MEMOIRS

OF

MIRABEAU:

BIOGRAPHICAL, LITERARY, AND POLITICAL.

BY HIMSELF,

HIS FATHER, HIS UNCLE, AND HIS ADOPTED CHILD.

VOL. II.

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MDCCXXXV.
Before we conclude the present book, we must endeavour to atone to our readers for the blanks we have been obliged to leave unfilled, as regards the events and correspondence belonging to the time which the fugitives spent in Holland.

Several passages in the collection from Vincennes *, the prefaces to two works published by Mirabeau in 1784 and 1788 †, and a number of letters in our possession, make it manifest that, at Amsterdam, at Rotterdam, at Leyden, and at Dordrecht, he had become intimate, not only with the savans and literati, but also with many citizens, whose taste led them to study politics, and to active philanthropic speculations.

In France, Mirabeau had been received at an early age into the brotherhood of Freemasons. This circumstance had enabled him to visit a Dutch lodge; and it appears that, either spontaneously, or in compliance with a request, he intended to propose an establishment of which we have the plan, written not in his own hand-writing, for he left but a few unconnected autograph notes on the subject, but in that of an amanuensis employed by him for several years, and who probably copied the original manuscript.

This production bears evidence of having been written by Mirabeau. It contains his opinions, his

* See, among others, p. 222, vol. iv.
† Doubts on the Freedom of the Scheldt, and the Address to the Batavians.
principles, and his very style, which is the more easily recognised, because he never sought to disguise or vary it. This is not, we admit, a work of deep reflection, or superior merit. But we think that others will see in it as we do, the most noble and benevolent intentions, and just principles; and will admit that gratitude is due to the writer, a fugitive, and a wanderer, for the voluntary penance which made him devote himself to the good of all, as an indemnity for the injury he had done to a few. This production will also be viewed with a mixture of wonder and concern, as a fresh proof of the talents and generosity of a man, made up of good and evil passions, who sought in the meditations of philanthropy, a little relaxation from domestic anxiety, remorse, and imminent danger. We therefore give it a place here.

**PLAN**

**OF AN INTIMATE ASSOCIATION TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE ORDER OF FREEMASONRY, WITH A VIEW TO RESTORE THAT ORDER TO ITS GENUINE PRINCIPLES, AND MAKE IT TEND EFFECTUALLY TO THE GOOD OF MANKIND: DRAWN UP, IN 1776, BY B. MI——, NOW SURNAMED ARCESILAUS.**

**Preamble.**

"Those who without insight into the principles of the order of Freemasons, and without enthusiasm, enter that brotherhood, from mere curiosity, or from
motives of interest, are generally but little satisfied, and often forsake it, unless the charms of society, or other considerations, induce them to remain. But how widely different must those men think who, after deep reflection, discover the usefulness, the greatness, and the respectability of one universal bond, the ramifications of which, extending to every land, have linked together a great number of enlightened people, most of them of superior birth, fortune, and education, in an institution whose object is to direct all minds to the knowledge of nature's universal creator, to the primitive connection of fraternity and equality which exists among all men, and to the consequent duty of succouring one another, and labouring for the welfare of the whole human race—a duty constantly acknowledged by religion, and by all our discourses and actions.

"Such as are sensible of all this ought not to heed a few unpleasant blemishes. Though they may grieve to witness the little use that has been made of means so sublime, so noble, and so admirable, they ought, nevertheless, to endeavour at least to maintain this institution, to the utmost of their power; so that, if it be not their happy lot to see the day when it shall produce all the fruits expected from it, future generations, at least, may be enabled to work out for the general good of mankind the valuable means which it affords.

"Thus, how little conformable soever a brother may
find the actual state, either of the whole order, or of his particular lodge, to the notions which his private information has enabled him to form of the use of the O., and its possible results, still it is his duty neither to abandon it himself, nor to dissuade candidates from becoming members. If it prove that, in some places, nothing more is done than a little charity to the poor—if in other places what is done has no effect on human welfare—and if even, as is often the case, immaterial things are effected by great powers, which might have been applied to purposes infinitely more beneficial and determinate, had they not been checked by ignorance, narrowness of mind, short-sightedness and personal interest:—still he should not murmur, but comfort himself by saying, that this charity towards the B. is of itself something noble, and worthy of respect; that the little which is done for mankind, though frequently misapplied, is always interesting, and worthy of admiration; that it is an important example of what the O. might do if it were to exert itself, and of what it will do when knowledge and philanthropy, its natural consequences, have become more diffused; but that all this good would be suspended and could not go on, if erroneous notions and culpable impatience led the choicest spirits to forsake the order, and gradually to occasion its dissolution. It is only by keeping alive the enthusiasm of the B., and binding them still more
closely together, that the great object of the institution can be effected.

