

tress through their own folly becomes a subject of ridicule rather than sympathy.

“ Pleased to the last, they crop the flow’ry food,  
“ And kiss the hand just raised to shed their blood.”

Content with their present prosperous condition they are more careful to enjoy than perpetuate it, and confine their views to the narrow circle of a month or a year instead of securing to posterity those blessings of which they so largely partake. A visionary hope that reason will some time preside and the multitude obey her mandates, leads them to the brink of the precipice before they open their eyes to the danger towards which they were from the beginning of their journey proceeding. They occasionally feel solicitude, but it evaporates in fruitless wishes and idle anticipation. They call upon Hercules before they put a finger to the wheel; and foolishly build their hopes upon some miraculous interposition which like the horizon always flies as they pursue it.—This is the portrait which history and experience draws of people who have most at stake in society, and are most deeply interested in its prosperity and preservation.—Livy, Tacitus, Gibbon and the history of our own times abound with instances. The supine will forget these truths; the timid will not dare to act upon them; the prudent have some fault to find with the mode of obtaining redress; men of high spirit will smile at my forebodings; and all will tacitly agree to do nothing at the very moment when inaction is the worst and most dangerous of possible things.—These are my fears; but contrary to my expectation should any thing I have written excite them to confederate and do their duty, I shall enjoy a secret satisfaction in having contributed even *this trifle* to the stock of public happiness.

CAMILLUS.