DR. FRANCIS' REMARKS

INTRODUCTORY TO THE

COURSE OF LECTURES

DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE

KANE MONUMENT

IN NEW YORK

NEW YORK: JOHN F. TROW, PRINTER, 377 & 379 BROADWAY, CORNER OF WHITE STREET. 1859.
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Fellow Members of the Kane Monument Association:

This large and intelligent audience awakens a cheering influence and presents unmistakable tokens of success. The noble motives which have roused your zeal in furtherance of the patriotic design of erecting some suitable memorial in honor of an illustrious man, give confidence to the Board of Managers that the work which they have lately assumed, may, in due season, be perfected, and that the renown which follows great deeds will receive a lasting demonstration of the excellence of your hearts and the lofty purposes of your organization. The appeal which has been made to the enlightened and the liberal in behalf of a national tribute to the memory of the lamented Kane, seems to have been made not in vain, if an inference may be drawn from the expressions of opinion and other proofs of approbation furnished by the inhabi-
tants of this metropolis and by the generous and the benevolent scattered throughout our widespread Republic.

The present occasion does not allow a minute account of the formation of the Kane Monument Association. Suffice to say, that it had its origin with a few distinguished and enlightened citizens of this city, prominent among whom is Sidney Kopman, all actuated by a patriotic and benevolent spirit, to hold in commemoration for present and after times the achievements of an individual, who, by his life and services, had conferred signal distinction on his country by his bold and adventurous acts, and extended through both hemispheres his mighty renown. Some two years have now elapsed since the project first enlisted notice, but the committee, after full deliberation, have only recently ventured to introduce the subject for public consideration, and now only have invited your approbation and countenance to the undertaking. The act of incorporation by the Legislature of New York, bears date April 5, 1859. Circumstances must control their future action; but the Board have the strongest assurances from numerous quarters that their hopes will be realized; for they dare not doubt that the American people, with their enlarged benevolence and wonted patriotism, will sustain the measure. I need hardly give you assurance that my own feelings are deeply involved in the great design.

I have already implied that popular feeling is enlisted in behalf of the erection of the contemplated monument to the late Dr. Kane, and that I be-
lieve public liberality will accomplish the undertaking. The grounds of this confidence are manifest. The life and adventures of the illustrious explorer are of a nature which have secured the attention of the philosophic world, and led to a perusal of his narrative, more widely than, perhaps, has ever fallen to the lot of any other work of a similar denomination; while the character of the man in the several relations of life is so pregnant with remarkable traits, so beautiful, so consistent, so comprehensive, and so attractive, as an example of exalted worth, as to have stamped his name indelibly on the historic page of illustrious men. And all this is very natural. Who is there so abject in the scale of humanity, as not to admire that extraordinary capacity, which, amid numerous adverse circumstances, attained to the mastery of so wide, so copious, so accurate a knowledge, that by almost self-instruction, his disciplined intellect was found adequate to every emergency, in a life so varied and so checkered? Who, amidst the most trying privations, conquered his own wants and became the generous benefactor to the indigent and the destitute pressing on every side, when his perishing companions would not believe that less than a miracle could interpose in their behalf for salvation? And what disciple of the Christian faith can be indifferent in contemplating that holy confidence that inspired him—that cherished, with unwavering hope, the divine thought that these demonstrations of sovereign power were in reality no more nor less than the wonder-workings of Providence in behalf of himself and his forlorn crew? Yet such was the
man, and such his religion. The God of the Bible, of the Ocean, and the Storm, was the Maker of man. Can biography furnish us a more instructive example than these words of such an individual?

Look then at the narrative of his exploring tour which he himself penned: consult, with minute care, the story which he has given us in such purity of diction, in such fulness of incident, with such honest purpose, with such unaffected simplicity and truth; and who is there, within this assembly, who has not profited by the perusal of his precious volumes? The Old and the New World have pronounced their verdict on the merits of his literary labors, as well as on his heroic and marvellous exploits, and he stands before us, when we review his services, as among the rarest, the most able and the most instructive of navigators. But are there no other traits of character unfolded by his actions in critical conditions that shall further enhance our love and esteem for the intrepid sailor? Have you a recollection of more promptitude in emergencies than he displayed? Does he not profitably remind you, in his readiness for action, of the renowned Ledyard, the African adventurer? Ever ready, was Kane's signal. Have you found more humanity than his, in those recorded ministrations to the sick which he has given? Have you in memory one more fertile in resources in a perplexing combination of affairs? Have you read of one whose mellifluous words carried more consolation to the afflicted bosom? Have you proofs more convincing of the power of a robust heart to summon order and restore discipline—to command with the energy and
the success of an autocrat? Nowhere have you more forcible and illustrative proofs of the courageous heart, the penetrating forethought, the balanced mind. He was enriched with varied knowledge, but of modest utterance; his capacity for acquisition was rare, yet his cultivated taste and chastened discipline rendered him a congenial and instructive associate for the most refined circles; and by a happy adaptation he yielded delight to the prattling child or the astute philosopher. He won the most grateful acknowledgments from Lady Franklin, in his brief interviews with her, prior to his departure for Havana, where, shortly after, his marvellous life terminated its earthly existence.

A sound intellect and a fearless and exalted moral principle, was the armor he wore; mind was his controlling agent; for, believe it who may, his physical frame, though symmetrical, was small and attenuated; his height somewhat over five feet, and, as he assured me from his own lips, his weight, at its greatest bulk, not 110 pounds; while it was sometimes reduced as light as 97, as when he left New York on his last arctic expedition, as his friend and noble patron, Henry Grinnell, reported to me.

There was no stagnant blood resting in the veins of Commander Kane; his big heart acted with freedom and with force; the vital principle abounded, and every pulsation of his frame beat for discovery and philanthropy.

I am ready to concede the fact, that there is something in the accounts of voyages and travels that yields to us an almost inexpressible delight, independent of the merits of the literary ability with
which they are drawn up, and the character of the narrative itself; and hence the popularity of writings of that nature, even when the productions of inferior pens. This circumstance, it is but justice to admit. Notwithstanding the high merits of Dr. Kane as an author, such voyages as he conducted and such occurrences as he has described, would have proved instructive and captivating, even if recorded with less of that finished taste and descriptive powers, so largely a characteristic of his intellectual capacity. Our gratitude to him is consequently enhanced, when we have confirmatory proofs that the severe application and close confinement to which he subjected himself, after his last return voyage, in order to prepare for the press, within a limited period, his classical volumes, wrought more injury to his delicate frame than he sustained in encountering the hardships of navigation. We consequently love his volumes the more when we reflect upon the cost at which they were prepared: they received their last revision with almost his latest breath. Funeral honors of a high order were rendered upon his death, and his body now lies by the side of his distinguished father, Judge Kane, in the Laurel Hill cemetery, near Philadelphia.

But I will trespass no longer on your kindness. I believe that the feelings of gratitude which dwell within the American bosom will prompt to successful efforts to the erection of a suitable memorial to the chivalrous and noble-hearted explorer.

I have the pleasure to introduce as the orator of the evening, the Honorable Mr. Banks, the illustrious governor of Massachusetts.