself never had any intercourse after that for several years, but then meeting him in Washington (while he was in Congress) by an instantaneous feeling of both we shook hands as if nothing had happened.

While I was most diligently engaged in the practice of the law, I imposed on myself the task of writing upon some speculative subject every day, and

³⁷ George Tucker, "Valedictory Address on the Retirement of President James Madison," *Acts passed at a General Assembly of the commonwealth of Virginia*, Richmond: Thomas Ritchie, printer to the commonwealth, 1818.

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in 1813 and 1814, I selected a portion of these essays, and had them published in a periodical of Philadelphia, the Portfolio – then edited by Dr. Caldwell under the title of “Thoughts of a Hermit” – which appeared to be very well received by the public.³⁸ About this time Mr. Wirt published in a Richmond paper the numbers of the Old Bachelor, to which I made several contributions.

I have stated that the years which I spent in Pittsylvania were probably the happiest of my life. Yet it had great drawbacks for there I lost my two lovely and promising children, and for the first years my debts and pecuniary difficulties were a source of perpetual anxiety and effort. When I first went to Richmond to live (in 1800) I had a great horror of debt, and for some time escaped its thralldom. But my resolution gradually yielded to the circumstances in which I was placed, of having the money of others at my command, and in not having an income adequate to my necessary expenses. When I call to my mind the various expedients to which I resorted to raise money, and how often those expedients were unavailing, and when I look over the minutes of my correspondence which I have never failed to keep, it seems now to me astonishing that I could have borne these embarrassments as well as I did. The heaviest debt was that which I owed to the Trustees of Richmond Academy – and which arose from their consenting to let the prizes of the lottery remain in my hands until applied for, on condition that I would provide for their prompt payment by responsible persons in Richmond – the auctioneers of my furniture to assume their payments and they were to be indemnified by the sale of my Richmond lots. After waiting a year or more, the Trustees assumed the payments themselves, and called upon me to pay to them the funds in my hands. They further required me to be answerable for such lottery tickets as had been put into the hands of my cotrustees, one or more of whom had since become insolvent. Against this last claim, I indignantly remonstrated, and I proposed to leave all questions between us to arbitration. To this they agreed, and the arbitrators exonerated me from the claims against the trustee who had the same power as myself, and they allowed me a fair commission on the sales I had made. I should have stated, that the Trustees had previously appointed a committee to examine and report on my management of the Lottery. The report was made by the chairman, Dr. John Brockenbourgh, a sensible upright man, who stated that the accounts were so fairly and fully kept that the history of every individual could be traced, and if any loss was incurred as was not improbable, it was obliged to fall solely on myself. The report was highly complimentary to me, and satisfied all honest inquiry.

³⁸ A list of these contributions is contained in Robert Colin McLean's *George Tucker* (1961). Most of these articles were reprinted in *Tucker's Essays on Various Subjects* (1822), cited below.

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My next debt in importance arose from money advanced to me at different times by Taylor and Brown. To meet these claims I endeavoured to sell my lots in Richmond – but before I could make a prudent sale other debts had been incurred to meet my expenses in travelling about the country, from 1806 to 1808, in building in Pittsylvania, and in establishing a plantation on Dan River. Besides the sale of my lots, I engaged in some speculations with a view of profit. I once bought up a drove of hogs on Dan River and had them driven to Richmond, by which I was a small gainer and also joined my father-in-law and two Fredericksburg merchants in the purchase of an estate of \$100,000 – but it was some years before I derived any profit from it. The sum which Mr. Carter was to give his daughter (\$5,000) was tardily and but partially paid me partly in land that could not be converted into money, and was a further source of disappointment. I endeavoured to effect loans of men who were rich, were habitual money lenders, and with whom I was on friendly terms, but with this class I was invariably unsuccessful. I obtained some money from the bank with judge Tucker's endorsement – from two to three thousand dollars – and Dr. Thomas T. Tucker, one of the best and most faultless men I have ever known, willingly enabled me to borrow from a district bank \$3,000, which he afterwards assumed upon himself, and for which I accounted to his legatees.

Nor were these debts the only source of my difficulty. Mrs. Shippen, afterwards married to General Izard,³⁹ questioned my title to the Saura Town lands, and brought suit against me to recover one third part of the portion which had been allotted to me. The other two thirds I had by a compromise with Mr. Carter and Mr. Corbin, secured the title of. The Izards succeeded in the suit, and on the division between them and me, as my lot, containing all the river low grounds, was much the most valuable I was decreed to pay to them the sum of \$1,800 – which of course added to my pecuniary difficulties.

The debt which I owed to Taylor and Brown was the occasion of an occurrence, which during its brief existence, was one of the most mortifying of my life. This debt was, in the settlement between the partners, transferred to Brown – and as I was obliged to defer its payment, as well as others, while I was making efforts to raise money, his patience becoming exhausted, and learning moreover that I was then in Richmond, and had not called upon him with either money or excuse, he ordered suit against me, and by means of a special affidavit, required bail of me. In my surprise and indignation, I refused to ask anyone to be my bail, and the sheriffs, who were amiable, gentlemanly men, treated me with great delicacy, and trusting to my honor,

³⁹ George Izard (1776–1828), American Army officer who rose to the rank of general during the War of 1812.

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allowed me to consult counsel. I consulted two lawyers, who agreed with me that bail was not demandable (the claim being due on open account) and by a short process the case was removed from the County Court to the District Court, then in session, and the next day, the question of bail was discussed by myself and Brown's counsel. The judge did not hesitate to decide in my favor, when the case remained on the docket to be tried in its turn, and I brought suit against Brown for false imprisonment. They remained untried for several years, and at length a very curt letter from Brown, expressing his regret for the step he had taken, and proposing an adjustment of all matters between us on my own terms, brought about a final settlement and entire reconciliation between us.

In 1815 the return of peace gave prosperity to all classes in the United States, except to the small one which had embarked in new manufactures. Land everywhere rose in value, and mine on Dan River, which I had estimated at more than \$15,000, I sold for \$22,000. I was thus enabled to pay off my debts, and soon afterwards became the purchaser of a large tract on Staunton River, supposed to be above 10,000 acres, for \$26,500. But Walter Coles being in treaty for the purchase, it was agreed between us that he should be one fourth and I three fourths interested.

My sale of the Saura Town land was the source of no small vexation, before the purchase was made. After a compromise was made with Messrs. Carter and Corbin and myself, I had prepared deeds, and had taken steps to have them executed and recorded in North Carolina, but Moorman to whom I had sold, having understood that Genl. Izard had a claim against me for a sum of money, and also for profits on the land, for which claims the land against me was liable, was induced to make inquiry into my title, and could hear nothing of the conveyances from Carter and Corbin, of which I had informed him. This information was confirmed on inquiry, and I immediately set about repairing the mischief. I then found the benefit of having kept memoranda of all my letters, and was thus able to establish the facts, in case there should be any disposition in those gentlemen not to execute the bargain. I lost no time in applying to them, and obtaining the execution of a second release of their claims, and agreed with Moorman that his payments might be suspended until Izard was fully satisfied.

[5. LYNCHBURG AND WASHINGTON: 1818–1825]

Having decided on removing to Lynchburg, as a better place for my practice and also further education of my children, I also made sale of my residence – Woodridge – for \$7,200 and my property after paying my debts, was worth upwards of \$30,000. Some essays on banking published in Lynchburg, which was then an interesting subject in the town, induced the citizens to appoint me one of three commissioners to come on to

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Philadelphia for the purpose of getting a branch of the United States Bank for that town. We came on, but were unsuccessful, as we ought to have been, but this short visit impressed me so favorably that I decided on making it my future residence, whenever my income should justify it. This was in 1817, and it was in 1845, twenty eight years afterwards before I carried this purpose into execution.

The purchase on Staunton and Pig River was considered by all persons as a very advantageous one, and Dr. Cocke, to whom our bonds for the purchase money were assigned offered me 12,000 or \$14,000 profit on our bargain soon after it was made. It proved indeed to have been a very good bargain, but there were two circumstances which subsequently deducted largely from its value. One was that the land, instead of reaching 12 or 13 thousand acres, as we were informed, contained but 8,500 – and as we had preferred not buying it by the acre, we could obtain no compensation for the deficiency. The other was that the Executor of David Ross, the former owner, maintained that it had not been legally sold under the deed of trust, and had a suit depending to set aside the sale. As this claim interfered with the partial sales which we wished to make of the large tract, we were obliged to buy up the claim, and had to give the Executor \$7,000 for a claim which proved in fact to be worthless, as the Court subsequently decided, but with these drawbacks, the sale proved a profitable one.

I should also add that before I left Pittsylvania I purchased three Danville lots, in a recent addition to the town for less than \$400 – and the spirit of speculation having then seized the people in that part of the country, the lots began rapidly to advance in price, and in twelve months after I bought them, I could have sold them for \$10,000 – and should have done so, but for a repugnance to be regarded as a speculator. I however could not resist the temptation to disposing of a portion of my interest and sold portions of the lots – amounting to about one fourth – for \$2,500, which I actually received.

In March 1818, after a residence of 10 years in the county of Pittsylvania, I removed with my family to Lynchburg, then a busy and thriving town of about 3,000 inhabitants. My family then consisted of a wife and five children – a son and four daughters. My son, Daniel George, after some schooling at home and in the neighbourhood and in Albemarle, had been sent to the College of Chapel Hill, in North Carolina. He showed a good genius, and by the essays which I required him to write by way of exercise, a depth of reflexion above his years. My over-anxious desire for his advancement had made me overtask his mind at a very early age, which had probably contributed to give him a subsequent distaste for study, as he never distinguished himself at college either at Chapel Hill or William and Mary afterwards. My daughter Rosalie then 13 was all that a parent could desire in person, mind, and disposition. Maria our second daughter had not her character then developed, but its distinguishing feature was her love and

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admiration for her eldest sister – her guide in all things. Eliza and Leila were but 10 and 8 years of age.⁴⁰ My property which after the sales of my land in Pittsylvania I estimated at about \$40,000 was, by a liberal valuation, after the purchase on Staunton since called Derward, I considered to be worth nearly double. The reputation of now having a competent estate, threw much of the profitable business of collecting into my hands, and the clients which I had in the counties wherein I had practised, promised me a fair share of the business in the chancery and other courts in Lynchburg. The change was a very grateful one to all my family – and I looked to the future with the brightest hopes. They were Alas! soon sadly blasted. In that very year our dear Rosalie, the pride and joy of our lives fell, like Harriet, a victim to the whooping cough. A portrait painter, who chanced to be then in Lynchburg, enabled us to have her likeness taken after death. I found some consolation in portraying her rare virtues in a little volume of Recollections, copies of which I distributed among her female friends, all of whom were warmly attached to her.⁴¹

In the following spring, when my practice had become profitable and was increasing, I was invited to become a candidate for Congress, John Kerr, the former representative having become unpopular by voting for changing the per diem compensation of \$6 a day to a salary of \$1,500. Soon after my purpose was known I was told by a friend just from Richmond that on a proposition to make me President of a bank in Lynchburg, it had been stated on the floor that I had been a delinquent to the Trustees of the Richmond Academy, and I further heard that the same report was circulating in the congressional District. I set off for Richmond the next day, and addressing a letter to the speaker on the subject, complained of the calumny, and asked for an investigation. The same was given and on the most satisfactory evidence, that I had become a temporary debtor of the Trustees with their consent, and secured them by a deed of trust, and had finally paid them all that I owed. The Member who had made the injurious statement, on the evidence I adduced, retracted it on the floor, and my vindication was thus placed on record, in the proceeding of the House. I had a printed account of the whole affair circulated in the district,⁴² and having thus repelled the

⁴⁰ Tucker's six children are as follows: Daniel George Tucker (1802–1838), Eleanor Rosalie Tucker (1804–1818), Maria Farley Tucker (1805–1893), Eliza Lewis Carter Tucker (1808–1893); Mary Leila Tucker (1810–1851); Harriet Washington Tucker (1813–1816).

