REV. DR. BETHUNE'S ORATION

BEFORE

THE PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY.

THE CLAIMS OF OUR COUNTRY ON ITS LITERARY MEN.

AN

ORATION

BEFORE

THE PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY

OF

HARVARD UNIVERSITY,

JULY 19, 1849.

BY

GEORGE W. BETHUNE.

CAMBRIDGE:
PUBLISHED BY JOHN BARTLETT.
1849.

CAMBRIDGE:
METCALF AND COMPANY,
PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

ORATION.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of
The Phi Beta Kappa Society:

The next difficulty, after gaining courage to address so distinguished an assembly, is the choice of a subject. The orator's habits may, through your characteristic courtesy, influence his decision; and, as you have laid the honorable appointment upon one who has been consecrated an advocate of Christian morals, you will not be displeased, if his theme should accord with his calling. His task will, then, be more proportionate to his powers; for the discovery of truth is seldom a privilege of man, and the illustration of well-known principles in a manner that gives them attractive freshness is an art of rare genius; but to urge simply, yet earnestly, the motives of duty, is not above the pitch of an ordinary strength. You have, also, gone beyond your own ranks, (every man of which were more worthy of the office,) and commanded the present service from a stranger of a distant city, nurtured at the bosom of another

Alma Mater, who, without a drop of New England blood in his veins, has little knowledge of your sectional topics, sympathies, or predilections; therefore, while deeply grateful for the compliment, he unhesitatingly assumes the full right, which your request implies, of speaking as it becomes him before a society of American scholars, fearless of giving offence by a frank utterance of his thoughts, certain of a kindly hearing from those whom talent, cultivated under the best auspices, has made liberal, candid, and considerate.

The Claims of our Country upon its Literary Men have been often discussed; but the field is so rich, that it may well reward an hour's gleaning, though many strong reapers have gone before.

Patriotism has been regarded by some as a visionary virtue, existing only in boyish dreams, romantic rhapsodies, and declamations of demagogues; by others it has been denounced as a narrow vice, the opposite of Christian philanthropy. The first are at variance with the general sense of mankind; the last, with the moral economy ordained by God. That there are those who, while professing love for their country, would sacrifice its welfare to their selfishness, proves no more than their infirmity or hypocrisy. Human weakness is no argument against the reality of a virtue; on the contrary, a false pretence of a moral principle testifies to its value, for cunning bad men cloak their evil with the semblance of good. It were mere

commonplace of quotation to cite instances showing the power of patriotic sentiment. Every page of history, and of none more than our own, records its courage in conflict, or its devotion under defeat. Poetry, the language which genius gives to the heart, exults with its pride, or saddens with its sorrow. The orator appeals to it, seldom in vain, as among the strongest passions of our nature. The ethical philosopher defines its limits and adjusts its rules. The Holy Scriptures sanctify it by their infallible authority, when they preserve "for our learning" the mournful elegies of captive Judah, mingling her tears with the waters of Babylon; or bid us "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him, but weep sore for him who goeth away, for he shall return no more, nor see his native country"; or, above all, exhibit the sympathy of Christ himself, the Divine perfection of humanity, who, on his way to die for the world, paused to lament over Jerusalem, and, as he sent forth the "glad tidings which shall be for all people," commanded that they should be proclaimed first throughout the land of his birth. Nay, amidst the shades of this venerable Academy, where so many mighty spirits have gathered wisdom that they might go out to give their grateful fellow-citizens oracles of far-reaching, conservative, animating counsel, and so many, worthy of their ancestry, are at this time refreshing their zeal by the contemplation of such high examples; with the sacred fields round about us on which the proto-martyrs of our country poured forth their

blood like water, and in close sight of Bunker's Hill, — who, under the glory of "so great a cloud of witnesses," dares question the reality of a virtue so magnanimous in trial and so grand in successes? One, who has been a companion and fellow of miscalled politicians, holding the base creed, that offices made for our country's advantage are the legitimate pay of successful, because unscrupulous, conspirators, until he has "quite lost the divine quality of his first being," may sneer at patriotism as a profligate does at conscience, or a wanton at modesty; an atrabilious misanthrope, eager after proofs of human pravity, may have no leisure for observing the beautiful workings of God within man "both to will and to do of His good pleasure"; a mystical abstractionist, inverting his reason from the actualities of common life, may forget the common feelings of common men; but a little child, whose heart leaps at the word *home*, and knows why the cannon roars on the twenty-second of February or the fourth of July, can lead us to a purer, more generous, more uplifting, more philosophical sentiment.