If the heart of a B. is capable of "love for his neighbour," if he is not infected with that social pestilence, that cold spirit of selfishness, which, as it considers nothing but the present moment, is entirely foreign to every real emotion of the heart, whether for virtue, or for fame, these ideas will bind him to the O., make him espouse all its interests, and induce him to perpetuate its true principles and uses, by inculcating them in the most persuasive manner to others, especially to new B., as well by language as by example. These opinions and feelings will prompt him to overlook the little defects he may perceive in every lodge, owing to the foolish measures adopted every day from want of knowledge, generosity, wisdom, and virtue among most of the brotherhood.

The frivolity, and folly of the Athenians did not prevent Demosthenes, Phocion and other celebrated citizens belonging to that republic, from continuing to serve it till their deaths. Such were the ideas of the greatest men of former ages, with regard to their country; such, too, should be the ideas of an enlightened B. with regard to the O.

Nevertheless, the human intellect is becoming more and more enlightened, and man, so long pent up within the limits of sordid selfishness, by the despotic
power of governments, now begins to entertain more extensive views and feelings, and to watch more carefully over the common interests of his race. All this is due to the intolerable burden of the very power which had deteriorated the springs of their minds. The time is come for the most enlightened and high-minded B. to collect their strength, and turn the O. by degrees towards that goal which it may reach, and thereby become able to contribute with full efficiency, when opportunities offer, to the happiness of all, including even those who are not B. For such a purpose it would be proper to form an association of the most virtuous, humane, and enlightened B., taking for its groundwork the following principles:—

**Principles of the intimate Association of B.**

1st. The object of this institution is to labour most effectually to the one object of the order of Free-Masonry: **THE GOOD OF ALL MANKIND.**

To effect this object, we must rightly understand the means of its attainment.

First: the happiness of each individual depends upon the degree of wisdom and virtue which the Supreme Being has conferred upon him. No society can compel any man to be wise and virtuous: such a project would be chimerical. But we may bring the means of acquiring wisdom and virtue within the reach of many men; this
is a result which human society should pursue eternally, for, by dint of perseverance, it may be obtained.

"Such is the nature of wisdom and virtue, that to make a profession of them is advantageous to those who possess them. If many think otherwise, it is because they have not sense enough to see this truth, or because having at the outset imbibed false notions, they are become incorrigible, and it will remain hidden from their view.

The proper way, therefore, to make men wise and virtuous, is first to enlighten them; and this should be done more especially when they are young.

The primary basis of the exertions of this institution, one of the great principles upon which its rules should be founded, is a resolution to extend to the utmost the circle of knowledge, not so much in depth as in surface.

I explain myself:—

The labours and exertions of this institution should not be employed in scientific research. For the rewards which hardly ever fail to attend discoveries in science are sufficient to engage the pursuit of men of learning.

Nevertheless, if the members of the institution either individually or collectively, can, without detriment to more important matters, give encouragement to useful discoveries, they may do so without swerving from the spirit of the O.
Their main object should be to diffuse among the people those facts and that useful knowledge already revealed to many privileged persons. This would prove the most effectual means of enlightening and improving the human race.

To defective education must be attributed the ignorance of people of all conditions, except a few master spirits, and those to whom literature is a profession. Ignorance lures many into vice, and many more into a course of dissipation, always attended with aberration of intellect, whereby they become incapable for ever of thinking, or of following any useful employment.

This irrational education induces a hatred of science, makes its acquirement almost impossible, and prevents nine hundred and ninety nine people in a thousand, from addicting themselves to reading; the habit of which generates that of thinking, and by arming the mind against the tedium of life, preserves us from a thousand vices and misfortunes.