⁴¹ George Tucker, *Recollections of the life of Eleanor Rosalie Tucker: addressed to her surviving sisters*. Lynchburg: Printed for the author [by James Boyce], 1818, 45 p.

⁴² George Tucker, *The following letter, with the accompanying documents, were received in the House of Delegates on the 2d day of March 1819: and they are now printed with a view of affording to the public the same satisfactory explanation that was afforded to that honorable body*. Richmond: 1819, [3] p.

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calumny, I was elected by a handsome majority, with not much electioneering, and without any of the ordinary expense of treating and the like.

In December 1819, I took my seat in the House of Representatives, being then forty four years of age. The Missouri question, which had been brought at the previous session by John Taylor of New York was discussed, and for the first time exhibited the fearful character of that question which divides the United States into two parties separated by a geographical line. It brought upon the floor every member who was in the habit of speaking, and some who were not – among which last I class myself. While the interesting subject was debated in the committee of the whole, I thought I could present some arguments for the unconditional admission of Missouri which had not been previously argued, and I decided to take a part in the debate. For which purpose I prepared a speech with care, and aimed to get the floor, but bolder and more experienced members were before me until the house became extremely weary of the discussion, and was vociferous for the question. I at length obtained the floor, (though in strictness Felix Walker of North Carolina preceded me) and delivered my speech from memory.⁴³ The members present were hardly 50, but I was encouraged by finding that I was listened to with attention – with the exception of one of my colleagues, John Randolph⁴⁴ – who left the Hall. The next day I received high compliments on my success from several quarters – and among them from Henry Clay,⁴⁵ who said that he greatly regretted he had not heard it, as he had been told it was the ablest speech which had been delivered on the subject – and it was one of the small number selected by Niles⁴⁶ to exhibit the character of the debate. Yet this speech, so extolled by others, was represented by Randolph to Dr. Brockenbrough as a failure. He himself had signally failed – and as he was then ill affected towards me, and had endeavoured to injure me in the district (which was adjoining to his own) he denounced it because it had won the praises of others – and during the greater part of the time which I served in Congress, I scarcely ever said anything in Congress which did not provoke his opposition.

About this time when I began to find some return of my pecuniary difficulties, in consequence of my purchase on Staunton, they were greatly and unexpectedly increased by the situation of Mr. Carter, my wife's father. He had sold out his land in Fredrick at a disadvantage – his family being very

⁴³ George Tucker, *Speech of Mr. Tucker, of Virginia, on the restriction of slavery in Missouri Delivered in the House of Representatives of the United States, February 25, 1820.* [Washington? 1820], 20 p.

⁴⁴ John Randolph (1773–1833), U.S. Representative from Virginia.

⁴⁵ Henry Clay (1777–1852), U.S. Representative and Senator from Kentucky, and unsuccessful candidate for the presidency.

⁴⁶ Hezekiah Niles (1777–1839), journalist and founder of *Niles' Weekly Register*.

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sickly on the Shenandoah – had made a purchase of an estate in Culpepper, which he found he was not able to keep, and after selling it and receiving for the great part of it Kentucky lands, he owed debts which the residue of his property was scarcely able to meet. He therefore concluded to migrate with a small number of negroes to Kentucky. This was a heavy affliction to my Maria, whose attachment to her mother was unbounded – and to spare him the necessity of thus banishing himself from Virginia, I offered to let him have a settlement on the Deerwood lands, and had previously proposed to make him a partner in the purchase. If his remaining property would not enable him to make the purchase, I offered him a gratuitous settlement for the life of himself and his wife, and an invitation to himself and his children to take up his abode with us until I could put up a comfortable tenement for him at Deerwood. The last part of the offer was accepted, and his family remained as our guests for some time, and finally found a plain but comfortable home at Deerwood. Mr. Lawrence Lewis, Mrs. Carter's brother had purchased some 10 or 12 of Mr. Carter's slaves, and he conveyed them to me in trust for his sister, and for some time with a part of them and some of my own, we worked a plantation on our joint account. I had previously procured the place of cadet at West Point for their son Fielding, and another Farley studied law with me. In these arrangements I was obliged to make frequent advances of money, which tho' I was afterwards reimbursed, occasioned me much inconvenience at the time. I was a further loser, by not having received the whole of what Mr. Carter was to pay as his daughter's marriage portion by more than 1,500. Some smaller purchases of land, bought with a view of profit, but which proved unfortunate, increased my difficulties, and before I left Congress, I was in the same thralldom of debt as I had extricated myself a few years before.

My means were also reduced by my failing to receive two thirds of the purchase money of Deerwood – upwards of \$5,000 – as I had to repurchase the property under the deed of trust, and it remained several years on my hands before I could sell it at a reduced price. The first two years that I was in Congress, my wife spent a part of the time with me – for we had been accustomed to very short separations, and my per diem allowance, instead of yielding any surplus was absorbed in my expenses. My practice too was fast leaving me by my going to Congress, and I half determined to quit public life. I however offered again, and against a feeble opponent obtained an immense majority. The first session I had been a member of the Judiciary Committee. In the third, having done nothing after the first year to advance my reputation, I was made chairman of the committee on the expenditures of the war Department, which I regarded as a downward step in scale of honor. I however applied myself with diligence to the discharge of its duties, and made a report which contained some important developments. One was the famous Rip Rap Contract but which bearing hard upon some indi-

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viduals, it was laid on the table and never afterwards acted on. Besides that my pecuniary engagements and difficulties somewhat unfitted my mind for the current business of legislation, I spent all the leisure hours that were not given to society in playing chess, to which to my shame and lasting regret, I was then passionately devoted. I had then a livelier ambition to be a great chess player than to be a distinguished member of Congress. General Brown of the army and Commodore Chauncey of the navy chanced to be my fellow lodgers, and they being almost as fond of chess as I was, I was ever playing with one or the other. I remember when having one day made some off-hand remarks on a subject brought before the house, when judge Hopkinson of Philadelphia,⁴⁷ having the privilege of the floor as a former member, came up to me and said, "Mr. Tucker, you ought to speak oftener in this House. You don't do justice to yourself."

I decided on publishing the essays which during my third session of Congress had already appeared in the Portfolio, and to add a few others long since written, so as to make an 8^{vo}. volume. Its title was "Essays, written by a citizen of Virginia",⁴⁸ which was apparently well received by the small class of readers who have a taste for grave speculations. My son, with whose progress at William and Mary I was greatly dissatisfied, I had now sent to Cambridge, where his expenses contributed to enhance my difficulties, tho' he unfortunately exhibited no greater fondness for study, or ambition to attain the reputation he was fairly entitled to. But when the fourth session approached my mind was engrossed by my anxieties about my beloved wife. She was again in the way to increase her family, and her sufferings and danger from child-bearing had gradually become greater, she had strong forebodings that she would not survive the present occasion. My efforts to encourage her were ineffectual, and in a solitary walk one evening at Deerwood, she spoke most solemnly and affectingly on the subject, and adverted to her feelings "after twenty years of unalloyed happiness." This was a little before I set out for Congress. I set out then with a heavy heart – hoping for a favorable result, but still more fearful of it. Early in January I was informed of her illness, at the birth of a child. I obtained leave of absence, and before I reached home received intelligence of her death. My sufferings were enhanced, if anything could enhance them, by my efforts to conceal my sobs and tears from those whom I passed on my journey. I felt heartbroken, and would willingly have parted with life but from a sense of duty to my children. I sought consolation in reading religious books and to

⁴⁷ Joseph Hopkinson (1770–1842) U.S. Representative from Pennsylvania from 1815–1819 and later federal judge.

⁴⁸ George Tucker, pseudonym "A Citizen of Virginia," *Essays on various subjects of taste, morals, and national policy*, Georgetown, D.C.: J. Milligan, 1822, xi, 350 p.

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some extent found it. I found no small solace from looking at and handling a silk handkerchief, which my beloved Maria, invalid as she was, had bought and hemmed for me just before I left home. I subsequently lost this precious memorial, and no loss of a diamond pin, of which I had had several, was half so regretted.

In a few weeks after this cruel blow, I was applied to to know if I should again be a candidate for Congress at the election in the ensuing Spring. The application was made by a little clique who wished to make a vacancy for one of themselves. I could not but feel some indignation at their want of delicacy and feeling, and answered that I had not decided. When the spring came on I announced myself again a candidate, and was elected without opposition.

On my way to Washington in December, by way of Richmond, meeting with an empty carriage going to the same place, I agreed with the driver for a seat in it, leaving my horse to be led by my servant. Suffering severely from toothache I took out my purse or wallet, which contained some opium, and in my habitual heedlessness and distraction of mind managed, as I suppose, to drop my bank bills in the carriage. I missed them as soon as I got out of the carriage, but the driver professed entire ignorance of them, and neither threats nor offers of reward could induce him to change his tone. I was therefore compelled to borrow money of my friend Rootes to defray my expenses to Washington. It mortifies me to add that this was the third time I had lost money to the amount of \$300 or upwards, making in all nearly a thousand dollars – once by losing my pocket book in the road – once by leaving it in my great coat at an evening party in Richmond, and the third time by dropping it in the bottom of the carriage – to say nothing of losing similar sums on two or three other occasions, when the money was found by honest persons and returned. This heedlessness I had from a child, and during my practice of the law, I strewed the upper country with umbrellas, gloves, toothbrushes, handkerchiefs, pencils and knives.

The loss of my money in the carriage was insignificant compared with the consequences to which it led. I had occasionally played whist at Washington as well as chess – but not habitually, and always at a moderate rate. But smarting under the self-reproach of not having taken care of my money I conceived the absurd purpose of trying to regain it at whist – with which view I played at a higher rate. I played with the members of Congress of our mess. It so happened that one of the members from Pennsylvania introduced among us a friend of his of decent appearance and manners, and after playing a few games, and some mutual banter between that member and myself, it was agreed that a member from South Carolina and myself should play against the Pennsylvanian and his friend. We afterwards learnt on good authority that this man was a notorious swindler and our own observations had led us to the same inference. He had a very slow and peculiar manner of

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dealing the cards, and when he dealt, he and his partner always counted honors. The suspicions of my partner, Mr. Carter, were first excited, and he repeatedly called for fresh cards. The result was that I lost nearly a thousand dollars. Carter, as he afterwards told me, refused to pay what he had lost, on the ground that this man was known to be a cheat. I did not go so far, but proposed to the Pennsylvania member on the strength of Carter's example to make a deduction from the amount I had lost, to which he consented. This affair shows that the precaution to play with none but gentlemen, which had always governed me, is not always sufficient to prevent one from becoming the prey of sharpers. This man wore spectacles by which I presume he was enabled to see the marks or scratches made on particular cards while he was dealing.

My losses made a most unseasonable addition to my debts. I had endeavoured to obtain a deduction from the purchase money of the Staunton land, on the ground, that altho' I had not bought by the acre, yet as the quantity was so much short of what *both parties* believed it to be, a court of chancery ought to relieve me on account of the *mistake*. The court decided against me, and unable to raise the money which had been suspended, a third of my Deerwood land was sold under the deed of trust. It sold however for a tolerably fair price.

At this my last session 1824–1825 – I had been persuaded by Stevenson the speaker to move for a select committee on the claim of Beaumarchais⁴⁹ against the United States. This question had frequently been before Congress, some half a dozen reports or more had been made on it, half in its favor and half against – and my ambition was excited to point out a course which would reconcile the conflicting objections, and thus bring the question to a close. I had a very able committee, and in the midst of my card and chess playing gave a thorough examination of this copious subject, made an elaborate report,⁵⁰ in which I agreed with the opponents of the claim that the supplies on which Beaumarchais' claim was founded had been actually furnished by France, yet inasmuch as we received them and had never paid for them, we were bound in honor not to insist with the French government that these supplies were *a gift*, but should admit that they were *a debt*, and pay that debt to the person to whom they said it was properly due, who was Beaumarchais. The subject was discussed in the House, and being warmly and ably opposed, it was rejected in the House tho' settlement was afterwards provided for by treaty in correspondence with the recommendation of the report, and Beaumarchais' biography recently published

⁴⁹ Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (1732–1799), wealthy French author who provided arms for American revolutionaries.