Love to all men is, indeed, the law of Christianity. God, "who hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth, for to dwell together on the face of the whole earth," never meant that the brotherhood should be broken by territorial boundaries, or limited by expedients of trade. Yet none, but those who have gone mad upon remote generalisms and unities, will deny that kindred, vicinage, and organized reciprocity impose peculiar

obligations. The maxim, that "charity begins at home," though much abused, is true. While God is the great object of all obedience, each man is made the centre of his human relations. His regard for himself is the inspired rule and measure of the regard due from him to his fellows. Next to himself is his household, then the immediate community in which he lives, then his country, then the world. Genuine benevolence is systematically expansive. It is educated in the family for the state, in the state for mankind. A disobedient child will not make a good citizen, nor one unfaithful to his countrymen a philanthropist. These affections are concentric circles, described by the hand of the All-Wise around the heart; nor is it possible for our love to reach the outer, but by overflowing the inner. Hence the mistake of the illogical communist is apparent, when, to realize the idea, truthful in itself, of a universal family, he would destroy the germ from which the grand sociality must spring, and, with it, the household dependencies that teach a mutual well-being, the household needs that urge a combination of effort. We sympathize with him in his aim, but we deny the wisdom of his process.

For the very reason that these affections are concentric, they never clash. The Divine law, which assumes it to be right that a man should love himself, because he is, under God, the guardian of his own welfare, enjoins upon him love for his neighbour; and, as the same authority requires his care for those to whom he is more immediately

related in his own house, so should he care for his country, which is an enlargement of his home, and for the world, which is the common home of his heavenly Father's human family. But, as self-love becomes sinful selfishness when it prompts a man to war against, or even neglect, his neighbour's good, so does love of country become a vice when it seeks national aggrandizement by injury done the people of other lands. The same rule that measures duty between man and man is equally applicable to nations. As an individual is dependent upon his fellows, as a community is prosperous through a distribution of labor and a reciprocity of benefits, so must international exchanges be for the good of each and of all; and, since it is a law of retributive providence, political science should adopt as an axiom, "The liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand."

The nearly synonymous use, in these remarks, of the terms *duty* and *affection* has arisen from no confusedness of thought, but from the difficulty, or rather impropriety, of treating them apart from each other. What life is to the animal frame, *love* is to morals. The anatomist may dissect a dead body, and demonstrate the functions of each part in the wonderful mechanism; but the mysterious motive-power, which gave impulse to all, is gone. So the moralist who leaves love out of view, however accurately he may define our relations and deduce rules of conduct, presents us with a cold, inanimate abstraction. Such is not the system of the Bible. There, all duty is comprehended by

love. Love is the vital principle of obedience to God and of service to man. Reason, unduly lauded as the superior quality of our nature, is, even when embracing by faith "the wisdom from above," valuable only as it advances the development of love towards its heavenly perfection in the likeness of God. Hence, by the Divine arrangement, there is for every duty an inspiring affection. The love of parents for their child precedes proof of parental obligation; the love of a child for its parents is the stem on which filial duty must be grafted. Omniscient grace exhibits the forgiveness of God, "that he may be feared"; and constrains us from sin to the love of Christ, by "shedding his love abroad in our hearts"; because, "if we love him, we shall keep his commandments." Thus love of country is first called forth by the power of association over our natural sensibilities. As a babe learns to love the face which smiles kindly on him, the voice which gently soothes him, the bosom which yields him sustenance, the clasping arm which embraces him, so do we love the scenes about our early home, the haunts of familiar and friendly intercourse, the fields which give us bread. They may be rugged and unattractive to a stranger's eye, but the heart radiates over them its own beauty. His icy plains are as dear to the hyperborean as the Alpine valley to the Swiss, or the vine-clad hills, laughing shore, and purple sea to the Italian. Then, as reason expands, the love expands. We learn to love the people whose welfare is united with our own, and the soil held

in common with them; to cherish the government whose laws afford us protection; or, if it be tyrannical, to struggle for a better, and to die rather than suffer foreign domination. Yet, though rational self-interest should enhance the affection, it is not, of itself, a sufficient principle of duty; for, if we consider only the profit which our country brings us, we shall serve it only so far as the service is profitable. Love is the strength of patriotism; for love alone is capable of that unhesitating, self-sacrificing devotion which seeks reward in our country's honor, holding fortune, ease, and life, as our country's fathers held them, cheap for its sake. Nor can we doubt that a sentiment so natural, so generous, so energetic, divinely indicates a corresponding obligation; or that unfaithfulness to our country is unfaithfulness to God.