Means must therefore be found to amend the system. The institution should therefore undertake to examine and encourage every new discovery pertaining to the subject, and to practise and cause to be practised all those which sound reason, joined to experience, may show to be well adapted for the diffusion, more beneficially than heretofore, of true and useful knowledge, and for facilitating its acquirement to all men.

Thus, the introduction of reason, good sense, and
sound philosophy into the education of every class of men, is the primary object of this society.

Let us come to the second point.—If we imagine a race of men endowed with all the wisdom and virtue which can spring from a good education, we shall see that this is not enough to make them happy. A very wise, and very virtuous man would be very wretched, if he had either the gout or the stone. He would not suffer so much as a maniac or a vicious man with the same complaints; but he would be wretched notwithstanding.

It is true that the projected society could never undertake to set bounds to the physical effects which the maker of all things has mixed up with the composition of his work, and which often affect particular persons.

But there are many other obstacles to the happiness which men might enjoy, and these obstacles all proceed from government and legislation. For instance, can it be supposed, that the wisest and most exemplary man can be otherwise than very unfortunate, when he has been torn from his parents, his wife, his children, or his mistress, and sent to be butchered in America*?—when he is a serf bound for ever to the soil, himself and his children with him?—when instead of being able

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* This is evidently an allusion to the Hessians, six thousand of whom the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, Frederick II, sold to the English to go and fight against the rebels of North America. This expedition suggested to Mirabeau the idea of the “Advice to the Hessians,” a work written in Holland, and of which we shall give an account in Book XIV.
to work to support himself, his family and his cattle, he is liable to average or feudal labour; or when he desires to practise some art which he has studied, and to marry the woman of his affections, but is prevented from doing so, because either he has not money enough to take out a licence from his corporation, or it absorbs his last penny, which ought to be laid out to improve his condition?—or when the smallest pretence shall suffice to have him immured in a prison or put to the rack? In a word, is it possible for a wise and virtuous man to be happy, if he is liable to oppression, exile, imprisonment, and death itself, at the pleasure of any powerful fellow-creature whom he may have displeased?

Thus we have shown that despotism and its results constitute one of the great scourges of humanity. The second great object of the present institution is the correction of the actual system of law and government.

This correction may be special or general, gradual or sudden, secret or open.

This latter species should not enter into the spirit of this institution, because it is contrary to the statutes of the O., and even dangerous to humanity. Ambitious men take advantage of troubled times, to cast another net oftentimes more closely woven, to impose upon mankind another yoke frequently more heavy, and to hurry those who had wished only to remedy present evils, into an opposite abyss.

See Cromwell, see the reigning king of Sweden, who
has urged on his adherents far beyond the limits to which they intended to go.

But this institution will be perfectly able to attempt a gradual improvement in law and government. Such a project is not chimerical. It may, however, be easily understood, that this last and sublime part of the brotherhood's labours ought to be kept secret, and disclosed only to confidential persons. The result would be immense, worthy of all the attention of the O., and worthy of itself.

If any one persisted in asserting that the execution was impossible, to him I would reply that patience, perseverance, and secrecy render every thing possible.

If any member of the institution possesses influence in public affairs, or is even able to urge on those who do possess such influence, he will exert himself to destroy one of the fetters that galls human nature in any particular country or place; another will do the same elsewhere; and thus by degrees, with prudence and good-sense, despotism will find itself circumscribed within the limits of reason and of law.

I will here cite as an instance, a recent and striking example of what a body firmly united and guided by wisdom can achieve; and though this instance is taken from an atrocious institution, it may at least serve to prove the power of time and prudence.

I allude to the institution of the Jesuits. What has it not achieved? The object of the Jesuits was un-
doubtedly to make a burnt offering of the liberty of man-
kind upon the altar of superstition and despotism, and
afterwards to make the two latter minister to their own
ambition. They wanted to brutalise the human species
and then govern it. Our views are entirely the reverse:
they tend to enlighten mankind, to render it free and
happy. But we must and ought to attain our end by
the same means, and what should prevent us from ope-
rating in good what the Jesuits did in evil.

