

# **French *Philosophes* and Philadelphia Freedom**

**by Mary Helen Kashuba S.S.J.**

France and America influenced each other mutually, from the early days of colonization. Montaigne noted the new land recently discovered, which one day would surpass the old (140). French participation in the American Revolution was crucial to its success. In keeping with these traditions, we will examine some ideas of the French *philosophes*, with special emphasis on Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and Montesquieu, to determine their influence on two luminaries of the American Enlightenment, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. Although neither is a native Philadelphian, both spent a considerable amount of time there, and left their imprint on the city. They also knew Paris well, having lived and worked there. In addition, we will note the influence that America had on France, not only through the American Revolution, but also through documents that preceded and followed it.

Adrienne Koch, author of *The American Enlightenment*, writes: “The question of what the American Enlightenment means implies the larger context of the Enlightenment in general . . . that movement of thought in the eighteenth century when learned men in all of Europe sought to assimilate, popularize, extend and apply the scientific and philosophic heritage of the ‘new science’ of the seventeenth century” (36). She notes that it finds light in reason and lightens necessary human toil. However, in contrast to the European Enlightenment, American thinkers showed peaceful political leadership and avoided “the extremes of doctrine precisely because they appreciated the factor of experience and respected the spirit and equal rights of each individual” (40).

Let us begin with the “rights of man.” While political correctness would dictate “human rights,” both French and American *philosophes* interpreted the word in its literal sense, the male members of society, a concept much broader today. *La Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen* and the American *Bill of Rights* are a summary of Enlightenment thought as articulated by many thinkers and statesmen. Both date from 1789, but in this case it was American thought, which had borrowed from continental sources, that influenced France.

In June of 1776, the Virginia legislature adopted a document drafted by George Mason that became known as the *Virginia Declaration of Rights* (Virginia Declaration of Rights). It was widely publicized, and even translated into French. Thomas Jefferson supported it, and through his friendship with the Marquis de Lafayette, made France aware of it. In fact, Lafayette determined to vote for the French *Déclaration* because it so resembled the American declaration. Lafayette and Jefferson exchanged numerous letters before, during, and after the French Revolution, since Jefferson was in Paris before and during this time as Minister to Versailles (1784-1789) (Koch 387).

In studying the two documents, many similarities strike the reader. We shall limit ourselves to three, and examine their roots both in the French and the American *philosophes*. The

first is *égalité*, or equality. The French *Déclaration* reads: « Les hommes naissent et demeurent libres et égaux en droits » (Nicollier). The Virginia *Declaration of Rights* states: “All men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights . . . namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety” (Virginia Declaration of Rights).

The second theme is *religion*. The *Déclaration* addresses it implicitly: “Nul ne doit être inquiété pour ses opinions, même religieuses, pourvu que leur manifestation ne trouble pas l’ordre public établi par la Loi.” According to the Virginia *Declaration of Rights*, “religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharging it, can be directed by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore, all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience.” The American *Bill of Rights* in the First Amendment states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

The third theme is what we may call *vertu*. It includes hard work and frugality and entails deep devotion to the republic, namely, patriotism, the same sense as the English word *virtue* in the eighteenth century. While not prescribing any specific duties, the *Déclaration* emphasizes the responsibilities of all people as members of society: “Les Représentants du Peuple Français... ont résolu d’exposer, dans une Déclaration solennelle, les droits naturels, inaliénables et sacrés de l’homme, afin que cette Déclaration... leur rappelle sans cesse leurs droits et leurs devoirs.” The Virginia *Declaration* is more explicit: “That no free government, or the blessings of liberty, can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue and by frequent recurrence to fundamental principles.” Let us now examine each of these points in greater detail.