This brief reasoning may seem unnecessary, and it would be, were it not for a disposition, too often shown by some claiming superior refinement, to treat patriotism as, at best, a weakness of the vulgar, forgetting that many of what are called weaknesses belong to the best parts of humanity. Like the early, fragrant blossoms of the vine, they promise fruits of active usefulness; or, like its slight, graceful tendrils, they twine our pliant infirmity around the upright strength of ascertained rule. The spirit of patriotism has also decayed among our people generally. Vain and boastful as we have been said to be, it is only in the United States of America that you can hear natives speaking contemptuously of their country. Some causes for this

may be discerned. The immense extent of our country, our allegiance to which passes through our allegiance to our several States, whose rights must be watchfully guarded; the consequent variety of products and circumstances, creating a supposed, but not real, opposition of interests; the very greatness and unprecedented progress of our prosperity, allowing no salutary lessons from grave adversity; the licentiousness of party rancour, stimulated far more by the cupidity of profligate office-seekers than by any substantial difference of political doctrine; the inability of the less educated or less gifted to look over the vast field, and comprehend the stretch of their personal responsibility; the too general aversion of the good and wise to meddle with canvasses made purposely annoying by gross demagogues, who, Aristophanes tells us, are like the eel-fishers of the Copaïs, that do best in dirty waters *; — all these have a tendency to cool down our ardor to a more latent heat; but above all, the remoteness of other countries, which renders less noticeable the contrast of our unequalled privileges. We see the evils that exist among ourselves, and feel what Locke calls our "present uneasiness," while we admire what appears desirable abroad under the "enchantment" of distance. Besides, our Anglo-Saxon blood, though tempered by alternating extremes of heat and cold, retains its pro-

---

* Ὅπερ γὰρ οἱ τὰς ἐγχέλεις θηρώμενοι πέπονθας.
Ὅταν μὲν ἡ λίμνη καταστῇ, λαμβάνουσιν οὐδέν·
Ἐὰν δ' ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω τὸν βόρβορον κυκῶσιν,
Αἱροῦσι. ΙΠΠΗΣ, 864–867.

pensity to quarrel and (pardon the rude English, — no other language supplies us with a synonyme) to grumble; so, having none else to quarrel with, nothing else to grumble at, we vent our hereditary spleen upon ourselves and our government. In a word, we lack a proper degree of loyalty.

Loyalty is the very term to describe the sentiment that cordially acknowledges the claims of our nation upon our love and service. It has indeed signified, almost exclusively, the fidelity of a subject to his prince; nor, though, from our political habits, we cannot comprehend the feeling, can we help admiring the many instances of heroic valor, patient constancy, disregard of loss or suffering, and zeal through good or evil fortunes, which such attachment has prompted. Yet, though the principle has undoubtedly come down from those early times when the patriarch was the chief of his tribe, its more modern name is clearly derived from considering the monarch as the head of the state, because the representative of the incorporating law. To uphold the authority of him who sat upon the throne, because it was necessary for the stability of government and the safety of the people, became a virtue as well as a policy; yet, (such is our nature,) through the force of association, the person of the reigning prince grew to be so sacred, that it often attracted and absorbed the homage due him only in his official character; and history tells us of men clinging desperately to the anointed fool who sported with their destinies, the priest-ridden bigot who persecuted their religion,

and the licentious tyrant who preyed upon their substance or wasted their lives.