⁵⁰ George Tucker, *Speech of Mr. Tucker, of Va., on the claim of the heirs of Beaumarchais*. Washington, Gales and Seaton, [1824?] 10 p.

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shews that the supplies furnished by him were actually obtained from the government stores, as the report had maintained.

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1824–5. While I was thus wasting my time I received a message from Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison, offering me the place of Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Virginia, then about to go into operation, and whom the other Visitors had given authority to appoint the Professors. Thinking the appointment one not to be hastily accepted or rejected, I asked until the rising of Congress (on the 4th of March) to make my decision – and promised to call on Mr. Jefferson on my way home.

After some deliberation, I decided to accept the place offered to me. I passed my time at Washington in agreeable society. I had no opposition in my district, and I was not without hopes of yet taking a more prominent part in debate. It was also possible that I might obtain some foreign mission, the only public office I coveted. These considerations advised my rejection. On the other hand the salary afforded a certain and an adequate and certain support for my family, would give to myself if not to my children a more congenial society than we enjoyed in Lynchburg, and I might be enabled to cultivate letters, to which I was then strongly inclined, to more advantage. I therefore was disposed to accept – and calling at Monticello, Mr. Jefferson, whose address and powers of pleasing were very great, so favorably represented the life I should lead, that I no longer hesitated, and at the succeeding courts of my district, announced my purpose to my constituents, and expressed my gratitude to them for their previous support.

[6. CHARLOTTESVILLE: 1825–1739]

My family now consisted of my son and three daughters, of a sister and her daughter whom I had invited over from Bermuda, after the death of my wife, and in the spring of 1825, I took possession of the Pavillion at the University assigned to my chair. I was then in my 50th year, and about to enter on a new line of duty, for which I felt myself to be unqualified by my previous studies, as I frankly stated to Mr. Jefferson – but he made light of my objection, which he regarded as merely temporary. I always supposed that the volume of Essays which I had published, and of which I had learnt that both Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison had spoken highly, had induced them to appoint me – and possibly the farewell address to Mr. Madison by the Virginia legislature may have also contributed its part.

My associates consisted of four Englishmen and a German who had been procured by a special agent, Francis Gilmer, sent to England, and Dr. John P. Emmet an Irishman.⁵¹ The law professor, who was F. Gilmer, with myself

⁵¹ Francis Walker Gilmer (1790–1826) professor of law; John Patton Emmet

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made 8 professors, and I was chosen the first chairman or presiding officer. Convinced as I was of my insufficient acquaintance with the subjects on which I was required to lecture, I very assiduously applied myself to their study, and read and wrote to a late hour in the night, so as sometimes to apprehend from the grotesque images that floated before my fancy when I retired to rest, that my brain might be seriously affected. My colleagues were all agreeable well-informed men, and had all travelled in foreign countries. We were very sociable often dining and passing the evening together, and the life which we then led, tho' seemingly monotonous and devoid of interest, has no doubt appeared to all, on a retrospect, one of the happiest portions of our lives.

In the preceding summer, 1824, I was tempted to try my hand at a novel – the extraordinary success of Walter Scott stimulating my ambition, as well as that of many others. It had long appeared to me that every country afforded abundant materials for this class of writings in the delineation of national manner, habit, and character. I still continued in the practice of the law, and regularly attended four courts, yet I managed, by profiting by every interval not engrossed by business to finish a novel “The Valley of Shenandoah”⁵² – in two months, it having been begun on the 1st of July, and ended on the 31st August. Conscious of its imperfections, and doubtful of its success, I wished to make an experiment on the public taste without being known as its author. I went to New York, and attempted a negotiation with Harpers, even then great publishers – but it was unavailing. A passage in our chaffering has often since afforded matter of amusement to both parties. The work having been so hastily written and never transcribed was much altered and interlined, so as to in some places difficult to decipher, and almost unintelligible. They offered me \$500 for the work, if I would remain in New York and superintend the printing, to which I objected. As an excuse for not offering more liberal terms, one of them, the eldest partner, said, “Why, we shall have to give a man fifty dollars to read your book” – “Oh”, said I, “what chance have you then to sell it if you have to hire a man to read it?” Thus failed, I applied to Charles Wiley, who then printed Cooper’s novels,⁵³ and ranked high in the trade; and we agreed that the book should

(1797–1842) professor of Chemistry. Tucker’s other colleagues included George Long (1800–1879) professor of ancient languages, Thomas Hewett Key (1799–1875) professor of mathematics, Charles Bonnycastle (1796–1840) professor of natural philosophy, Robley Dunglison (1798–1869) professor of anatomy and medicine, George Blaetterman professor of modern languages.

⁵² George Tucker, pseudonym “A Citizen of Virginia,” *The valley of Shenandoah; or, Memoirs of the Graysons*. New York, C. Wiley, 1824, 2 v.

⁵³ Around this time Charles Wiley published the following works of James Fenimore Cooper: *The Spy* (1821), *The Pilot* (1823), *The Pioneers* (1823), and *Tales for Fifteen* (1823).

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be printed at our joint expense and joint profit. Under this agreement I became responsible for the paper, and Wiley having soon afterwards failed, I received nothing from him but some hundreds of copies which I distributed very partially, and some of which I still have. The work may be regarded as a failure. It had the disadvantage of ending unhappily, and its catastrophe was offensive to Virginia pride. It was moreover so incorrectly printed that there is not perhaps a single page which is free from error. It was however reprinted in London – and was translated into German, and I decided to make another attempt in the same line, in which I would bestow that labor which I was now satisfied was indispensable to success. But my new position as Professor gave to my studies and pen a very different direction.

Of the eight professors who constituted the Faculty, no one had ever been a professor before, and but one, Dr. Blaetterman, had ever been a teacher – and our want of skill in the management of young men, was soon but too manifest. We were all of opinion a system of great restraint or even of much regulation was unwise, and we went to the other extreme of leaving the students the sole regulators of their own conduct. I remember hearing one of the English professors declare that he cared nothing about a student's drinking or gaming, provided he performed his college exercises. With this implied license, the students gradually became more and more irregular and disorderly in their habits, and their excesses were annoying to the neighbours, and were greatly exaggerated by them. Having made a short excursion to Lynchburg, on my return I stopped at the house of a friend in Albemarle, and there chanced to meet three or four individuals from different quarters, all of whom spoke of the crying disorders of the students, which it seemed were a topic of general complaint and denunciation. I reached the University in the evening, and repeating to my associates what I had heard, urged on them the necessity of interposing our authority, especially to repress the vices of drinking and gaming – which the public would expect from us – these being the rocks on which so many youth in Virginia, and in all slave-holding States, had been wrecked. After a while a party of students in disguise, marched about the lawn, as they had often done before, inviting and defying the notice of the Faculty. Dr. Emmet who chanced to be at my house, and myself went out to try the effect of our remonstrances and to bring the offenders, when ascertained, before the faculty. Emmet in attempting to take hold of one of them, got into a boxing match with him. When I attempted to join them and to remonstrate with them – “They advised me to go to my logic” – and soon afterwards on my persisting in attending and reprehending them, one of them took up a piece of the brush with which the lawn was then covered to protect the young grass, and seemed to threaten me with personal violence, and some others followed his example, on which I determined to try the effect of appealing to their pride. “Gentlemen”, I said, “you seem as if you meant to use violence against me.

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What can I do against you all?" and then folding my arms, I said, "If *you are mean enough* to do so, you are welcome" – on which they all threw down the brush and dispersed. The next day such of the rioters as were known were summoned before the faculty, and the principal offenders were dismissed. These punishments were the worse borne for our previous indulgence, and a spirit of insubordination was openly manifested. Some of the more disorderly and resentful threatened violence to the professors. This had so much effect as to induce the faculty to apply to Mr. Jefferson the rector, and to offer their resignation unless protection could be secured to them by legislative provision. It so happened that the annual meeting of the visitors was then held at Monticello. The consequence of our application was that the next day the visitors went to the University and were addressed by Mr. Jefferson and other members of the Board. Their appeal to the students induced them to give up the names of such of the offenders as were not known to the Faculty, after which, under the persuasions of the Visitors, the Professors withdrew their resignations, acted on those students whose names had been given up, and reinstated the rest. This riot, in the infancy of the University, had an unhappy influence on its success, and we heard from all quarters of persons who had previously intended to send their sons to it, but had now been induced to change their purpose.

One of the memorable incidents of the first year, was a visit from La Fayette. He had called on Mr. Jefferson the year before, and the recommendation to Congress to make him a liberal donation having first appeared in the Charlottesville paper, had no doubt been the suggestion of Jefferson. A dinner was provided for him in the Rotunda by subscription, and I had the pleasure of treating him to some fine old Madeira that I chanced then to possess, and which he relished very highly.

The following year, 1826, Mr. Jefferson died on the 4th of July, the fiftieth anniversary of the declaration of American Independence which he had drawn, and which was thus associated with his name for ever; and what was so much more extraordinary, according to the doctrine of chances, Mr. Adams, who was one of the same committee to declare independence, died on the same day. Mr. Jefferson's funeral was not numerously attended, considered the esteem of his countrymen and the stations he had held, but was as much so as the dispersion of people and the short notice of his death permitted. His agreeable society and hospitality were greatly missed by the professors and the University lost its greatest attraction. He was succeeded as Rector by Mr. Madison.

F. Gilmer the professor of law died before he was able to enter on the duties of his office, and the place was conferred on John T. Lomax, who joined University at the second session.⁵⁴ The subject of political economy

⁵⁴ John Tayloe Lomax (1781–1862) professor of law.

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had been assigned to the law professor, and understanding from him that he was not particularly desirous of lecturing on it, and that his other duties would be sufficient to occupy the whole of his time, I applied to the Board to assign the subject to the chair of Moral Philosophy which was done; and after a temporary use of Say⁵⁵ as a text book I prepared a full course of lectures on the subject, which had always been a favorite one with me. I took the same course with the like success as to the subjects of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, which had been assigned to the Professor of Ancient Languages, George Long, who did not incline to lecture on them. These two subjects being added to my department gave it an additional number of students, though its number was still very inferior to the average number, so as to make its emoluments considerably less. My chair had this inherent disadvantage at that day, the younger students generally entered the schools of languages and Mathematics, and most of the elder students, anxious to prepare themselves for a profession, were students of law or medicine exclusively. This was one of the consequences of allowing every student to attend what professor he pleased. In process of time however, I succeeded in obtaining the average number.

Having found my life of solitude unbearable I decided on changing it, and after one or two efforts to change it, I at length married Louisa A. Thompson whose maiden name was Bowdoin, and who altho' then residing Baltimore was a native of the Eastern shore of Virginia, and in whom I found the same warm and devoted affection I had been previously blest with. We were married in December 1828 – after a widowhood of nearly 5 years.

The year before I published in New York a little work called “The Voyage to the Moon”⁵⁶ in which I aimed to notice the errors of the day in science and philosophy. Cooper put forth a similar satire a year or two afterwards which was supposed to be an imitation of it.⁵⁷ Bliss the publisher printed 1000 copies which he soon sold, for which I received but \$100 and some copies.

A year or two after marriage I encountered one of the heaviest afflictions of my life. My son who had for some time shewn himself more than usually

⁵⁵ Jean Baptiste Say (1767–1832), perhaps *A treatise on political economy; or, The production, distribution and consumption of wealth*. Philadelphia, J. Grigg, 1827, lvi, 455 p.

⁵⁶ George Tucker, pseudonym “Joseph Atterley,” *A voyage to the moon; with some account of the manners and customs, science and philosophy, of the people of Morosofia, and other lunarians*. New York, E. Bliss, 1827, iv, 264 p.

⁵⁷ Tucker is probably referring to James Fenimore Cooper’s satiric novel *The Monikins* (1835), in which the hero travels to Antarctica where he finds it populated by two nations of monkeys who mimic the ways of England and America respectively.