The first point, *égalité*, is one of the hallmarks of the French Revolution. Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his famous *Discours sur l’origine de l’inégalité* imagines private property as the cause of inequality. The framers of the *Déclaration* however admitted it as a basic human right, despite Rousseau’s great influence. Later revolutions, such as the Soviet Revolution of 1917, took Rousseau at face value and tried to abolish private ownership. Socialist authors such as Babeuf, Louis Blanc, and Proudhon toyed with the idea. Rousseau’s solution of la *volonté générale*, appears in the *Déclaration*: “La Loi est l’expression de la volonté générale. Tous les Citoyens ont droit de concourir personnellement, ou par leurs Représentants, à sa formation. Elle doit être la même pour tous.”

Koch notes that the concept of la *volonté générale* “in its inherent unity and its imperial latitude over particular wills” (32) was abhorrent to the American mentality. Thomas Jefferson alluded to this in his First Inaugural Address (March 4, 1801) stating, “All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail. . . the minority possess their equal rights, which equal laws must protect, and to violate which would be oppression” (quoted in Koch 405). Indeed, the application of Rousseau’s *volonté générale* without consideration for the minority has led to totalitarian rule in France and elsewhere.

Equality was a thorny concept. Mona Ozouff, citing Tocqueville, notes three types: equality of legal status, equality of political rights, and equality of the conditions of material

existence (Furet 674). She observes that not even Rousseau was so naïve as to imagine that perfect equality could exist. The Revolution also realized this. In any case, the problem of political equality was complicated both in France and America by limiting voting rights to male property owners. Legal status based on social utility as in the *Déclaration*: “Les distinctions sociales ne peuvent être fondées que sur l’utilité commune,” was also complex; who would decide its application? Finally, there was almost no way of equalizing material possessions, although many have tried.

The question of equality raises two important issues that preoccupied the *philosophes* on both sides of the Atlantic. One was the question of the aristocracy vs. a classless society. The other was the issue of slavery. The *Déclaration* states, “Les distinctions sociales ne peuvent être fondées que sur l’utilité commune.” The French *philosophes* were unanimously opposed to the existing social order. Voltaire’s satire on the “soixante et onze quartiers de noblesse” of Candide and his mother illustrates this. The *philosophes* also opposed the Divine Right of Kings. In the article *Autorité Politique* in the *Encyclopédie* Diderot maintains, “Aucun homme n’a reçu de la nature le droit de commander aux autres.... Le prince tient de ses sujets mêmes l’autorité qu’il a sur eux.” Voltaire’s portrait of the King of Eldorado reflects the benevolent ruler, more like the ideals of an American president than French royalty.

Thomas Jefferson notes that before the establishment of the American states, only the old world system of government with all its vices existed. Now, he maintains, a new order is imperative, adapted to a situation in which everyone, “by his property, or by his satisfactory situation, is interested in the support of law and order” (Adams 388). He distinguishes between natural and artificial aristocracy. The latter, based on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talent, is unacceptable. The former, with virtue and talent, is a great gift of nature, to be used for the instruction and government of society. He notes the revolution of thought that is taking place in Europe, “of science, talents, and courage, against rank and birth, which have fallen into contempt” (Adams 391). Jefferson welcomed the French Revolution at the beginning, praising especially the *Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen* (Koch 329). He also noted the reality of the class situation, remarking the precarious position of Lafayette, who was a member of the nobility, but who supported the people (Koch 328). He risked the rejection of both.

A problem with equality that touched the American consciousness deeply was the question of slavery. It was a reality in the colonies, especially in the South. Although there were no slaves in metropolitan France, the slave trade furnished income through the Caribbean islands (West Indies) in the production of sugar. The French were not unique in this practice, as noted in the *Encyclopédie* article, *Traite des nègres*, which lists English, Portuguese, Dutch, Swedes and Danes. The author, Le Romain, condemns the practice as loathsome and contrary to natural law, even though those who would justify it claim that it saves the immortal souls of these slaves (Hoyt 258-273).

Montesquieu in his characteristic irony had already condemned the practice in Book XV of *L’esprit des lois*. He refutes common arguments, including the salvation of souls. Chapter 5 emphasizes the absurdity of the situation for example: “Le sucre serait trop cher, si l’on ne faisait travailler la plante qui le produit par des esclaves.” Not only is slavery immoral, it is also useless.