Besides we possess infinite advantages over them. We
have no dress, no external rite to distinguish us, no
visible chief invested with the power of dissolving our
association. At every storm which might threaten us,
we could dive and reappear at other times and in other
places. We have no interested or ambitious views that
might give umbrage. If, with these means, a judicious
choice is made in the admission of members, and in
the care taken to form them, and instil into them the
principles of our association, it is impossible not to
succeed. Pythagoras and his disciples formed in that
part of Italy called Magna Græcia, an almost similar
society. We respect, and justly so, this illustrious B. M.
and he may serve as our model.

Having thus stated the principles of this institution,
I will hazard a sketch of a few regulations which natu-
 rally arise from it, entreat ing the B. who read them to
add their own observations.
REGULATIONS FOR THE PROPOSED ASSOCIATION.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL REGULATIONS.

I. This association shall be entirely grafted upon that of the order of Free-masons, and therefore intimately connected with it; and none shall become a member of the former, until he has been admitted into the latter.

II. The admission to this institution shall take place with the same description of ceremonies as those observed in the other degrees of the O. The form of admission shall be in unison with the object of the institution, and the rites shall be determined by those brothers who first accede to the plan. These rites when once fixed shall never be changed except by general consent.

III. There shall be two principal degrees. In the first, the initiated shall be informed of the true object of the whole order, THE GOOD OF HUMANITY, and the intention of efficaciously labouring for its attainment. The general system of the association shall be explained, and one of its objects, namely—the intention of reforming and extending the education of mankind, and of protecting with united force every thing that shall tend thereto.
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In the second degree, to which none shall be admitted who have not given evident proofs of zeal in pursuit of good, the second object shall be explained, namely—the correcting of law and governments, and the establishment of an equitable liberty among men.

IV. As all the members must be B. M., they must be zealous in that order, not only because it is an excellent school of public spirit, but also in order to acquire the masonic dignities of their lodge, and make the strength of the latter concur, unknown to its general members, in the views of the association, which are also those of the Free-masons. The masonic lodges having at their head members of this association, shall be termed enlightened lodges.

V. The association shall be divided into provinces, after the model of the order, and there shall be a capital in each state, but without possessing any authority. The great undertakings which require a general co-operation of force, shall be decided upon by the majority of votes, first in each lodge of the association, and afterwards in the lodges united. Out of lodge, each member, individually, or several voluntarily united, shall labour to forward the views of the institution among their friends, always giving an account of their proceedings at the metropolitan lodge, which shall inform the other lodges of the same.
CHAPTER II.

QUALIFICATION OF CANDIDATES FOR ADMISSION.

I. It must be a fundamental rule never to allow any sovereign prince whatever to enter the society, were he an angel in virtue. If monarchs were not absolutely excluded, they would infallibly spoil the institution, in the same manner they have spoiled Freemasonry. But noblemen, provided they have become superior to the prejudices generally attributed to that class, would be valuable members of this association, because the point of honour which binds them to their engagements, would render them more attached to it. The fear of losing the esteem of their friends, would make them more punctual in the fulfilment of their duties. Further, the certainty they have, from their birth, of attaining to the most elevated posts, would render them the most efficient members to labour usefully in forwarding the great objects proposed. And let them not fear that in procuring the liberty and happiness of mankind they injure their own interests: for, independently of being themselves the first victims of despotism, they have only to turn their eyes towards England. Have the nobles of that country lost any of their rights, or any of the splendour of their station, because they have not the power of oppression and injustice?—or has the abolition of average labour rendered their estates less productive? Quite the
reverse. Liberty benefits every one, except the despot, and the cruel and unjust man.

II. A candidate must possess either property, or talents that secure him against indigence. Poverty renders a man too liable to undertake any thing that may extricate him from it, to justify his being made acquainted with a project like the present. It must be concealed from an individual in such a situation, or likely hereafter to be so situated.

III. Although probity must be considered an indispensable qualification in a candidate, he must, nevertheless, be also a man of strict propriety of conduct. A prodigal voluptuary squanders and wastes his fortune, however considerable it may be, and finds himself under the necessity of doing many blameable things, in order to repair the effects of his improvidence. He might thus frequently be unable to fulfil his duties in the institution, or might perhaps even injure or betray its best interests.

IV. As prudence is an indispensable qualification, no member shall be admitted under thirty years of age.

V. He must have obtained, in Free-masonry, the three first degrees at least, and must have given, during a lapse of time, not less than three years, by his constant attendance at the labours of one or more lodges, proof of prudence and attachment to the public good.