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selfwilled and regardless of advice, gave manifest symptoms of unsoundness of mind, and when the fact could no longer be doubted, he was conveyed to the hospital in Philadelphia, where he continued several years, during which time I performed the painful duty of making him several visits. He died in October 1838. He had previously made a visit to the West, with a view of settling himself, and very soon after gave evidence of a disordered mind. He had before that been a candidate for the legislature in Pittsylvania, and acquitted himself very well as a public speaker.

The subsequent notices on my life will be principally of my publications, as my pen was never long unexercised either in writing books or for the newspapers or periodicals.

In 1827⁵⁸ I published a small volume on Rent, wages, and profits.⁵⁹ I had considered that the theory on these subjects, as given by Ricardo, was incorrect as to their causes, though ingenious. That the diversity of soils, tho' very well marking the diversity and the progress of rent, was no element of its cause, rent being as certain to follow if all land was uniform in its quality as where it was diverse. That the fall of wages was the necessary consequence of the rise of rent – the two being parts of the same series of changes in the progress of Society; and lastly that the rate of interest depended on the proportion between the amount of accumulated capital and the demand for it. By way of supporting my views by a reference to authentic facts, I addressed a series of queries to the members of the Senate, as to the prices and rents of land, the rates of labour and of the necessaries of life in their respective states, and their answers having been digested with a table, afforded confirmation of my theory. I am not aware that I acquired much reputation by this work. It being published at my own expense, it had a very limited circulation, and saving some short notices in the newspapers, was neither praised nor blamed. The self love of an author has sometimes found consolation in the maxim that "men must be taught as though you taught them not" – But I am far from being satisfied with its correctness. Though an author's rivals and acquaintances may refuse to receive his instructions, yet the public in general is not so fastidious, and it lends a willing ear to one who imparts a new truth, corrects an old error, or who even makes clearer and plainer what was before known. There are however casualties which advance or retard an author's success, independent of his real merit, much more than the willingness or unwillingness of the public to receive instruction. This book, having been printed in Philadelphia under the revision of a friend, contains many errors.

⁵⁸ The manuscript clearly reads "1827", although Tucker undoubtedly meant 1837.

⁵⁹ George Tucker, *The laws of wages, profits and rent, investigated*. Philadelphia, E.L. Carey and A. Hart, 1837, x, 189 p.

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The next work which I undertook was a life of Jefferson.⁶⁰ His representatives, by their indiscriminating publication of his letters, had given great offence to individuals of whom he had spoken freely, and had thus aroused against him much of that enmity which a few years before his death appeared to have died away. I was therefore desirous of placing his virtues and his services in a true light before his countrymen, and at the same time drawing a veil over his errors and defects to which I was not blind. This work went to press in 1836. It was printed by Carey Lea and Blanchard who agreed to pay me 50 cents a volume – the edition to be 2000 copies. It was of course ill received by the Federal party, and the conservatives among the Whigs, and such was deemed its mischievous political tendency that the *Quarterly Review* of Philadelphia, then under the influence of that party, thought it prudent not to notice it. It however succeeded well with the rising generation, and I have been assured by those likely to know that it decided the politics of the young men in Philadelphia, and in different parts of New England. A notice in a New York paper, in which personal kindness had induced the writer to overrate its merits, gave me a taste of the pleasures of authorship which I had never before, nor have ever since enjoyed – tho' I have often been a successful writer. My book was reprinted in England, and my friend Andrew Stevenson told me that Lord Brougham⁶¹ remarked to him that I had changed his opinion of Mr. Jefferson, against whom he had entertained a strong prejudice. I was afterwards informed that it proved a losing speculation to the publishers Charles Knight. My book was dedicated to Mr. Madison, from whom I had derived much information in writing it, and the last time he put pen to paper, was in signing the answer which he dictated to his amanuensis, and in franking it. He died the next day June 28th, in his 86th year. He had been an especial favorite with me ever since I had known him, for independent of his profound and far-reaching views in the science of government and legislation, he had unwonted gentleness and suavity of manner, which joined to a large fund of anecdote which he told very well, made him one of the most companionable men in existence. His habitual cheerfulness was the more remarkable as Dr. Grymes, his physician, told me that to his knowledge Mr. Madison had been for 20 years afflicted by three diseases any one of which might at any moment have carried him off. Mr. Jefferson too had most winning manners when he chose to exert them, but he was occasionally somewhat dictatorial and impatient of contradiction, which Mr. Madison never appeared to be.

⁶⁰ George Tucker, *The life of Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States With parts of his correspondence never before published, and notices of his opinions on questions of civil government, national policy, and constitutional law.* Philadelphia, Carey, Lea and Blanchard, 1837, 2 v.

⁶¹ Henry Brougham, review of Tucker's *Life of Thomas Jefferson*, in *Edinburgh Review*, October 1837, Vol. 66, pp. 156–186.

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During my residence at the University, I was a frequent writer for the newspapers on subjects of politics or Political economy; and there were few topics of great public interest which did not afford exercise for my pen. I sometimes wrote for the *National Intelligencer*⁶² of Washington City, and sometimes for the Richmond papers, but occasionally for obscurer journals. I also contributed some articles to the *Quarterly Review* edited by Robert Walsh, and among them, strictures on General Jackson and in defence of the United States bank.⁶³ In consequence of this article I received a complimentary letter from Mr. Nicholas Biddle, the President, who informed me that the Bank had concluded to reprint the article in the pamphlet form, and distribute it, as they had done an article of Mr. Gallatin's, and that copies should be sent to such persons as I should name. I accordingly sent him a list of friends to whom I wished it to be sent and these copies constituted all the remuneration which I received from the bank. The publisher had previously paid me the regular price of two dollars the page – tho' it was more than once intimated in congress and elsewhere that the bank had hired writers to assail the President, as if I had been in that category.

Soon after I went to the University, the Professors agreed to set up a weekly journal of which Dr. Duglison and myself were to be the editors, each on alternate weeks.⁶⁴ We continued for a year, and finding that it had but a limited circulation, and consequently was not profitable it was discontinued. All the professors, or nearly all, wrote papers for it, but Duglison and myself were the principal contributors as we were bound to make up on our respective weeks all that was not furnished by the correspondents. It makes a volume 800 pages of large 8^{vo}.

When the University was about to go into operation the Visitors left the distribution of the duties of the Professors, and the regulations exclusively to Mr. Jefferson; not merely from a regard to his superior competence, but because as he was regarded as its founder, the responsibility for its success would fall principally on him. It had happened that there had been a constant state of altercation at William and Mary College between the President and the Professors, to avoid which Mr. Jefferson went to the opposite extreme, and allowed no controlling power whatever to the presiding officer, who was called the Chairman Of the Faculty. The more perfectly to remove all ground

⁶² Under the pseudonym "One of the Sovereign People," the following articles by Tucker appeared in the *National Intelligencer*: "The President's Late Act, No. 1" (October 9, 1833), "The President's Bank Manifesto, No. 2" (October 12, 1833), "The President's Late Manifesto, No. III" (October 16, 1833).

⁶³ George Tucker, "The Bank of the United States," in *American Quarterly review*, 1831, Vol. 9, pp. 246–282.

⁶⁴ *Virginia literary museum and journal of belles lettres, arts*, Charlottesville: F. Carr, Vol. 1, no. 1 (June 17, 1829); ceased with v. 1, no. 52 (June 9, 1830).

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of jealousy against this officer, thus divested of power, the office was to be held by every professor in succession for one year as they chanced to be elected by their associates. This plan soon proved to be Impracticable. It was found that persons may be very well qualified to teach, but too devoid of personal dignity or moral propriety to be at the head of the Institution, and the year after Mr. Jefferson's death, this enactment was changed, and the election of the Chairman was given to the Faculty without restriction. It was again changed, so as to give the annual appointment to the Visitors – and further duties having been imposed on the Chairman, he was allowed an additional salary of \$500.

About this time, 1837, I undertook, at the instance of my friend and former colleague George Long of London, the Geography of the United States,⁶⁵ to make part of a geography, which he and others had undertaken. It occupied much of my time, but I had the consolation that if my pecuniary compensation should prove insufficient I should be adequately remunerated by the large addition made to my knowledge of the United States. I had previously contributed to the Journal of Education, edited by Long, an article giving account of the schools and colleges of the United States.⁶⁶

In one of the excursions which I annually made to the north in the summer, I rather rashly made a purchase of Chicago lots for about \$3,000, instead of Illinois land, as I had intended – such a purchase having been recommended to me by the consideration that while such land was now in a frontier state with reference to the Atlantic States, and therefore of a low price at present, yet from its being on the Mississippi it was nearer to the great market of New Orleans than the States east of it, and that therefore that it must soon rise in price. But Mr. William L. May, then in Congress from Illinois, and a friend of his made so favorable a representation of Chicago and its prospects that I was induced to buy town lots there rather than land. The purchase, imprudent as I admit it to have been – it being made out to be in a steamboat of a man who was a stranger to me – turned out to be the best I ever made. At this time, 1858, about 20 years after I bought the property, it is probably worth more than twelve times as much as it cost. I persuaded my son-in-law, Gessner Harrison,⁶⁷ to be one fourth concerned in the purchase.

The next work that I published was on Money and banks.⁶⁸ It was princi-

⁶⁵ George Tucker, "United States of North America," in George Long, ed., *The Geography of America and the West Indies*, London: Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, 1841, xii, 648 p.

⁶⁶ George Tucker, "Education in Virginia," *Quarterly Journal of Education*, 1832, Vol. 4, pp. 49–71.

⁶⁷ Gessner Harrison was husband to Tucker's daughter Eliza Lewis Carter.

⁶⁸ George Tucker, *The theory of money and banks investigated*. Boston, C. C. Little and J. Brown, 1839, viii, 412 p.

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pally taken from my lectures on political economy. I offered it to the principal publishing houses in Philadelphia, and to Harpers of New York, who refused to print it at their cost, tho' I offered to pay the expense of the paper. As a last effort, however, I sent to Little and Brown of Boston a copy of its contents, and they readily agreed to publish 1000 copies at their expenses, and to pay me half the profits. The edition was soon sold, and they paid me \$400 for my share. The book was favorably noticed in the reviews.

At this time one of our former Students, who had migrated to Texas, wrote to Mr. Bonnycastle and myself that the public debt of Texas, bearing 10 per cent interest, was then greatly below par, and advised us to become purchasers of it. We accordingly each sent him two thousand dollars, for which we had been led to expect that we could each obtain stock to the amount of \$10,000. We however obtained \$5000 each and after one payment of the interest, the state regarding its poverty rather than its faith, suspended all further payments. They still, however, recognized the debt as carrying 19 per cent interest.

[7. EUROPEAN EXCURSION: 1839]

In the year 1838 the "Great Western" steamer,⁶⁹ crossed the Atlantic from England, and continued her voyages throughout the year. The practicability of navigating the ocean by steam, had been previously much discussed, and Dr. Lardner,⁷⁰ a successful writer and lecturer on physical science had undertaken to show that such navigation could never be profitable. It was however believed at the University that his reasoning was unsatisfactory, and we were all doubly gratified that it had been now disproved by experiment. I had previously decided that if it should succeed I would then gratify a wish I had all my life entertained of seeing Europe – especially England – and accordingly in the following year 1839, I obtained the permission of the Visitors to be absent for 3 months, and set off in the "Liverpool" from New York early in July – my wife not objecting to my own voyage, but being unwilling to encounter it herself. That day fortnight we dined in Liverpool as I had anticipated. To make the most of my time, I set off with a fellow passenger, who, being an old traveller, was very useful to me, to visit *Chester* an old town which is very curious and interesting for its antiquities, and in the neighbourhood of which are the remains of a Roman camp, built of brown stone. We visited also the Marquess of Westminster, whose noble seat gave me a fine specimen of the

⁶⁹ The Great Western Steamer, the first regular transatlantic steam ship, was in operation from 1838 through 1856 and, carrying around 150 passengers, made the voyage from New York to England in 15 days, half the time of sailing ships.