Loyalty, with us, is more agreeable to the etymology of the term. It is a reverent attachment to law emanating from the people according to the Constitution. Our magistrates, it is true, are, during their term of office, representatives of the law, and, as such, should receive our venerating obedience; nay, very grave must be the provocation, before we

> " 'bate
> The place its honor for the holder's sake ";

but our loyalty cannot be given to them, because they are the creatures of the popular will. Our only sovereign, under God, is the people acting legally; and to them, while just in the exercise of their constitutional sovereignty, is due that fealty which political propriety, with the Word of God, commands from us to "the higher powers" of the land. Hence, the loyalty of an American citizen is of a more intellectual character, and, therefore, more difficult to be maintained. The person of a king is a visible, tangible object, and men can regard him as a man; but our people are such an immense multitude, that it is not easy to regard them in their aggregate capacity, except as a theoretical idea; though, truly, the king is the figment, the people the substantial reality. The will of a monarch comes down upon his subjects from a height which long prescription has taught them to consider the source of law; the will of our people ascends through their ballots, and, when justified by the

national compact, becomes the law, which, by the same compact, we are bound loyally to obey. But in the formation of this law, each citizen, as a constituent part of the legislating people, has a share; so that, as far as his vote has effect, he is his own sovereign and a law unto himself. The law is the result of the general suffrage, perhaps of long discussion, angry dispute, and a small majority. The ballot-box, like a mighty crucible, fuses together the conflicting prejudices, sectional jealousies, antagonist opinions, and rival aims, which move the millions acting their several parts within the vast republic. It is, therefore, not easy to hush the passions which have stirred us during the exercise of our elective right; to acknowledge with due submission the supremacy of the general over the individual will; to own the rule of those who, though the majority, we believe are in the wrong; to respect and love (ay, love, for without respect and love there is no loyalty) the people whose errors we see, whose faults we condemn, whose policy we dread. Still, such loyalty must be cherished, or our Union, now moving in harmony, like the heavenly orbs, by the nice balance of its centrifugal and centripetal forces, would soon become a chaos of fragments wild, jostling, and mutually destructive.

Why should not such loyalty be cherished? Will not the issue of our ballot-box come nearer the right than the will of a crowned despot, or of an hereditary nobility, or of any privileged class? Has history shown the world so well governed by

the autocrat or the few, the happiness of the many so cared for by those who held themselves above and not of them; has political virtue so run in the line of legitimacy, or political wisdom so been the consequence of high birth, that, for some slight mistakes or even disastrous failures, we should abandon our popular system to adopt any other? On the contrary, has not experience proved the safety and self-perpetuating energy of our institutions? When our national government was formed, how many scornful voices in the Old World confidently prophesied its speedy downfall, from the alleged want of elemental adhesiveness! Yet, short as our history is, our system has survived most of the European governments, and, as the signs of the times strongly indicate, may, at no very distant date, outlast them all; except, perchance, our sister republics of the Swiss, which, now seven hundred years old, tower, like their Alps, above the prostrate or shaking thrones around them. How often, as this party or the other came uppermost, have the disappointed leaders rent their clothes, and, with ashes on their heads, howled dolefully over the land, that our ruin was nigh, that our commerce would be destroyed, our manufactures crushed, or our agriculture impoverished! Yet, notwithstanding the mischievous vacillations of our economical policy, where, a few years since, there was one ship, there is now a fleet of merchantmen; single manufactories have grown into prosperous cities; there is scarcely a farmer in the old States, who has not pulled down his house and

barns to build better and larger; while, in the new, the virgin forests have gone down to let the sunshine smile upon fields of plenty so rich and vast that their statistics almost stagger belief. We are but seventy-three years old, yet our States are thirty where there were thirteen; nor can any one, who candidly compares the two periods, deny that we have grown more united as our millions have multiplied, and more consolidated as our territory has expanded, until our Constitution, like a noble arch, stronger by every fresh weight imposed upon it, now upholds in a prosperity unexampled an area equal to the continent of Europe.

There are, doubtless, differences of opinion respecting some of the steps by which these results have been attained; but it is only with things as they are, or promise to be, that our present reasoning is concerned. In the year 1824, the Oration was pronounced before you by a gentleman then not unknown to fame as an accomplished scholar, but since eminently distinguished as the erudite statesman of whose eloquent power Massachusetts has been justly very proud, as the dignified representative of American culture while diplomatically representing the United States at the first court of Europe, and (not the least of his well-merited honors) as the head of your great University. His discourse then was fervid with patriotic hopes, and demonstratively prescient of our country's rapid advancement; but how must his generous heart rejoice to see that the accomplished reality has far transcended his warmest anticipations! Indeed, the aim

of the address you are now hearing so patiently is humbly to follow out, through the accumulated facts of 1849, some of the thoughts with which he stirred our youthful ambition twenty-five years ago.