Montesquieu adds, “Quelques pénibles que soient les travaux que la société exige, on peut tout faire avec des hommes libres” (258-261).

Voltaire echoes Montesquieu’s irony in *Candide*, Chapter XIX. A slave caught his finger in the millstone used to make the sugar, so the master cut off the man’s entire right arm. He lost his leg when trying to escape. He cites *les derviches hollandais*, “qui disent tous les dimanches que nous sommes tous enfants d’Adam, blancs et noirs. Je ne suis pas généalogiste; mais si ces prêcheurs disent vrai, nous sommes tous cousins issus de germain” (222). What a strange family, he concludes, where relatives treat one another in this way.

In Pennsylvania, only 2% of the population was enslaved. Benjamin Franklin was President of the *Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery*. In a 1789 petition he condemns slavery, but also demands the rehabilitation of freed slaves, hoping that this will become part of national policy. The plan of the Society, a truly visionary statement, is “to instruct, to advise, to qualify those, who have been restored to freedom, for the exercise and enjoyment of civil liberty, to promote in them habits of industry, to furnish them with employments suited to their age, sex, talents, and other circumstances, and to procure their children an education calculated for their future situation” (quoted in Koch 149-150).

Virginia, however, accepted and legitimized slavery. Thomas Jefferson, the great proponent of liberty and equality, owned slaves. Yet before he died he regretted that his financial state did not permit him to free all of them. Throughout his life, he spoke in favor of emancipation. In his *Autobiography*, he noted sadly the state of Virginia’s refusal to accept the amendment on emancipation. He wrote, “Yet the day is not distant when it must bear and accept it, or worse will follow. Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate, than that these people are to be free” (quoted in Koch 299). He also noted that the times were “preparing, under the auspices of heaven, for a total emancipation, and that this is disposed, in the order of events, to be with the consent of the masters, rather than by their extirpation” (quoted in Koch 392).

Along with equality, the subject of religion was highly controversial. As the *philosophes* insisted on the equality of all people, a proportionate burden of taxes, and the destruction of the ancient class system, so they demanded equality of religion. No one religion was to supersede another, and none was to be state-supported. Most of the *philosophes* were deists or agnostics. Some, like Voltaire, believed that religion was important for “le peuple,” but that the intellectuals did not need it. Yet all fought against intolerance and supported religious freedom.

Among Voltaire’s countless examples of religious tolerance, we find the starving *Candide*. The Christian orator will give him nothing unless he confesses that the Pope is the anti-Christ. The Anabaptist Jacques, technically not a Christian, offers him food without requiring any profession of faith. *Candide* later speaks with the sage of Eldorado, and inquires of him what religion this country practices. The old man appears surprised: can there be more than one? In Eldorado, no one supplicates God, since they have all they need. They merely thank and adore God, and have no need of priests, since the King and all fathers of families fulfill that office (218).

Rousseau on the contrary opted for a more mystical religion, which one might call *la religion du coeur*. Speaking through the Vicaire Savoyard in *Émile*, he writes, “En suivant toujours ma méthode, je ne tire point ces règles des principes d’une haute philosophie, mais je les trouve au fond de mon cœur écrites par la nature en caractères ineffaçables” (Rousseau 372). The ultimate judge is one’s conscience. In following it, one cannot go wrong: “Toute la moralité de nos actions est dans le jugement que nous en portons nous-mêmes.” Directed against the *philosophes* and especially Helvetius, this *Profession de foi* influenced future generations in their movement toward subjective morality and the cult of nature which became a guiding force in nineteenth-century Romanticism on both sides of the Atlantic.

While Diderot apparently rejected God and religion, he made an impassioned plea for tolerance. In the *Encyclopédie*, his article on *intolérance* was actually based on a letter addressed to his brother, the Abbé Didier Diderot, secretary to the Bishop of Langres, in 1760 (Hoyt 147). Here he skillfully quotes arguments from the Fathers of the Church as well as from the Scriptures against intolerance. He concludes, “Intolérants, hommes de sang, voyez les suites de vos principes & frémissiez-en. Hommes que j’aime, quels que soient vos sentiments, c’est pour vous que j’ai recueilli ces pensées que je vous conjure de méditer. Méditez-les, & vous abdiquerez un système atroce qui ne convient ni à la droiture de l’esprit ni à la bonté du cœur” (Diderot and D’Alembert).