VI. Independently of probity, an indispensable qualification in a candidate must be firmness. He
must possess a manly and courageous manner of thinking, and a strong feeling of fame and honour. Not that this institution can require great personal sacrifices: if such were the case, it could not exist, on account of its numerous members. But it is impossible to rely on the attachment of a man to his connections, if he be destitute of courage and firmness; and of all characters in the world, that one with which the least is to be accomplished, is the timid and inconsiderate man, were he even, in other respects, endowed with good qualities, and every possible talent.

VII. A candidate must have received a certain education, acquired some knowledge, and be an enlightened man. He must be fond of study, and of discoursing upon serious and useful topics.

VIII. A religious fanatic shall be excluded, ipso facto, from the association. Not that it ought to be composed of men without religion—God forbid! But it is essentially necessary, that whilst they adore the supreme architect of nature, with sincerity, and each after his own fashion, they shall not condemn, in any way whatever, those who adore him according to any other mode, provided that mode does not enjoin actions evidently contrary to true morality, and to what is acknowledged and proved to promote the happiness of mankind. In a word, every candidate must be perfectly tolerant, and convinced that religion is an affair between God and each of his individual creatures,
in which no person has a right to interfere, against the will of the party interested. Such shall be the qualifications demanded of the candidates; and if the association is to yield the desired fruits, those regulations must be inflexibly acted upon. Fresh proofs must even be required, whenever a brother shall pass from the first to the second degree of the association, which promotion shall not take place unless it has been remarked that the brother's enthusiasm in favour of humanity has acquired additional energy. If he feel himself displeased at this, he will perhaps withdraw from the institution. But what matters his secession?—and what will he be able to say, that, far from injuring the association, will not redound to its glory? This is not the case with the second degree. An enemy might, however noble his principles, present it under an odious light, dangerous to the members. This is the reason why the choice for this degree must be made with the utmost caution.

CHAPTER III.

DUTIES TO WHICH THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OBLIGE THEMSELVES.

ARTICLE I.—General Duties.

I. The members of the association, resident in the same place, shall be united in bonds of friendship, which
is of easy accomplishment, as they all must be of an honourable station in society.

II. Sure signs and words will enable them to recognise each other, and they shall not conceal themselves from those who may prove themselves brothers.

III. There shall not exist any charitable fund in the society, because it is not anticipated that any member can stand in need of it; and because, if, by any extraordinary chance, such should happen to be the case, as all the members are masons, the person so situated might have recourse to their lodges.

It follows from this, that no member of the society shall ask pecuniary assistance from the other members. But they will render reciprocally to each other every service which intimate friends, bound by the most noble obligations, owe to one another.

IV. Above all, they shall accept collectively the trust that may be left to them by a dying B., either for the education or guardianship of his children or other persons. This, however, shall not force them to incur any expense, unless from the natural impulse of their own generosity.

V. The members shall always take care to manage things in such a way, that the papers belonging to the institution may never fall into profane hands.
ARTICLE II.—Duties of the Brothers of the inferior Degree.

Independently of the obligation of secrecy towards all uninitiated persons, of submission to the laws of the association, and all others of the same nature, they shall engage—

I. To promote by all means in their power the establishment of efficient instructors, particularly for the people.

II. To encourage every new attempt at correcting the present mode of education.

III. To encourage all establishments of public instruction, founded upon good principles, and not upon the pedantic plan, teeming with prejudice, hitherto followed in the education of youth.

IV. To acquire knowledge themselves, by reading good works, by conversing and meditating upon every object of public utility, and especially upon education.

V. Those members who are husbands and fathers, shall engage to superintend the education of their children, the development of their bodily strength, as well as their mental faculties, and to inspire them with those principles which form the basis of the society, and with those virtues without which they would not themselves have been received among its members.

VI. To assist each other reciprocally, in order that
the united forces of the masonic lodges to which they belong, may concur in the same object with themselves.

Article III.—Duties of the Brothers of the superior Degree.