That there are portentous evils existing among us, national crimes provoking the wrath of Heaven, practices widely inconsistent with the just theory of equality which we avow, and fearful perils to be met at no very distant day, it were folly to deny; but let us remember that everything human is necessarily imperfect, that Heaven, while condemning sin, is mercifully patient with the infirmities of the sinner, and that reform is arduously slow, as vice is precipitant. Instead of desponding because all we desire has not been done, we should be highly encouraged by the achievement of so much. Certainly, no people ever made such growth in wealth, arts, general knowledge, and, considering all the circumstances, social virtues. The large scope given to expression of thought, and the multiplying opportunities of moral influence, have already wrought most salutary changes of public sentiment on important subjects. The triumph of truth with the prevalence of right, though delayed, is certain, and, when gained, will be permanent. Let us, then, not heed the murmurs of the self-conceited dogmatist because his opinion is not the pivot on which the nation swings; of the sordid gain-seeker, who would turn the country's force to enhance the profits of his ship or his furnace, his cotton-plant or his spindle; or of the fanatic nullifier, of whatever latitude, who

would sever his State or his section from such a league of powerful coadjutants, to dwindle in puny isolation. Thank God, the Samson is not, never will be, born, who can pull down our glorious edifice for the silly gratification of breaking his own pate! One honest American woman's scissors are more than a match for all the strength such heads can wear.

Our people deserve our trust. Far and wide as they have stretched themselves, they hold one political faith. The new States, allowing for the difference of period and circumstances, are but repetitions of the old thirteen. At this time of nearly universal uprising and struggles for reform elsewhere, we present to the world the unprecedented spectacle of unanimous satisfaction with the system of government established by our national fathers. Within the past and the coming years, there will have gone from among us, lured by the hope of golden rewards, to our new territory on the Pacific, numbers, principally of hardy, well-taught, determined young men, equalling the population of an entire State; an instance unparalleled throughout the history of emigration; yet no one doubts that they will choose for themselves the same forms of government under which they have been educated, or that they will cordially maintain their allegiance to the Union. A citizen of the United States cannot imagine the possibility of living in happiness under any other system; and now, when contemplating the efforts of distant nations, sprung from the same loins that we are, for the establish-

ment of constitutional freedom, we estimate their chances of permanent success by their approach in forms to our own, in spirit to ourselves. Nor have we been inconsistent with our professions; for, whatever has been the decree of the ever-shifting majority, submission to law, and reliance upon the constitutional methods of correcting error, have steadily prevailed. At least, the exceptions have been too inconsiderable to impair the rule, and were speedily settled. Wonderful as was the revolution which made the colonies free, independent, confederate States, every national exercise of the elective right is, though on different grounds, worthy of equal admiration. We change our national rulers, and, with them, our national policy; yet, from one end of the country to the other, there is less riot than in England at the election of a member of Parliament. Nor can the most inveterate *laudator temporis acti*, who has read the newspapers published at the time of the earlier contests, deny that each general election is better conducted than were those before.

We are emphatically one people. The constant and expanding flood of emigrants from less favored lands gives in some sections a temporary, superficial diversity of customs, and even of language. Yet, as they come moved by an admiring wish to share our privileges, and a grateful respect for the nation which has made itself so prosperous, while it sets open its gates so hospitably wide, they readily adopt our usages, and soon become homogeneous with the mass through which they are

distributed. Until they or their children are educated in free citizenship, they follow; but rarely, and then never successfully, attempt to lead. As the Anglo-Saxon tongue is the speech of the nation, so it is the Anglo-Saxon mind that rules. The sons of those who triumphed in the war of Independence have subdued the distant forest, making the wilderness to rejoice with the arts and virtues of their fathers. The patronymics borne by the most influential among them are most frequently such as are familiar and honorable among us. Summon together the dwellers in any town of our older, particularly of our more northern, States, and you will find that there is scarcely a State of the Union where they have not relatives. The representative in Congress from the farthest West laughs over their school-boy frolics with the representative of the farthest East. The woodsman on the Aroostook talks of his brother on the Rio Grande; the tradesman in the seaport, of his son, a judge, in Missouri. The true-hearted girl, who has left her mountain birth-place to earn her modest *paraphernalia* amidst the ponderous din of a factory near the Atlantic coast, dreams sweetly on her toil-blest pillow of him who, for her dear sake, is clearing a home in the wilds of Iowa, or sifting the sands of some Californian Pactolus. We all claim a common history, and, whatever be our immediate parentage, are proud to own ourselves the grateful children of the mighty men who declared our country's independence, framed the bond of our Union, and bought with