Many colonists came to the New World to escape the intolerance they found in Europe. William Penn, himself a Quaker, founded the state of Pennsylvania as a “Holy Experiment,” where religious freedom would be the cornerstone of the new social order. In the *Declaration of Rights of 1682*, he wrote: “All men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences; no man can of right be compelled to attend, erect, or support any place of worship ... against his consent” (History of Pennsylvania). This was a radical idea in 1682, just three years before Louis XIV revoked the famous *Edit de Nantes* which had given religious freedom to all Christians in France. Penn traveled throughout the continent, promoting his colony to religious groups suffering persecution for their beliefs. Many accepted Penn's invitation, among them, Quakers, English Anglicans, French Huguenots, Scottish and Scots-Irish Presbyterians, Irish Catholics, and Jews.

For most of the eighteenth century, Pennsylvania was one of the few places under British control where Catholics could legally worship. The first public Mass was celebrated in Philadelphia at the site of the present Old St. Joseph’s Church in 1732 by Father Joseph Greaton, S.J. The Jesuits have administered the church since its founding. The most prominent was the Rev. Felix Joseph Barbelin, S.J., (1808-1869), Old St. Joseph's “second founder,” who built the present church in 1839 and St. Joseph's College in 1851. He was a native of France, and a scholarly man who believed in education. He established an Academy at Old Saint Joseph’s under the direction of the Sisters of St. Joseph, and enlisted their help in other schools. He was also attentive to the needs of Irish Catholic and later Italian immigrants. Parish records indicate that many blacks, both slave and free, attended Old St. Joseph’s, and were baptized, married, and buried from there (Old St. Joseph’s).

Unfortunately, William Penn’s ideals did not continue as he had intended. In the nineteenth century a group originally called “Nativists” or popularly “Know-Nothings” after

1850, terrorized Catholics, especially the Irish. In 1844, they burned churches. Widespread rioting occurred and tensions lasted well into the 1850s (Connelly 178). These years (1846-1864) coincide with the construction of the Cathedral Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul on Logan Square. The side walls of the building have only high clerestory windows, for fear of destruction by the Know-Nothings (Cathedral Basilica).

Few other colonies enjoyed the same religious liberty as did Pennsylvania. Virginia, for example, was bound by the laws of the Church of England, the official state religion since the foundation of the state in 1607. All citizens were obliged to pay taxes for its support. Only Anglican clergymen were permitted to perform valid marriages in the state. During the American Revolution, Baptists and Presbyterians led the Virginia campaign to disestablish ties with the Church of England and to allow freedom of religion for all. Other religions followed their lead. Thomas Jefferson was active in this struggle. He drafted an eloquent statement of the separation of church and state and of complete religious freedom in 1777 as the "Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom." James Madison engineered its passage in the General Assembly in 1786.

The Act reads in part:

Be it enacted by General Assembly that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but that all men shall be free to profess . . . their opinions in matters of Religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities. (Virginia Declaration of Religious Liberty)

Benjamin Franklin likewise stressed tolerance, but his most convincing and memorable arguments are in the form of parables. He wrote *A Parable against Persecution*, in 1774, using biblical language. He tells the story of a visitor to Abraham, teaching him to accept all people (quoted in Koch 127-128). Another parable features a Swedish missionary who preached Bible stories to the Susquehanna Indians. They listened politely, and then offered one of their stories. After hunting, they saw a beautiful young woman. They offered her some of their meat, and she in return blessed them with useful plants, such as maize and kidney beans. The missionary was disgusted with the story, exclaiming, "What I delivered to you were sacred truths; but what you tell me is mere fable, fiction, and falsehood." The Indians upbraided him for his lack of civility, saying that they listened to his words and observed the rules he taught them, but he refused to believe their stories (quoted in Koch 139-140).