⁷⁰ Dionysius Lardner (1793–1859), Irish physicist and astronomer who lived in the United States from 1840–1845.

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grand and costly style in which some of the nobility live. I saw every thing with the liveliest interest. The feelings with which an American first sees England, which has been the scene of most of that of which he has read or heard, are necessarily very lively and delightful. The next night I reached London.

The recollection of the fact that one is in a city of more than two millions of people is of itself enough to excite a very lively interest, but when that city is London, about which every American has heard and read so much, the interest is intense, and his mind is distracted and overpowered by the crowd of recollections and of past impressions with which it is then filled. I stayed at Morley's in Charing Cross, and the next morning on looking out of my window I was struck with the busy stirring scene before me. Besides people moving in every direction, I was struck with the number and variety of the vehicles, and according to my old propensity of enumeration, I counted what were then within the sphere of my vision, and found them to be more than 50. After a late breakfast, I took a stroll in the streets, and saw much to awaken former associations. Among others I went to St. Paul's Church, and though disappointed in its appearance from its being so blackened by the coal smoke, I looked about for Newberry's bookstore which had furnished me with so much delightful reading in my childhood, and when I found it, I regarded it as if I had met an old friend. I knew the length of my walk only by the fatigue I experienced on my return to my Hotel. The first person I tried to see was my friend and former associate, Long, now Professor in the London University. I sent him a note by a porter, and learnt from him that there were three George Longs lawyers in London's Inn. I called also on my friend Stevenson, then minister from the United States, and learnt from him as well as Sir Robert Inglis⁷¹ to whom I brought a letter that my lodgings were not the most eligible, and by the advice of my traveling companion Higginson, removed to Fenton's in St. James' Street.

My first days were occupied in delivering introductory letters and in sight seeing, but it was only now and then that my letters had any other result than a formal exchange of cards. Among these letters however were two (to Lord Holland and Samuel Rogers the Poet)⁷² whose acquaintance I was particularly desirous of making. I went in a carriage to deliver them, and not using my spectacles by mistake, delivered to one the letter intended for the other – and I should not know of the mistake if Lord Holland had not mentioned that he had received my card with letter for Mr. Rogers to Mr. Webster and Mr. Stevenson who dined with him.⁷³

⁷¹ Robert Harry Inglis (1786–1855), Tory Parliamentarian.

⁷² Henry Richard, Lord Holland (1773–1840), Whig politician; Samuel Rogers (1763–1855), English poet.

⁷³ That is, Tucker would not have known about the mistake if Holland had not mentioned it to Webster and Stevenson who dined with him.

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I was made an honorary member of the Travellers and Athenaeum club, which I frequented to read the newspapers, but I made no acquaintances there. As Parliament was in session I attended out of curiosity and heard some of their best speakers. On one of these occasions Sheil,⁷⁴ the Irish orator, asked me how I found the speakers in Parliament compared with those of Congress. I told him they were so different in their style of speaking it was not easy to compare them – that our speakers generally aimed at declamation, while in Parliament, as I supposed, they did not relish, or would not endure it. “Oh”, said he, “that is a great mistake! – there is no place where declamation is more relished than the House of Commons provided it is not frothy declamation”. He himself, as is well known, was a very successful declaimer. I had perceived, as I thought, a great inferiority to the people of the United States as to fluency. But while many of the speakers in Parliament were awkward and hesitating in their delivery, they all spoke sensibly and to the purpose – nor would any speaker obviously wanting these substantial qualities, be tolerated. I met few men of note in the literary and scientific world, but among the few was Babbage, who invited me to breakfast, and offered to shew me, and a foreigner whom he had also asked, his calculating machine, which he said he had not shewn to his countrymen for two years.⁷⁵ I regretted that I had on that day engaged to go over to France, having decided on devoting 10 days to sight-seeing in Paris.

I accordingly arrived there by way of Boulogne, and took up my lodgings at the Hotel Meurice. I employed a *Valet de places*, and by his aid, saw all that is deemed most worthy the notice of strangers, with the exception of the porcelain manufacture at Sevres. I found no difficulty making myself understood, but did not succeed as well in understanding the natives. When however I chanced to meet with one who like myself was a foreigner in France, and who consequently spoke French with more deliberation, I was able to keep up a dialogue. Yet I did not doubt that in a few months I should have been able to speak and understand the language with facility. I was delighted with the opera, where I heard the same singers which I heard in England, and a still higher treat was to hear and see the famous Rachel, who far surpassed any performer on the stage that I had ever seen. It happened that the piece in which she appeared was one of Racine’s tragedies which I was most familiar with.⁷⁶ The mingled dignity and scorn with which, as *Andromache*, she repelled the suit of *Pyrrhus* were transcenden-

⁷⁴ Richard Lalor Sheil (1791–1851), Irish Parliamentarian.

⁷⁵ Charles Babbage (1791–1871), English mathematician who created a machine for computing mathematical operations.

⁷⁶ Mademoiselle Rachel, stage name of French actress Élixa Félix (1820–1858). Jean Racine (1639–1699), French playwright and author of *Andromache* (1667).

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tally great. Her forte seemed to be in the expression of the unamiable passions. I found Paris to be much cheaper than London – the difference appeared to be about that of a sovereign and a Napoleon. I called on General Cass – our minister – and was invited by him to dinner, which invitation I could not accept from the shortness of my stay. I was desirous of returning in the same steamer which brought me out – she having made two voyages in the interval, but found before I left London that all the berths were engaged, except some which had been offered in Paris. I accordingly lost no time in repairing to the proper office, and at the moment I entered, a gentleman came in and expressed a wish to give up the passage which he had engaged on the Liverpool, in her next trip to the United States. Some conversation then took place between him and the agent about what he should pay, when I immediately offered to take his place to which he readily conceding, the matter was adjusted and my passage home, which was on so many accounts desirable, was secured.

I saw nothing of French society during my brief visit. I had carried a letter to the duke de Broglie⁷⁷ from Mr. Clay, and he was out of Paris. Mr. Porter of the Board of trade had given me one to Baron Dupin, but I had by mistake left it in Paris, and though it was sent after me, I never received it. The impressions which I had previously conceived were confirmed that there was no place in the world in which the *agrémens* of life are so accessible at so little cost by an individual who lives only for himself – but that the sum of domestic enjoyments are far less there than in the United States, and probably than in England. My friend Robert Walsh, now some years a resident of Paris, was then absent. I passed much of my time with a Virginian who chanced to be in Paris with his family, and who was a captain in the British Army. He was the son of a gentleman, Mr. Wormely, who had joined the royal cause in the Revolution, and had left Virginia for England. As he had made a visit to Virginia to see his relatives there, we were able to converse on the same scenes and the same individuals; and I was able to profit by his experience in gratifying my curiosity.

On returning to London I stopped a day or two at the old Hummums,⁷⁸ by way of seeing a little variety, and I found the accommodations quite good. There was soon to be a meeting of the British Association, a Tournament given by [blank space] and a celebration at Dover in honor of the Duke of Wellington,⁷⁹ all about the same time. I decided on going to the

⁷⁷ Achille-Charles-Léo Broglie (1785–1870), French politician and prime minister from 1835 to 1836.

⁷⁸ The Hummums was a bathing house established in Covent Garden in 1631, which subsequently became a hotel.

⁷⁹ Arthur Wellesley, first duke of Wellington (1769–1852), prime minister of Great Britain from 1828–1830.

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first, where I should see all the scientific men of the nation assembled. In the mean time Parliament was to be prorogued, and the exhibition on that occasion was deemed worthy of being seen by one unused to such displays, I accordingly applied to Sir Robert Inglis for admission into the House of Commons, but he found that all the places were engaged, and proposed to me to take a stand on the leads of the House, where I could see the procession. I did so, and witnessed a gorgeous exhibition of fine coaches, liveries, guards etc. – but which seemed more fit to amuse a child than one of my age. I felt however a great desire to see the young queen,⁸⁰ and tho' I was not far from her when she got out of her carriage, my curiosity was but partially gratified. While I was there Mr. Sheil the Irish orator, who had just accepted the Chiltern Hundreds to take the appointment of Vice President of the Board of trade, came up, and having been told who I was, by Sir Robert Inglis, introduced himself to me, and entered into the conversation which has been already mentioned.

I duly arrived at Birmingham, where the British Association was held this year, and found that my friend Mr. Porter had already had me appointed on the statistical committee of which Mr. Hallam⁸¹ the Historian was the chairman. Lodgings, by reason of the crowds attracted to the town, were hard to be procured, and very dear. I lodged with Mr. Porter, Mr. Tooke,⁸² the author of the work on prices, whom I found to be a very amiable as well as sensible man on subjects of political economy, and a few others.

There were about 800 persons attending the British association. They were divided into 4 sections. On the second day on entering the room allotted to the [blank space] section, I found Dr. Gibson⁸³ of Philadelphia speaking, and that he was employed in defending the United States from the charge made by a Mr. Thompson for their harsh and unjust treatment of the Indians. When he saw me he appealed to me for confirmation of what he had said. Thus called upon, I was obliged to make some offhand remarks, and was fortunately able to state a proposition had been lately made in Congress to assign a territory for the exclusive use of the Indians, to allow them a delegate in Congress as the other territories, and after they had duly passed through this state of probation, to admit them into the Union – which proposition had not yet been finally acted on. I acquitted myself more

⁸⁰ Victoria was age 20 at this time and had been Queen for two years.

⁸¹ Henry Hallam (1777–1859), British historian and author of *The Constitutional History of England* (1827).

⁸² Thomas Tooke (1774–1858), British economist and author of *High and Low Prices* (1823).

⁸³ Perhaps John Bannister Gibson (1780–1853), Pennsylvania politician and judge, who received an honorary doctorate in 1839.

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to my own satisfaction than I had commonly done on such occasions. It is unnecessary to add that this project eventually failed, and from the colour of the Indians there seems to be some objection to admitting them to an equality with the whites: or at least the slave holding states are likely for a long time to come to make that objection. Whatever opinion may be entertained about the inferiority of the blacks, there seems to be no reason to infer any intellectual or moral inferiority in the Indians, except what may be referred to the circumstances of their condition.

On the whole I was much disappointed in this congregation of scientific men, and I told my friend Long that the three most disagreeable, most unprofitable and most expensive days I passed in England were those passed at the British association.

I dined with the Useful Knowledge Society. There were about 18 or 20 members present and Lord Brougham presided,⁸⁴ but I saw nothing to impress me favorably with him. He has intolerable vanity, and was constantly talking across the table to two Quakers who evidently were flattered by the distinction, and whose undisguised admiration seemed to be his lordship's great impulse to display his powers of speech and to talk of himself. After he rose from the table, I was made an honorary member of the society.

Wishing to see as much as I could of England, and having a letter to Lord Leicester (formerly Mr. Coke of Norfolk)⁸⁵ I set out first for York, where I visited the famous cathedral and thence to Holkham.⁸⁶ I passed two days there very pleasantly – finding the old Lord not only very sociable and unaffected, but extremely partial to Americans. He told me for instance that his House (as an object of curiosity) was open once a week to Englishmen, but every day to Americans – and when I took my leave, he requested me to introduce to him any of my American friends. He told me some anecdotes which shewed that the early fire of party feeling was not yet extinct in his bosom. When he came to this Estate, from an uncle – its rental per acre would not have exceeded 2 shillings and sixpence – but, in answer to my question, he said that it would then rent for 30 shillings and upwards. The House covers precisely one acre, and is embellished with some fine paintings, and yet more with specimens of sculpture procured by its former possessor. Lady Leicester's manner was as easy, natural and simple as her husband's. I rather think that my visit did not prove as satisfactory to the

⁸⁴ Brougham founded the "Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge" in 1825; the organization published the weekly *Penny Magazine* (1832–1846) and *Penny Cyclopaedia* (1833–1858).

⁸⁵ Thomas William Coke, Earl of Leicester (1754–1842), English agriculturalist.