their sacred blood the liberties we enjoy. Nor is it an insincere compliment to assert, that, go where you will, New England is represented by the shrewdest, the most enlightened, the most successful, and the most religious of our young population. Nearly all our teachers, with the authors of our school-books, and a very large proportion of our preachers, as well as of our editors, (the classes which have the greatest control over the growing character of our youth,) come from, or receive their education in, New England. Wherever the New Englander goes, he carries New England with him. New England is his boast, his standard of perfection, and "So they do in New England!" his confident answer to all objectors. Great as is our reverence for those venerable men, he rather wearies us with his inexhaustible eulogy on the Pilgrim Fathers, who, he seems to think, have begotten the whole United States. Nay, enlarging upon the somewhat complacent notion of his ancestors, that God designed for them, "his chosen people," this Canaan of the aboriginal heathen, he looks upon the continent as his rightful heritage, and upon the rest of us as Hittites, Jebusites, or people of a like termination, whom he is commissioned to root out, acquiring our money, squatting on our wild lands, monopolizing our votes, and marrying our heiresses. Whence, or how justly, he derived his popular *sobriquet*, passes the guess of an antiquary; but certain it is, that, if he meets with a David, the son of Jesse has often to take up the lament in a different sense from the original, —

"I am distressed for thee, my Brother Jonathan!" Better still, his sisters, nieces, female cousins, flock on various honorable pretexts to visit him amidst his new possessions, where they own with no Sabine reluctance the constraining ardor of our unsophisticated chivalry; and happy is the household over which a New England wife presides! blessed the child whose cradle is rocked by the hand, whose slumber is hallowed by the prayers, of a New England mother! The order of the Roman policy is reversed. He conquered, and then inhabited; the New Englander inhabits, then gains the mastery, not by force of arms, but by mother-wit, steadiness, and thrift. That there should be, among us of the other races, a little occasional petulance, is not to be wondered at; but it is only superficial. The New Englander goes forth not as a spy or an enemy, and the gifts which he carries excite gratitude, not fear. He soon becomes identified with his neighbours, their interests are soon his, and the benefits of his enterprising cleverness swell the advantage of the community where he has planted himself, thus tending to produce a moral homogeneousness throughout the confederacy. Yet let it be remembered that this New England influence, diffusing itself, like noiseless but transforming leaven, through the recent and future States, while it makes them precious as allies, would also make them formidable as rivals, terrible as enemies. The New Englander loses little of his main characteristics by migration. He is as shrewd, though not necessarily as economical,

a calculator in the valley of the Mississippi, as his brethren in the East, and as brave as his fathers were at Lexington or Charlestown. It were the height of suicidal folly for the people of the maritime States to attempt holding as subjects or tributaries, directly or indirectly, the people between the Alleghanies and the Rocky Mountains; but those who have not travelled among our prairie and forest settlements can have only a faint idea of the filial reverence, the deferential respect, the yearning love, with which they turn to the land where their fathers sleep, and to you who guard their sepulchres. The soul knows nothing of distance; and, in their twilight musings, they can scarcely tell which is dearer to their hearts, — the home of the kindred they have left behind them, or the home they have won for their offspring. Be it your anxious care, intelligent gentlemen of New England, that so strong a bond is never strained to rupture!