The final point of comparison between the French and American Enlightenment that we will examine is *vertu*. To continue the tradition of parables, let us examine Montesquieu's *Histoire des Troglodytes* found in *Les Lettres Persanes*. The first Troglodytes led evil lives, and their race was exterminated except for two virtuous families, who worked hard for the common good, had strong family values, and were blessed with many children. Because of their growth in numbers, they decided to choose a king. This was their undoing. The new king told them, "Votre vertu commence à vous peser. Dans l'état où vous êtes, n'ayant pas de chef, il faut que vous soyez vertueux malgré vous: sans cela vous ne sauriez subsister.... Pourquoi voulez-vous ... un autre joug que celui de la vertu?" (37-44)

Montesquieu returns to the same theme in *L'Esprit des Lois*. He notes that *vertu* is the principle of a democratic government. Without *vertu* ambition enters in, and with it avarice and corruption. *Vertu* necessitates frugality, for luxury brings with it the desire for the wealth of others. It fosters selfishness where one does not make the common good the highest priority. Like the land of the Troglodytes, the republic without *vertu* will perish.

Thomas Jefferson, well-schooled in the writings of Montesquieu from his childhood, echoed these sentiments in his First Inaugural Address. Among the qualities essential for citizens of a republic, he lists “honesty, truth, temperance, gratitude, and the love of man ... a wise and frugal government ... which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement” (quoted in Koch 406). Jefferson believed in the simple life in the country, noting that those who labor the earth are the chosen people of God, and that rarely does one see corruption of morals among them. He maintains that “it is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a republic in virtue” (quoted in Koch 393).

The tone of frugality that animates Montesquieu and Jefferson comes to life in the aphorisms of Benjamin Franklin, the author of the famous *Poor Richard's Almanac*:

A penny saved is a penny earned.  
 He that buys by the penny, maintains not only himself, but other people.  
 The excellence of hogs is fatness, of men virtue.  
 He (the rich man) does not possess Wealth, it possesses him.  
 A Penny sav'd is Twopence clear, A Pin a day is a Groat a Year. Save & have. Every little makes a mickle.  
 (Benjamin Franklin)

Many similar sayings, some original, others imported from various authors whom Franklin had read in his lifelong friendship with books, among them Montaigne (Newcomb 489-491), insure the immortality of this *Almanac* which appeared from 1732-1757, and sold up to 10,000 copies a year.

In his *Autobiography*, Benjamin Franklin describes his plan to attain moral perfection. He listed thirteen virtues with their precepts. Among them are: frugality: “Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing.” Industry: “Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.” He began his list with temperance, the chief of all virtues. He devised a little score sheet to mark his successes and failures (54-74).

Finally, the writings of the *philosophes* stress the importance of education. Benjamin Franklin wrote in 1750: “Nothing is of more importance for the public weal than to form and train up youth in wisdom and virtue” (quoted in Koch 77). While the American *philosophes* were all well-educated men, Benjamin Franklin was self-educated. At age twelve he began to work for his brother as a printer. However, he founded the American Philosophical Society, an Academy, later the University of Pennsylvania, and composed scientific and cultural treatises. Thomas Jefferson asked to be remembered for three accomplishments: he was the author of the Declaration of Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and Father of the University of Virginia. These are inscribed on his tombstone.

The French *philosophes* also were learned men. At a time when free education did not exist, they sought to inform the public, especially through the Encyclopedia. Victims of censorship themselves, they fought for freedom of the press and freedom of expression, in the tradition of English writers (Kennedy 14). Following their lead, the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* declared, “La libre communication des pensées et des opinions est un des droits les plus précieux de l’Homme: tout Citoyen peut donc parler, écrire, imprimer librement. ”

Finally, the visual arts reinforced this concept of *vertu*. French paintings of the last half of the eighteenth century were primarily of two types: the Rococo and sometimes frivolous works of artists such as Boucher and Fragonard, and the more realistic designs of painters such as Chardin and Greuze. Of Boucher, Diderot writes, “Quelles couleurs! quelle variété! quelle richesse d’objets et d’idées! Cet homme a tout, excepté la vérité” (Diderot 449). In addition to criticizing their style, he did not approve of their absence of *vertu*.