These brothers engage—

I. On their initiation to this degree, and by the most sacred obligations never to quit it nor detach themselves from it, on any pretence whatever, and to whatever height of fortune they may rise; never to cease observing all the obligations contracted in it; always to acknowledge the members, and never to break off their connection with them; for the more they acquire power and influence, the more they will be enabled to fulfil the object of this degree. If a brother is member of the sovereignty of a state, or becomes the minister or favourite of a monarch, he shall employ all his influence to promote the object of the association. He shall, acting however with discernment, inspire his sovereign with his own views of love, humanity and justice. He shall prevent him, as much as lies in his power, from acts of oppression, from yielding to ruinous profuseness, boundless ambition, or insatiable avarice. He shall render to his brethren an account of what he may have done in the pursuit of this plan, in order to receive from them the just meed of praise and esteem of which he shall have proved himself worthy.

II. To abolish, as much as lies in their power, the
slavery of the peasants, the subjection of men to the
glebe, the rights of mortmain, and all those rights and
customs which degrade humanity, and are remnants of
the frightful barbarity of our ancestors.

In explanation of this article, it is necessary to state
that the association does not exact supernatural sacrifices
of generosity. As these are repugnant to the heart of
man, the institution could not exist if such were required.
Thus, it is not expected that a nobleman should grant
freedom to all his peasants without compensation;
but he will certainly derive a much greater advantage
from establishing them as small farmers upon their
portion of land, than from keeping them always in
slavery. The estates, in England, cultivated upon this
plan, are infinitely more productive than those of our
country, where the peasants are serfs.

III. To concur by all the means in their power in
abolishing average labour, upon condition of equitable
compensation, the advantage of which is entirely in
favour of the lord of the manor, as it has been incon-
testibly proved.

IV. To concur by all the means in their power in
abolishing all craft, corporations, and companies—all
impediments, in short, to industry. As every
man must work, there must not exist, according to the
laws of sound morality, any obstacle to his performance
of this duty.

V. To concur by all the means in their power in
abolishing every restraint upon trade, by custom and excise dues, and imposts of every description, by which the farmers of the public revenue seize upon the substance of the nation, without the people knowing how much they give.

VI. To do every thing in their power to diminish the enormous taxes which the unfortunate people are at present obliged to pay.

VII. To make every possible effort to bring about a general tolerance of all religious opinions. Provided a man be useful to the state, of what consequence to the government is his belief? The example of Holland, England, and of the Colonies in America, prove the utility of this principle.

VIII. To use every exertion to abolish all ecclesiastical jurisdictions, diminish the number of priests, where that number is excessive, and wrest every weapon from the hand of superstition.

IX. To endeavour by all the means they possess to circumscribe despotism within narrower and less unjust limits. For Germany, they will labour to maintain the right of the States, and resist arbitrary power, and will spurn all vile motives of interest. As it is impossible to particularise upon this subject, every thing depending upon circumstances, the brothers will consult among themselves, in their assemblies, upon the means of fulfilling their engagements on this head. It shall form the subject of their maturest deliberations.
X. It is with this view that, as the brothers of the inferior degree will read with attention good works upon the education of all classes of men, those of the superior degree shall peruse and meditate upon all productions treating of legislation and government. They shall point out to each other, and jointly seek in them what may be applicable to their own cases.

XI. They shall every where oppose the injustice committed by powerful men; and if they cannot prevent unjust actions, they shall endeavour to proclaim them, and deliver up the authors to the rack of public opinion.

XII. For this purpose they shall support as much as possible the liberty of the press, the strongest barrier against tyranny and oppression; they shall distribute every where those writings which cause umbrage to despotism; they shall also assist the authors, of such productions, if men of talent, and if there is no malice or deception in their conduct.

XIII. In order still more to encourage the members of the association to act with zeal in the fulfilment of the above mentioned engagements to their fullest extent, they shall solemnly swear to assist with all their might those who, through excess of zeal in the performance of their obligations, may fall into misfortune. The names of those who are sufferers in the cause of humanity, shall be communi-
cated to all the B. Their noblest actions shall be made public, in order that they may enjoy the honour they deserve, and they shall be received with esteem by all their brethren. These things shall never fail to be mentioned in all the regular correspondence, between the enlightened lodges and their capital, and also between the different provinces.

Such is the sketch of the plan of an edifice, the details of which may be determined upon, as soon as it is founded.