Variety of climate, of soil and position, must make variety in pursuits of life and habits of thought. The energy of our national character in various departments of productive skill (the relations of which to each other are, as yet, not generally well understood) must excite competition, perhaps some jealousy. Nor can all be expected to think alike on many questions of national policy. On the other hand, Providence has so wisely distributed its blessings, that we may not choose but to be mutually dependent. The products of our immense inland territory must find vent

for the surplus through the ports of the seaboard, through which, again, must come the luxuries or necessaries we require from abroad. The agricultural States offer the best markets for the manufactures of those whose soil is less fertile, yet dearer, and labor more abundant; while these, in their turn, are rewarded with plenty of breadstuffs and other provision. Iron, lead, coal, copper, gold, pass each other on their way to distant localities. There are no empty return-wagons, rail-cars, or coasting vessels; each carries back wealth purchased by the wealth which it brought. Our immense lakes, with their rich teeming borders thousands of miles about, act like inner impelling arteries to the trade of the whole country. Our great navigable rivers, with their numerous tributaries, ramify, like veins, for the circulation of a common life through leagues none pretends to count, and millions whose increase none dares to guess. Nay, by the wonderful inventions of recent years, we are no longer dependent upon the watery ways of nature, and wellnigh annihilate distance. On the wings of steam, the population and wealth of whole towns may speed, swifter than a bird, along the roads which, binding us together by iron sinews, pierce mountains, span valleys, and measure the continuous level by minutes, not miles, so that we say, "How long?" instead of "How far?" The slender wires, now stretching like network over the land, quickly as living nerves, thrill thought and feeling between correspondents the most remote. And, by the admirable working of our confederate

unity, is felt through all, like the beating of a central heart, the power of one national will. In a word, we realize more fully than Rome, with its Senate and *Plebs*, could do, the fable of old Menenius Agrippa, and are as virtually connected as the several parts of the human anatomy, — "that there may be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another; and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."

Suppose, for one melancholy moment, that this healthful economy of exchanges were broken up, — that the Western valley were shut out from the sea by adverse governments, — that those on the coast were hemmed in to their own narrow limits by hostile forts along the mountain ridges, — that between the North and the South there were neither commercial nor moral sympathy, — that at every State line passports were demanded and a tariff set; — who must not shrink from describing the terrible consequences; the stagnation of trade; the silence of brotherly counsel; the constant feuds; the multiplication of armies; the Cain-like, exterminating wars; the overthrow of law by military dictators; the utter ruin of all that makes us prosperous at home and respected abroad; the sure catastrophe, moral and national death! O that those, who, for any reason, talk lightly of dissolving this Union, would consider the immensely greater evils such a rupture would inevitably cause, the awful guilt it would bring upon themselves! Whatever may be

the cant of words, no lover of law could ever kindle the torch of such incendiarism, no lover of peace provoke such fratricidal slaughter, no lover of freedom plot for such general slavery, no lover of God and man undermine the eminent watch-tower whose light is now shedding over the world such bright promise of a universal brotherhood. Were it possible that an American womb could be so cursed as to bring forth so diabolical a monster, and the malignant Erostratus could be successful, a loud, bitter, heaven-compelling cry would go up from all the earth, swelled by generation after generation, until the final fires shall have swept to hell all trace of human crimes: "Anathema! *Anathema!* ANATHEMA MARANATHA!"

We ought, it is true, to have little fear of our being overtaken by so terrible a calamity; but our courage can rationally be derived, under God, only from a warranted confidence in our people, that they will have sense enough, probity enough, religion enough, to pursue the conduct upon which the permanence of our welfare depends. For these reasons, this feeble but earnest voice calls upon you, gentlemen, and, so far as it can reach, upon literary men throughout the country, to exert, by the many legitimate means at hand, the vast influence Providence has intrusted us with, for the cultivation of a high, generous, unsectional patriotism; a patriotism whose rule can be best given in the immortal words of one who, more than once, has upborne on his Atlantic shoulders, safe through perils, the sphere of the Constitution: "Our country, our whole country, and our country as one!"

God has not given us talents, and permitted us to cultivate them, that they may be terminated upon ourselves. Fascinating as the charms of study are, and delightful the calm, secluded hours in which we hold converse with the philosopher, the poet, the orator, and the historian, made immortal by their pages; and unwilling as we may be to tear ourselves away from pleasures so exquisite, for any living society or engagements of the outer world, neither the law of our Creator, nor the urgencies of the times, permit such luxurious self-indulgence. Thought, truthful, clear, and argumentative of good deeds, is an oracle from heaven; eloquence, whether of the voice or of the pen, comes from a divine *afflatus;* and woe, woe, in this world and in the next, to that man whom God has thus ordained his prophet, if he utters not, or if he perverts, the revelation! Study, when not directed to useful ends, becomes a vice; and superior knowledge makes us more guilty than our fellow-men, if we offer them no share in our acquisitions. Yes! far more worthy of thanks from man, and of reward from God, is the digger of the ditch that drains the marsh, the hewer of the wood that warms a dwelling, the veriest menial that serves our necessities, than the scholar who refuses his enlarged powers to the benefit of his race,—who distinguishes with more than Hermaic subtilty between "the Me" and the "not Me," yet neglects the actual morals around him,—who would sing solitarily his own pumice-worn numbers, self-charmed by their Attic purity, though the city were burning,—who,