Diderot praises Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin (1699-1779) and Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805). He admires *Le Mauvais fils puni*, exhibited in the Salon of 1765, especially for the moral virtues it inspires: “Quelle leçon pour les pères et pour les enfants” (549)! Greuze later turned his attention to historic painting and produced an excellent portrait of Benjamin Franklin.



**Figure 1. Portrait of Benjamin Franklin by Jean-Baptiste Greuze, 1777**  
**Credit: en.wikipedia; Public domain**

Diderot remarks of Chardin, “C’est toujours la nature et la vérité” (481)! The *Benedicite* is among the paintings that Diderot admires for its color, composition, and originality, as well as for its portrayal of ordinary bourgeois life. Chardin was a pioneer in depicting such scenes, not previously considered worthy of art.



Finally, the work of Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825) fostered the ideal of *vertu* and patriotism, before, during, and after the Revolution. Perhaps the most famous is *Le Serment des Horaces*, (1784), inspired by Corneille's sentiment of *devoir* and Enlightenment values and echoing Rousseau's *volonté générale*. The sons must ignore their wives and families and embrace the republican ideal. His depiction of *La Mort de Marat* became a revolutionary icon, portraying Marat as more of a Christian martyr and a Christ figure than a leader of the Terror.

American art, finding its inspiration in the European world, was perhaps even more insistent on instilling patriotic values. Many artists flourished in and around Philadelphia. Benjamin West, born of Quaker parents in 1738, studied art in Philadelphia and New York City, and later in Italy. Because of the paucity of scholarly artists in America, he went to England in 1763, where he remained until his death in 1820. His style anticipates romanticism, as can be seen in *Penn's Treaty with the Indians* (1771-1772).



**Figure 2. *Penn's Treaty with the Indians* by Benjamin West, 1771.**

**Credit: Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia**

**Wikipedia Commons: Public domain.**

The idyllic family life of the Native Americans is evident in the mother and children scene at the bottom right. The peaceful encounter with the Europeans recalls utopian dreamers from Rabelais to Rousseau. Actually, William Penn's sons commissioned the painting to restore their own reputations and re-establish better relations with the Native Americans.

Benjamin West influenced other American painters, among them John Singleton Copley, Gilbert Stuart, and Charles Wilson Peale. Portrait painting was the most important genre practiced by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century American artists. They chose many subjects from America's heroes, thus producing patriotic icons for the new Republic. Both Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828) and Charles Wilson Peale (1741-1847) lived and worked in Philadelphia. Gilbert Stuart's most famous portrait of George Washington appears on the one dollar bill. He also painted Paul Revere in 1813 at the age of seventy-eight. The skillful use of black and white portrays the legendary hero as an elder statesman, dignified and composed.

A native of Maryland and an enthusiast of the new American republic, Charles Wilson Peale came to Philadelphia in 1776, and served in the American Revolution. He completed over sixty portraits of Washington. He painted other famous Americans, among them Thomas Jefferson, portraying an idealist and a thinker, a true *philosophe*.



**Figure 3. *Thomas Jefferson* by Charles Wilson Peale, 1791.  
Credit: Wikipedia Commons: Public domain.**

In true Enlightenment fashion, he was also interested in natural history, and established a museum in Baltimore (Peale).

Where then did the Enlightenment ideals lead? Certainly to two Revolutions, the American and the French. Also to declarations of rights, not always following the intentions of the *philosophes*. Furet observes, “The Declaration of the Rights of Man is explained not so much by what it borrowed—from Locke as well as Montesquieu, from Rousseau as well as the American state constitutions—as the need to which it responded: to redefine the sphere of politics in liberty and law” (665). While human nature will never attain the perfectibility of which all utopians, Rabelais, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Karl Marx, Péguy, have dreamed, the progress so dear to their thoughts continues. Their heritage is one of the steps on which we rise, and which we celebrate on the anniversary of American independence.

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