⁸⁶ Built between the 13th and the 15th centuries, York's Cathedral of St. Peter is the largest Gothic church in England. Holkham Hall, in Norfolk, was designed in the Palladian style by British architect William Kent and constructed in 1734.

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menials as it apparently was to the master and mistress, for as I descended the steps to enter the stage coach there was a long line of servants on each side, who were entirely unnoticed in the only way that they probably cared to be – I having gone as far as prudence warranted in remunerating the servants who had given special attention to me.

I kept a hasty Journal during my absence from the United States, to which I should refer for a fuller and more accurate account of the incidents of my journey. Meanwhile I will state some of the leading impressions which England made on me. The beauty and high cultivation of the country, the magnificence of the fine country seats, and its opulence which no other nation has ever reached surpassed my expectation. The manners of the people fell short of it. Individuals, indeed, one often meets with who are at once hospitable and polite, and in the higher ranks, according to the few opportunities which I had of judging, there is the same mixture of ease, frankness and courtesy which characterize our Southern gentry, and especially of South Carolina. But in the great body of the people the distinction of ranks marked out by the laws has an injurious effect on the manners. Every one is looking up with deference and often with cringing self-abasement to those who are above them in the artificial scale of society which prevails, and with neglect and sometimes contempt on those who are below him. When therefore two persons meet who are strangers commonly one and sometimes both are shy of intercourse, or conversation – lest some loss of dignity should be incurred. I found, however, that as soon as it was known that I came from the United States, this shyness disappeared, and I accordingly made some very agreeable acquaintances among those whom I casually met with. The respect for rank is probably greater in England than in any other country – and as it is within the reach of all, and as every one, be his station what it may, may hope to rise far above his present condition, he is the better reconciled to his present inferiority, which may prove but temporary. Hope and ambition thus prevent or temper that envy of their superiors, which might otherwise arise in an intelligent community. One striking effect however of the excessive fear of losing caste, is that an American, so long as he is supposed to be an Englishman, is very likely to receive a rude answer to a civil question – so that I came to the conclusion that there were more churls in England than in all Europe besides. Of all the institutions that I was not familiar with, none pleased me so much as the police of London, and this, if nothing else, ought to immortalize Sir Robert Peel,⁸⁷ its author. They consist of young men of good character and

⁸⁷ Robert Peel (1788–1850), British prime minister and conservative leader, who, due to growing unpopularity, resigned his first prime minister appointment in 1835 – four years before Tucker's visit. In 1829 Peel initiated the Metropolitan Police Act, establishing London's first disciplined police force.

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manners, who are sufficiently numerous to have a supervision of every part of the metropolis, and of congregating, at a minute's notice, so as to put down any riot or disorder. They carry no weapon, and show no badge of office except an N^o. worked on the collars of their coats.⁸⁸ One of their prescribed duties is to give attention and assistance to strangers, and I so frequently applied to them for the information I wanted, that I came to regard the corps as a body of friends. From the few occasions in which I knew of their interposing to protect strangers from fraud or exaction, it appeared to me as if their authority commanded a more ready and thorough obedience from their having no arms or visible means of enforcing it. The power of the laws was better sustained by the imagination than the senses. We see this exemplified in the United States, where an unarmed constable may sometimes quell a riot. The honesty of the servants, in respectable hotels, of which I had several proofs, seemed also very remarkable both in London and Paris.

[8. CHARLOTTESVILLE: 1839–1845]

I returned to the United States after an absence of three months and a half, and had the satisfaction of finding my wife and children all well – and at the session of the University which had then begun, I had a larger class than ever before.

The following year was memorable at the University by the loss of three Professors. Bonnycastle died of a disease to which his father had been subject, and is said to be not uncommon with studious men who take little exercise – stricture in the intestines. He possessed a good genius, and having but a limited education at Plymouth in England – having been intended for some mechanical employment – had been diligent in supplying the consequent deficiency, as to have become a very pleasing and even elegant writer. I felt much flattered to learn from one of the Professors, that he had made my little satire of “The Voyage to the Moon” his model. Our next loss was of John L. Davis⁸⁹ the Professor of law, whose death was a cruel tragedy. A year or two before, many Students, in consequence of a riot, and refusal to deliver up the public arms which had been put into their hands, for a time were dismissed. But the number being very large some 60 or 70 – they were taken back on such light conditions, that they considered they had obtained a triumph over the Faculty, and in remembrance of it, had had a medal made which they all wore and made a subject of annual commemoration. As Davis was chairman at the time, and as he had had the most agency in rein-

⁸⁸ Collars on Metropolitan Policemen's uniforms were foxed with their constable's number, or “collar number.”

⁸⁹ John Anthony Gardner Davis (1801–1840).

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stating the students, this commemoration was particularly annoying to him. He prized his popularity with the students – which was indeed great – very highly, and he availed himself of it to prevent the approaching celebration, which was at once favorable to disorder, and cast a reflexion on the Faculty. He so far succeeded that all except two promised him they would give up the celebration. One of them was from Georgia and the other from South Carolina. The former, Simms, about 18 or 19 years of age provided himself with a pistol from one student and a ball from another, and they placed themselves before this house of Davis the chairman, and purposely made a noise, which brought out the chairman. The moon was at full, and the light almost that of day. He went up to Simms and asked him his name, but having at the time laid his hands upon Simms, disengaged himself, and presented his pistol. Davis, as he told me, thought that Simms meant merely to frighten him, he having done nothing to excite his lively resentment – kept his place tho’ he might easily have sprung upon the other and disarmed him. And when Simms fired and Davis felt that he was struck, he thought at first that it was only by the wadding. He fell to the ground, and there lay bleeding until he was taken up. The rest of the students were greatly shocked at this act, and resolved to seize Simms and his associate, both of whom had fled to the woods. They were accordingly found and delivered up to the magistrates. The only excuse which this youthful murderer gave for his act, was that Mr. Davis had laid his hands upon him, and that his brother had told him before he left home, that on such an occasion he would be justified in putting the Professor to death. Such was the defence which he made to those who were in his confidence – but he did not admit the fact on his examination, and it was made out only by circumstances. They were numerous, and one seemed to be conclusive. The only ball which he had been able to procure was imperfect – it being only about one half or two thirds of a sphere – the lead having given out – and this remarkable ball was cut out of Davis’s wound. The case was removed to Richmond, for the sake of an impartial trial. And as Simms’ confinement in jail in Charlottesville was thought by his physicians to endanger his life, he being severely afflicted by acute rheumatism and other diseases, he was bailed in the sum of \$20,000. He left the State, forfeited his bail bond, and thus escaped the punishment of the law. He lived a few years in Alabama and Mississippi, not respected by others, and a torment to himself. Mr. Davis had been some years preparing a book for the guidance of justices of the peace,⁹⁰ and to make it profitable to the family, I drew a petition to the Legislature to purchase it, keeping out of view, as far as was practicable, that the money required – which was

⁹⁰ John A.G. Davis, *A treatise on criminal law with an exposition of the office and authority of justices of the peace in Virginia*, Philadelphia: C. Sherman, 1838, viii, 660 p.

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about equal to Simms' bail bond – was the price of poor Davis' blood. The legislature made the appropriation, and the family had no hesitation in receiving the money, as there was no good reason why they should. The third professor which we lost was Dr. Blaetterman who had given offence to the Visitors first by living out of the University – contrary to the enactment – and afterwards by the scandal of openly ill-treating his wife. He was a man of excellent natural genius, of moderate acquirements which he unscrupulously exaggerated by every artifice of German charlatanry. But with all his laxity of moral principle, he had much kindness and benevolence of disposition, so that while we could not grant him our esteem we could not withhold from him our regard. His foibles were a perpetual source of amusement to his brother professors.

After a temporary appointment to supply the place of the law professor, the place was offered to my friend Henry St. George Tucker,⁹¹ then President of the Court of Appeals, in whose society I promised myself, and actually found very great pleasure. Our long acquaintance, our familiarity with the same scenes and individuals, afforded us a fund of interesting conversation that nothing else can supply. But alas, his ill health made my pleasure a shortlived one. Mr. Bonnycastle's place was supplied by Sylvester of England. The Visitors had been sometime divided as to the several merits of Mr. Courtenay, formerly of West Point and Mr. McCulloch of Maryland. While this question was pending I received a letter from my former colleague T.H. Key⁹² of the London University in favor of Sylvester, accompanied by a printed volume of testimonials in his favor, given by the ablest men in England. It had secured to him the appointment of professor of Mathematics in the London University, where alone he could have been elected in that country in consequence of his being a Jew. I felt it to be my duty to communicate Key's letter etc. to the Visitors, who unanimously appointed him, and at the succeeding session he entered on the duties of his professorship – but with a rare genius for profound and refined investigation he was little acquainted with the ways and the conventional rules of society. He was moreover morbidly sensitive on the subject of his creed, his personal dignity, his infallibility, and very unscrupulous and fearless in showing his ill-humour, so that it soon proved impossible for either the students or his brothers to get along smoothly with him. In some dispute with one of his class, growing out of some trifle, they had a personal rencontre, and he attempted to stab the student, but was fortunately prevented. His appli-

⁹¹ Henry St. George Tucker (1780–1848), son of St. George Tucker (and relative of George Tucker), was a U.S. Representative from Virginia (1815–1819) and professor of law at the University of Virginia (1841–1845).

⁹² Thomas Hewett Key (1799–1875), first professor of mathematics at the University of Virginia; he later returned to England.

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cation to resign before his year was out was therefore readily acceded to by the Visitors, and, after failing in an application to be appointed Professor to a College of New York, when the Faculty of Virginia on his application cheerfully testified to his high intellectual qualifications, he returned to England, where he was placed in the employment well suited him of actuary to a great Insurance company. Having only figures to deal with, his results may be safely relied on.

The next year after this (1848), I considered that I had cause to complain of the injustice of the Visitors. The professors first appointed received a salary of \$1,500 besides fees; but as it was expected that the emoluments from fees would in time be greatly increased, it was enacted that the salaries of the professors thereafter appointed should be \$1,000. After new professors were appointed this difference of salary was manifestly a source of ill feeling on the part of the new professors, and seemed to increase as the proportion of new professors increased. And when only Dr. Emmett and myself were left, and while Emmett was travelling for his health which he was never expected to recover, the visitors enacted that thereafter the salaries of all the professors should be \$1,000 – without giving any notice of their intention, so that we might assert our rights, if we had any. I was equally surprised and indignant at this supposed injustice, and determined that I would not continue to remain in the University on these terms. I was soon able to fortify my own recollections of an assurance from Mr. Jefferson that he considered the tenure of office to be equivalent to a life estate, the professor being removable only by 5 votes out of 7, which could not be expected to take place except in cases of flagrant delinquency. Mr. Lomax, who had previously resigned, and was then a judge, informed me that Mr. Jefferson had given him the same assurance; and I further found a letter from Mr. Jefferson to Dr. Emmett, offering him the appointment to the chemical chair, in which the same tenure of office was distinctly stated. These facts I respectfully but firmly stated to the Board, and contrary to that tenacity of purpose to which public bodies are too apt to exhibit, whether right or wrong, the Board was unanimous in rescinding their previous resolution, and I continued to receive the stipulated salary of \$1,500 as long as I remained.

My labours for the public were all the while going on, with more or less frequency. Having always taken a great interest in the census of the United States, partly from its showing the unprecedented progress of the United States, and partly, no doubt, from its gratifying my strong propensity to enumeration, I set about making an analysis of the 6th Census – 1840 – and after great labour requiring I conjectured more than a million of figures – tho' I used logarithm whenever I could, I completed it in 1843.⁹³ Among the

⁹³ George Tucker, *Progress of the United States in population and wealth for fifty years, as exhibited by the decennial census*. [New York: s.n.], 1843, 211 p.

