

Mr. Pres.

Nothing can be more embarrassing,
 however complimentary it may be, than
 to be expected suddenly to reply to a
 toast of a personal character like
 that which has been just proposed.
 I find it difficult to do so in
 appropriate language but I should
 be ungrateful if I did not endeavor
 to thank my friend who has so
 kindly invited me & to make
 my acknowledgments to the
 Company for the politeness & generous
 manner in which they have
 been pleased to accept his
 sentiment. Nevertheless Mr. Peck
 while I am thus ready to express
 my obligations I wish it also
 to be understood that I was
 perfectly sensible of being ridiculed
 for the opportunity of doing so to
 the Country, & ^{to the} general influence
 of the occasion rather than to any
 special disavowal of my own
 either in my own person or
 in the estimation of others. ^{may} What
 can I say more than thus briefly
 to return my thanks? If I were
 a Man of Science - a Hero - or
 Statesman involved with some
 great public question - or were a
 great Traveller who had

Wandered thro' the world & read the
great Books of Human Life in
all languages & in all Lands
I might be permitted to talk in
with about myself, ^{and to dwell}
with complacent ^{or justifiable} vanity in the
part I had performed or was
performing: But alas, I must
in all candor admit that I have
not been discerned men - never
having sought the Mexicans &
Spain had no chance to become a
Kis - among the Duty Books in
the Office of the Clerk of the
Supreme Court, I have had no
chance to exhibit any capacity
for Statesmanship & for several
years past my travel has been
confined ^{almost wholly} within the limits of
this most populous & crowded
City, with an occasional excursion
in the Delaware or Delaware
in the West or East in direct reference
to myself I can boast of nothing
except to Delaware - if indeed this be
a matter for boast - that to my
best knowledge & belief I have
never been engaged in a dis-
honorable action.

But Mr. Pust, ^{now that I am} ^{in the place} will
you pardon me if I admit in a
brief sentence or two, to another

topic. This is the first time I have had
the pleasure to participate in the
Anniversary Banquet of the
Hibernia Society. I do so now
by right of membership accorded
to me within the past year. I
desire to state here Mr President
& Gentlemen that the privilege of
membership in this ancient & honored
Society thus accorded to me, I regard
as a gratifying evidence of your
kindly regard & esteem. &
let me add that it is a pre-
cedent upon which I shall
ever place a very high value.
Since I first resided in Philadelphia
I have recognized the Society
as occupying a foremost position
of respectability & usefulness
among the kindred social &
benevolent Societies of the
Country. On point of age - on
point of numbers - looking in
the past to the general character
of those whose names may
be traced on the lists of mem-
bership - lists embracing
hundreds of noble hearted intelli-
gent & patriotic men. Con-
templating its present prosperous
condition - the worth & wealth &
talent to which it can justly
lay claim & above all its
— membership

those glorious principles of Brethrenhood
 & Charity on which it now rests &
 for were rested do as we in
 maintaining that the Bibernia
 Society may rank the equal
 of any similar philanthropic so-
 ciety in the Land. Go then
 anything nobler than the above
 it deems to serve & go then
 anything purer than the
 sentiment of social good feeling
 fraternal regard & active bene-
 volence be involved in the

cause of the ~~unfortunate~~ ^{the unfortunate} ~~people~~ ^{people}
 to be ^{the African Society} ~~celebrated~~ ^{rights} ~~here~~ ^{of}
 many societies founded on similar
 principles spread throughout the
 Union & marking to a certain
 extent the Distinction Races
 of which our American population
 is composed the vital principle
 of which only union & Disunion
 is Charity in its most complete
 human sense. Such societies
 everywhere have my best wishes.
 They should be increased not
 only for the private good they
 accomplish but as testimonies
 that tend greatly to the Public
 Benefit in a strictly public
 sense. In their peculiar Economy
 they evoke the best feelings of
 those connected with them, equally
 as citizens as men & as Philanthropists