The great power of literary men in determining the opinions of men with respect to character & events.

It is manifest, in general, that the power of literary men in determining the opinions of men with respect to characters & events must be interesting & useful. Their curiosities must be excited, whilst they search out its boundless, contemplate the vast field they traverse, (as the result will be, that its extent is commensurate with civilization, & its duration constant through time).

Where severe civilization opens the wilderness & clears away the obstructions & growth of the unlettered mind, literary works immediately impel, & establishing a fixed abode, affixes the inhabitants to their predominant faculties, diffuse the knowledge of distant countries, of past events, & establish the characters of the actors in every great scene; & at the remotest period, when there will be more & greater marks of power & grandeur of generations which have vanished from the earth, to heighten the curiosity & wonder, a knowledge of them can be obtained only through the medium of authors. The present would, all we could, & at the least an insensible night, see it not for history, which, discarding the innermost & inscrutable past ages, leaves but a bright avenue through which we can view their actions & movements. It revives the moulded bodies of ancient heroes, princes, & priests, & presents them before us, if not in their true original forms at least in works, by which they can be easily distinguished from the rest, where fairer and equal to ours, & the scenes are described in language & characters, the only, or almost the whole, of their former energy & as triumphs, though their mighty spirits have long since taken their flight into the invisible world, & bodies be described, & guided through circumstances. What would have been the condition of the human age, without the knowledge which has been transmitted to us, can be easily determined, by considering the state of the first inhabitants of our world. Like man, the world is progressive in improvement; but were