

General stared in utter amazement at the proposition. "Why, what in Heaven's name," he exclaimed, "do you want with a College in Virginia?" "To improve the minds and the souls of the youth of the province," was the humble reply. "Souls!" cried the law-dignitary, aghast at such presumption—"Souls! *D— your souls! make tobacco!*"

Thus it happens that we find very little of local fiction in any of its ordinary forms, among our ancient American literature. The Revolutionary War, however, which gave this country a seat in the circle of empires, was succeeded by an unlooked for and wonderful prosperity, that soon raised it to greatness. And as this contest—the most important epoch in our national history—was not at all deficient in those political verses that naturally find their seat upon the lips of men engaged in a long and impassioned strife, it does not ill become us, who today enjoy the fruit of the arduous toils of the founders of our State, to regard with an attentive eye every monument that remains of the characteristics of their nature. Nor should the desire to retrieve, so far as may be, every detail of the men and manners of that period, be dealt with as an idle inquisitiveness, or ranked with that spirit which, as Sir Thomas Browne relates, would seek to know what song the Syrens sang, or by what name Achilles was known among the women.

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