Our Constitutional Liberty

Other misfortunes may be borne, or their effects overcome. If disastrous war should sweep our commerce from the ocean, another generation may renew it; if it exhaust our treasury, future industry may replenish it; if it desolate and lay waste our fields, still, under a new cultivation they will grow green again, and ripen to future harvests. It were but a trifle if the walls of yonder capitol were to crumble, if its lofty pillars should fall, and its gorgeous decorations be all covered by the dust of the valley; all these might be rebuilt. But who shall reconstruct the fabric of demolished government? Who shall rear again the well proportioned columns of constitutional liberty? Who shall frame together the skillful architecture which unites national sovereignty with State rights, individual security, and public prosperity? No, gentlemen, if these columns fall they will be raised not again. Like the Coliseum and the Parthenon they will be destined to a mournful, a melancholy immortality. Bitterer tears, however, will flow over them than were ever shed over the monuments of Roman or Grecian art; for they will be the remnants of a more glorious edifice than Greece or Rome ever saw the edifice of constitutional American liberty.

Daniel Webster