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several facts and principles then developed – the most important, and entirely unsuspected, was the natural increase of our population was generally and steadily diminishing. This was shewn conclusively by the fact that in every State of the Union the number of children under 10 years of age, compared with the number of women, had visibly decreased in 40 years – and in every State, but two, there was a sensible diminution every 10 years. As this decrease could not be referred to the increased difficulty of subsistence, since a small proportion of the cheapest labour is sufficient to procure this – it must be referred to the increased difficulty of obtaining those artificial wants to which civilization gives rise, and to the consequent growing retardation of marriage, especially in the cities. This fact makes an important qualification to the doctrine of Malthus, who assumes as a general law that population will increase in proportion to the facility of procuring subsistence – since here where that facility is as great as it ever was – nay, perhaps somewhat greater, – it would seem that prudential considerations, by producing a delay of marriage, may be quite sufficient to prevent that redundancy of Population which is so fruitful of vice, crime, and misery, according to Malthus, and which are the necessary correctives of Men's tendency to increase and multiply. The view thus afforded by the census is a cheerful one to those who had been converts to Malthus's theory, which has made so many converts, and which all who have given close attention to it must admit to be so plausible. It is possible that the average delay of marriage for a short time – say 2 or 3 years – may be sufficient, under any circumstances to prevent excess numbers, and thus to shew that the multiplying propensity, tho' strong enough to repair the waste of life caused by extraordinary calamities, is not too strong when acting to the greatest advantage. This little work on the Census had more circulation, and was more read and used than anything which I had previously written. Yet, as it was printed on my own account, and only booksellers are competent to manage the sale of books, I did not receive as much as the edition cost me. The principal part of it was first published in Hunt's Magazine, and having there attracted the attention of Mr. Walsh,⁹⁴ subsequently our consul in Paris, I sent him 6 copies. I supposed this procured for me the honor of being elected a member of the Statistical Society of Paris.

After the resignation of my friend Henry St. George Tucker, I had no intimate companions, and all my associates being much my junior, in 1845, I sent in my resignation. I received very complimentary notices from the other professors, which, by a silly shyness or false pride, I did not publish tho' far less flattering notices on occasions went the rounds of the newspapers, and made my course unjust to myself. I had been at this Institution

⁹⁴ Robert Walsh (1784–1859), attorney and United States consul to Paris (1845–1851).

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just 20 years; in which time I had written, 1. a full course of lectures on Moral Philosophy, 2. another more condensed on Morals, 3. a full course on political economy, 4. another on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres and, 5. a short course of [lectures on the same subject], 6. lectures on General Grammar, or the philosophy of language. In all of which I had persuaded myself that I had said much which had not been said before – for I made it my duty to examine every subject for myself, and to probe it to the bottom, so far as I was able. My lectures, which had been at first always read were afterwards all extempore, by which I found they commanded the attention of the students, which discourses that are read rarely can.

[9. PHILADELPHIA: 1845–1858]

My purpose was to remove to Philadelphia, which had been half formed 25 years before. I thought that was the best place for an old man who had nothing particular to occupy him, and where he was likely to meet with many others as idle as himself – and by means of a reasonable frugality and some fortunate speculations, I thought my income of between 3000 and 4000, would maintain my small family in decent comfort. My household servants, who had been reared and partly born in my family, I emancipated. As they had been faithful and the attachment between us was mutual, the act was one of feeling and sentiment, but I subsequently had some doubts whether I ought not to have divided them between my two married daughters, for the sake of all parties. The number thus set free was five. Two of them, men, have since died without having abused their new privilege, and a third yet lives at the University, anxiously dreading the strict execution of the law which compels free negroes to leave the State, and which would separate him from his wife and children who are slaves. The two others, a woman and her grandchild, we brought to Philadelphia, where I was to pay the woman wages, and had the child bound until she was 18, but forgetting what I had done, they secretly left me, incited by some black abolitionists to secure her wages to themselves, and betook themselves to New York, where I presume they now are.

Before I left the University, I discharged a duty that had been long before imposed upon me, which was to deliver before the Faculty and the public an obituary notice on my friend Dr. Emmet, who had died of a pulmonary affection two or three years before. It was delivered on the public day at the University, when the students receive their degrees – and was printed in Philadelphia.⁹⁵ The sale of my furniture, paying off small debts, and settling

⁹⁵ George Tucker, *Memoir of the life and character of John P. Emmet, M. D., professor of chemistry and materia medica in the University of Virginia*. Philadelphia, C. Sherman, printer, 1845, 31 p.

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accounts occupied me until the Fall, when I took my leave of the University, after a residence of 20 years, and when I was seventy years of age. After making a short stay in Richmond and Baltimore I reached Philadelphia in November, and thought it prudent to live at a boarding house some time before we undertook to keep house, and my daughter, Leila, meanwhile remained with her sisters at the University. We boarded with Mrs. McMurtrie in Chestnut St. where we had two comfortable rooms, and met with very agreeable society.

One of the modes in which I promised myself that I might pass my time in Philadelphia with profit as well as pleasure was in attending the Philosophical Society.⁹⁶ Having, in my lectures on mental philosophy, taken a different view of the relation of cause and effect from Hume and Brown,⁹⁷ and having persuaded myself of its justice, partly from its having stood the scrutinizing test both of the acute and the captious in my class, and the approbation of a few friends, I ventured to read it before the Society – but its reading had been announced at a previous reading. But there attended three clerical gentlemen to two of whom I had before submitted my essay, and the paper was submitted to these gentlemen as a committee, who after some slight complimentary notice, reported against publishing the Essay among the transactions, and who seemed to have attended for that very purpose. It seems that the same two gentlemen had had their own speculations on the same copious theme, and were naturally unwilling to admit that I had discovered what had escaped their discernment, and were another instance of the maxim that

“men must be taught as though you taught them not
And things unknown be told as things forgot.”⁹⁸

This explanation of their course had not then occurred to me, and I had not then learnt from one of the committee that he had dissented from the majority – though one of the members of the society from the tenor of his remarks seemed to have had the same suspicion.

I afterwards read two or three other papers, but as they were not intended for the transactions, they did not make sport of them.

⁹⁶ The American Philosophical Society was founded in Philadelphia by Benjamin Franklin in 1743. Their meeting house, Philosophical Hall, was completed in 1789 and is located in what is now Independence National Historical Park.

⁹⁷ George Tucker, *An essay on cause and effect; being an examination of Hume's doctrine, that we can perceive no necessary connexion between them*. Philadelphia, Lea and Blanchard, 1850, 52 p. The work criticizes Hume's "Of the Idea of Necessary Connection" in the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), and Thomas Brown's *Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect* (1818).

⁹⁸ Alexander Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, Part 3, v. 574–575.

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My summer peregrinations which had hitherto been to the North – Saratoga – New York etc., were now reversed, and I went at that season to Virginia to see my children and grandchildren, and occasionally crossed the Blue Ridge to visit the springs either in Pennsylvania or Virginia.

The next work which I undertook was the History of the United States.⁹⁹ I began with reading what had been written on the subject, and making short notes, as a sort of chronological table. The authorities on which I principally relied were for the Colonial History, Grahame, Bancroft, and Hildreth – and for the subsequent period, Marshall, Gordon, the English Annual Register and Spark's Washington. I carefully also consulted Fenno's and Freneau's papers for the first years of Washington's Administration – and Niles' Register from the time that it was established. With this preparation I made a rough draft – compelling myself to write more or less every day and when I had reached the end of Mr. Tyler's administration, I began to write for publication. The work was however interrupted and delayed, by an analysis of the Census of 1850 which I had published in Hunt's Magazine, and afterwards published by way of appendix to my work on the Census of 1840.¹⁰⁰

The first volume of my History of the United States was published in 1856. It had a very limited circulation, Lippincott, my publisher, telling me that the booksellers generally were unwilling to take a work that consisted of several Volumes, until the whole was completed. Some gentlemen, however, whose judgment I highly respected spoke of it in terms of high commendation. I set to work with great rapidity to finish it, and the 4th Volume was printed in the latter part of 1857. And when the publisher had given me much encouragement, and assured me that he had then ascertained the work would take with the public, the banks to the surprise of all suspended cash payments, and business of every kind was at a standstill. In such seasons of Pecuniary difficulty there are 3 or 4 branches of trade that most suffer and one of them is the book business – and I am now (in March 1858) looking forward with patience until the revival of the book trade.

In 1848 judge Stryker of New York, having reached the age of 60 was disqualified to continue in office and by way of making a livelihood proposed to establish a quarterly journal in this city, somewhat on the plan of the English Annual Register.¹⁰¹ I agreed to write the historical part, and I did write it for three volumes – besides publishing occasional essays in it. The

⁹⁹ George Tucker, *The history of the United States, from their colonization to the end of the Twenty-sixth Congress, in 1841*. Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1856–1857, 4 v.

¹⁰⁰ This Appendix appeared in 1855 in a second edition of Tucker's *Progress of the United States in Population*.

¹⁰¹ James Stryker, ed., *The American quarterly register and magazine*, Philadelphia: E.C. and J. Biddle, Vol. 1, no. 1 (May 1848), ceased with Vol. 3 (Dec. 1849).

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plan was a good one, but, for want of capital, the proprietor was not able to continue it until it had established its character with the public. This employment suggested to me to write the History of the United States.

I soon afterwards lost my youngest daughter, Leila, who died of that distressing malady, a cancer in the breast. She gradually became reconciled to her hopeless condition and found that consolation in religion which nothing else can give.

The discovery of the rich gold mines in California, induced me to indulge in some speculations on the probable effects, and the paper which I prepared on the subject I first published in *Hunt's Magazine*,¹⁰² and then read before the Philosophical Society of Pennsylvania. I anticipated that the increase of gold, great as it was, would not for several years affect prices, but I had supposed that in 4 or 5 years the relative value between gold and silver would be altered. In common with all others who had written on the subject in this country and Europe, I had not foreseen that it would be extensively substituted for silver currency, which circumstance creating a new demand for gold, would delay its depreciation, when compared with silver. In the U. S. the coinage of gold dollars has made that coin of the commonest among us, and the same substitution has extensively prevailed in France and other parts of Europe, the consequence of which substitution the change in the relative price of the two metals has, as yet, been very insignificant. But if the mines of California and Australia continue to be as productive as they have been, and the production of silver is not also greatly increased, gold must soon depreciate compared with silver – and if both metals are increased in nearly the same proportion, then both metals must depreciate. It must however be recollected that the depreciation tends to correct itself. For as soon as its market value sensibly declines the consumption will be increased, and those mines which barely repay the cost of working will cease to be worked, so that the production will be diminished. By this double operation of an increased consumption and diminished production the supply and demand will be in equilibrio, and this result may occur before there is any material alteration in the value of these metals.

¹⁰² George Tucker, "Our Metallic Currency," *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review*, 1852, Vol. 27, pp. 175–178.



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ROBLEY DUNGLISON: OBITUARY NOTICE
OF PROFESSOR GEORGE TUCKER (1862)

Robley Dunglison, "Obituary Notice of Professor George Tucker," presented at the October 3, 1862 meeting of the American Philosophical Society, published in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 1862–1864, Vol. 9, pp. 64–70.

Born in Keswick, England, Robley Dunglison (1798–1869) was professor of anatomy and medicine at the University of Virginia, and, along with Tucker, was among the original group of professors handpicked by Thomas Jefferson for the newly-formed institution. Dunglison was one of Tucker's closest associates and, from 1829 through 1830, the two co-edited the *Virginia Literary Museum and Journal*. He also authored a flattering review of Tucker's *Voyage to the Moon*. During his retirement in Philadelphia, Tucker was a member of the American Philosophical Society and frequently attended their meetings. After Tucker's death, Duglison composed an obituary of Tucker, which he read at the October 2 1862 meeting of the Society and was later published in the Society's *Proceedings*. Drawing on almost four decades of friendship with Tucker, Duglison provides biographical details that do not appear elsewhere.

OBITUARY NOTICE OF PROF. GEORGE TUCKER.

Professor George Tucker was born in Bermuda in the year 1755. He came to this country when about twelve years of age, to be educated under the superintendence of his relative, Judge St. George Tucker, who was Professor of Law in the College of William and Mary in Virginia, and was the father of Judge Beverly Tucker, afterwards Professor of Law in the same college, and of Judge Henry St. George Tucker, Professor of Law in the University of Virginia, and author of Commentaries on the Laws of Virginia. Professor Tucker's collegiate education was at the College of William and Mary, after which he studied law, and practised his profession in Richmond, and afterwards at Pittsylvania and in Lynchburg, and for a considerable distance

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around, with great success. He was elected to the Legislature of Virginia from Pittsylvania, and in 1819, whilst a resident of Lynchburg, was chosen member of Congress to represent the district composed of the counties of Pittsylvania, Halifax, and Campbell. He was in Richmond at the time of the terrible sacrifice of life by the burning of the Theatre in 1811, and from a falling beam, received a severe wound, which resulted in a permanent scar over one eye.

Whilst in Richmond, he contributed to the "British Spy," edited by Mr. Wirt, and wrote amongst other communications, in the year 1800, on the Conspiracy of the Slaves in Virginia, and in 1811, on the Roanoke Navigation, which were printed. In the State Legislature, and in Congress, he was most distinguished as chairman or member of important committees, in which his services were highly valued, and he was twice re-elected to Congress. In the year 1822, he published "Essays on various subjects of Taste, Morals, and National Policy, by a citizen of Virginia," which were so favorably thought of, as was, indeed, his whole course in the Legislature of Virginia, and in Congress, by President Madison, that he urged and obtained his appointment to the Chair of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy in the nascent University of Virginia.

In the year 1819, after the death of a daughter at an early age, who had given promise of varied excellence, he wrote in Lynchburg, "Recollections of Eleanor Rosalie Tucker." In 1824 appeared "The Valley of Shenandoah," a novel, intended to illustrate the manners of the Old Dominion, which was republished, the writer has been informed, in London in 1825, and in Germany the year after.

In consequence of the protracted voyage – of fourteen weeks – from England of the vessel in which were the writer of this notice and two of the professors, the opening of the University of Virginia, which was to have been on the 1st of February, did not take place until April, 1825, when Professor Tucker, the oldest of the professors, and the one most familiar with the habits of the country, was chosen Chairman of the Faculty for the first session.

During his residence at the University, he engaged in many literary labors. In 1827, he published a work of fiction entitled "A Voyage to the Moon," the evident aim of which was to fulfil for the existing age, what Swift had so successfully accomplished for that which had passed by; to attack, by the weapons of ridicule, those votaries of knowledge, who may have sought to avail themselves of the universal love of novelty amongst mankind to acquire celebrity, or who may have been misled by their own ill-regulated imaginations to obtrude upon the world their crude and imperfect theories and systems, to the manifest retardation of knowledge. It was reviewed by the writer in the American Quarterly Review for March, 1828.

In 1837, Professor Tucker published "The Laws of Wages, Profits, and Rent Investigated," and in the same year, his "Life of Thomas Jefferson," in

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two large volumes, which received high commendation in the "Edinburgh Review" from Lord Brougham, as "a very valuable addition to the stock of our political and historical knowledge." In it, Professor Tucker does not always accord with the illustrious subject of his biography. The work, indeed, manifests a laudable desire to do justice, and to decide impartially on contested topics; and hence, perhaps, it failed to give satisfaction to the ardent supporters, as well as to the bitter opponents of Mr. Jefferson.

In December, 1837, he delivered before the Charlottesville Lyceum, "A Public Discourse on the Literature of the United States," which was published in the Southern Literary Messenger for February, 1838; and in which he enumerates many of the contributions made in this country to the domains of science and literature, concluding with glowing auguries of their future "progressive brightness."

In 1839 appeared a small volume, entitled *Theory of Money and Banks*, the copyright of which Professor Tucker was unable to dispose of in Philadelphia or New York, and which was published in Boston, and soon passed to a second edition. His "Progress of the United States in Population and Wealth in Fifty Years, as exhibited by the Decennial Census from 1790 to 1840," was a valuable contribution to statistics and political economy. It was a thorough analysis of the census for the period mentioned, and led its author to important inferences on the subjects of the probabilities of life, the proportion between the sexes, emigration, the diversities between the two races which compose our population, the progress of slavery, and of productive industry, &c. To this he added an appendix in 1855, when eighty years of age, containing an abstract of the census of 1850, in the preface to which he expresses the patriotic hope "that these authentic exhibitions of our growth and improvement, so gratifying to the pride and love of country, will lead our citizens to greater party forbearance, and give them new incentives to cherish that Union to which, under heaven, they owe the blessings they enjoy." Impelled by the same sentiments, he gave "A Public Discourse on the Dangers most Threatening to the United States;" (Washington, 1843.)

Professor Tucker's last production at the University of Virginia, was a "Memoir of the Life and Character of Dr. John P. Emmet," the accomplished Professor of Chemistry and *Materia Medica* in the University, who died in 1842.

During the whole of this period of his life, he had been a prolific contributor to the public journals, and to the more imposing periodicals, as the *North American*, the *American Quarterly*, the *Southern*, and the *Democratic Reviews*, and at an earlier period, to the *Port-folio of Philadelphia*; and when his colleague, Professor George Long, left the University of Virginia, to occupy a professorship in the University of London, and became editor of the *London Journal of Education*, and of the

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Penny Cyclopaedia, Professor Tucker was, at his request, the author of various educational articles in the former, and in the latter, of sundry biographical notices, as of Presidents Jefferson and Madison, and of geographical contributions in regard to the United States.

From the first opening of the University of Virginia, it had been thought by many of its most intelligent friends, that it presented a favorable occasion for the establishment of a literary journal. It was presumed that eight or nine professors, who were daily occupied in communicating the fruits of their studies to others, would be qualified to make such a work at once useful and interesting to the public. It was known that the plan of the Institution was principally the work of Mr. Jefferson, and that important innovations had been made in its discipline and course of instruction, whence it was inferred that a lively curiosity would be felt to learn the progress of an experiment, made by one of the most popular and most philosophical statesmen of his age. It was not, however, until the year 1829, after the University had been visited by an endemic disease, from which no locality, however healthy, is exempt, and the feeling of the faculty, that if such a medium of communication had been in existence, they might have been able to allay popular apprehension, and prove from unquestionable evidence the general salubrity of place, that they determined on the establishment of a weekly periodical, entitled "The Virginia Literary Museum, and Journal of Belles-Lettres, Arts, Sciences, &c.," the editorial charge of which was assigned to Professor Tucker and the writer. The first number appeared on the 17 of June, 1829; but although its contents were diversified and interesting, it was discontinued at the end of the year, and mainly for causes which have proved fatal to so many undertakings of the kind, – the failure of the contributors to afford the aid they had profusely promised, and hence the editors found, that to furnish the requisite materials from their own resources, demanded more of their time than was consistent with their other duties and engagements. The contributions of Professor Tucker were numerous and varied, but were, generally, popular essays on the subjects that appertained directly or indirectly to the chair he held in the University.

In the year 1845, at the age of seventy, with his mental powers undimmed, he resigned his Chair in the University of Virginia, and decided to spend the remainder of his days in comparative leisure. At all times fond of social intercourse with the enlightened, he had never failed to pass his vacations away from the University, and generally spent a portion of the time at the summer resorts of the refined and intellectual. Philadelphia was his choice for a permanent residence, both on account of its intelligence, and the opportunities afforded by its libraries to the seekers after knowledge. He was chosen a member of this Society in 1837, and was, likewise, a member of the Historical Society.

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From the time Professor Tucker took up his residence in Philadelphia until his death, with brief intervals of relaxation, he adhered to his student life, and continued his contributions to various literary periodicals, and especially to those which were devoted to the elucidation of great questions of politics and political economy.

His undiminished intellectual activity is signally shown by his having commenced about the year 1850, or when seventy-five years of age, the herculean task of collecting materials for a political history of the United States. To aid him in the execution of his work, as he himself remarks, it had been his good fortune to have a personal knowledge of many, who bore a conspicuous part in the Revolution, and of nearly all those who were the principal actors in the political dramas which succeeded. The history extends to the elevation of General Harrison to the Presidency, in 1841. This seemed to Professor Tucker as far as he could prudently go, at least, without obtaining some testimony from public sentiment of his fairness to his contemporaries.

The work was comprised in four volumes, the first of which appeared in 1856, and the last in 1857. The first chapter is devoted to colonial history prior to the Declaration of Independence, and the remainder to the Confederation and the United States.

Nor was this elaborate work the last production of its venerable and indefatigable author. In 1859, he printed, and was his own publisher of "Political Economy for the People," being in substance a compendium of the lectures on Political Economy, delivered by him in the University of Virginia, with such alterations and additions as his farther experience and reflection had suggested; and lastly, in 1860, when eighty-five years of age, he issued on his own account, "Essays, Moral and Metaphysical," some of which had been already published anonymously or separately, but were now republished, and added to the series. These essays were respectively, On our Belief of an External World; On Cause and Effect, read before this Society; On simplicity in Ornament; On Sympathy; On the Association of Ideas; On Dreams; On Beauty; on Sublimity; On the Ludicrous; On Classical Education; On the Siamese Twins, read before this Society; and On the Love of Fame.

Professor Tucker's protracted and useful existence was now verging to a close. The death – in the summer of 1859 – of his wife, the constant and faithful participator in his joys and his sorrows for upwards of thirty years, gave occasion to a thorough revolution in his domestic arrangements, and in place of wisely determining

"To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose,"

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he undertook extensive and harassing journeys. In the early portion of the summer of 1860, he visited Baltimore, Washington, Norfolk, the Eastern Shore of Virginia; and in the middle of June, in company with his son-in-law, Mr. George Rives, of Virginia, travelled as far as Chicago, to look after property which he had there. He did not suffer from the long journey he took on this occasion, and subsequently in Virginia, and returned to Philadelphia in the early part of the winter, with the intention of escaping the severity of the northern winter, from which he had suffered greatly the previous year, by a sojourn in the South. In December, he left Philadelphia, and in company with a friend proceeded from Richmond, in Virginia, to Columbia, in South Carolina; and afterwards to Charleston, Savannah, and other Southern cities. The last letter the writer received from him was dated Savannah, in February, 1861. In it he feelingly and deplorably depicts the conditions of Southern sentiment as exhibited there. "The state of public affairs," he remarks, "is indeed gloomy, even to heart-sickening. People seem to be crazed in the fancies of imaginary evils, and of their strange remedies."

Some weeks after the date of this letter, the writer was pained to learn from Mrs. Rives, the eldest daughter of Professor Tucker, that while landing at Mobile from a steamboat from Montgomery, her father had been struck down by a bale of cotton, which was being removed from the vessel; and that the shock to his system was so great, that for two or three days he was insensible, or more or less incoherent. Under the most hospitable roof, he remained at Mobile, until his son-in-law reached the place, when he was removed to Sherwood, in Albemarle County, Virginia, the residence of Mr. Rives, where, surrounded by his estimable relatives, he gradually sank, and died on the 10th of April, at the advanced age of eighty six.

Few persons have contributed more to the literature of the period than Professor Tucker. He himself estimated the amount of his more fugitive productions, – about one-half of which were anonymous and gratuitous, – at ten thousand pages. His talents were at one period directed greatly towards the composition of works of fiction, and he occasionally wooed the muse. When at the White Sulphur Springs of Virginia, in his extensive journeyings in the summer before his death, he composed measured lines, upwards of one hundred in number, entitled "Life's Latest Pleasures," the manuscript of which he gave to the writer, before setting out on his last journey to the South, in which, to use his own language, he casts a look on the future,

"And midst old age's cares and pains,
Asks what enjoyment yet remains."

His forte was not, however, the imaginative. It is as a successful and equitable writer on great questions of politics and political economy, and of

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intellectual philosophy, that he will take his place. His biography of Jefferson, and his History of the United States may, indeed, be regarded less as narratives of occurrences than views of great national and political questions, as they from time to time arose, logically discussed, and conveyed in language which has unusually the merit of great terseness and perspicuity.

During his residence in Philadelphia, Professor Tucker was a frequent attendant on the meetings of this Society, and at the time of his death was a member of the Board of Officers and Council.