intent over his problem, cares not that an enemy has forced the gates, — or who exhausts upon the particles of a dead language an energy which might save immortal souls!

Your candor, gentlemen, will interpret these remarks, not as disrespectful to learning, (which would be sacrilege on an occasion like this,) but as hortatory to its proper use, and as dissuasive from a selfishness more refined, yet scarcely less guilty, than the hoarding of a miser. Error is never idle, never uncommunicative, but, like its malignant father, goes pestilently about to corrupt human happiness. Ignorance is never idle, but rushes on from blind impulse, often the more mischievous when honest, because superstition, prejudice, or fanaticism, inspires it with the strength of conscience. Mind will be active, the moral being will be busy; and if they who have the skill direct not its force to good, it will be working evil. It is the plan of God, "the Father of lights," — *Pater ipse colendi*, — that men shall be regenerated and sanctified by truth, — truth communicated through the instrumentality of men whom he calls to work with himself, — truth, the proper, sole medium of his omnipotent rule over the freedom of his rational creatures. We are, therefore, verily faithless to God and dishonest towards men, if we bury his gift, which, through a zealous usury, might make many rich, or hide the light which he has kindled in our souls for the scattering of darkness around us. Yes! the miser who hoards gold is despicable, yet he withdraws only a temporary convenience; the speculator,

who stores away bread in time of famine, makes gain of mortal suffering; the skilful physician, who, from cowardice or love of ease, attempts not the rescue of his neighbours sick of a plague, is negatively a murderer; but he who knows truth and the method of imparting it, yet keeps it back, secretes the riches of eternity, the food of immortal spirits, the sure, only remedy of all human woe.

The lessons of the abstract, when apprehended aright, tend steadily to the practical. Our researches as scholars are in the past, but our business is in the present and the future. And what an unprecedented field does our present and future open to the philanthropic exertions of intellectual men! Human nature is ever radically the same. That as yet anonymous science which concerns the knowledge of human nature has few fundamental axioms. Solomon wrote proverbs for all ages. The characters of Tacitus transmigrate through all generations. But the developments, the combinations and phases of human action, in these times, are unexampled. The labyrinth has become so complicated, that our hand cannot securely grasp the ball of the clew. Zeno himself could not keep cool amidst such universal, multiform, constant excitement. Once, a few thought, and still fewer led; now, all think, and none are willing to follow. Mountains, seas, diversities of language, hereditary enmities of races, scarcely retard the revolutionary contagion. Armies receive the command to "charge!" — they obey; but first come "right about face," and rout with their bayonets *l'état major.*

Bulls, whose roar once shook terribly the earth like one wide Bashan, now wail plaintively and feebly as a famishing calf outside the gate of its paddock. The pawns toss kings and queens, knights, bishops, and rookish nobles from the board, to play out the game among themselves. Constitutions are woven in a night, and are swept away like cobwebs by the morning broom. Rulers and ministries treat oaths as lightly as do smugglers in a custom-house. The giant, MAN, long crushed by usurpers of divine right, is flinging off the Ætna from his mangled breast. His limbs are not yet drawn from under the quaking, groaning, fire-spouting mass; but *he is sure to rise.* He will reel blindly, at first, from inveterate weakness of limb, his head dizzy with his new uprightness; his enemies will hurl on him their frightened vengeance; he will stagger, stumble, fall; but, gaining strength each time he presses the bosom of his mother earth, he will gather himself up, drive opposing powers irrevocably back to more than Egyptian darkness, and stride triumphantly forwards until he reaches the goal which the good God has promised him, — consummate freedom, happiness undefiled, imperishable dignity in the Divine image. The truth of a liberated Gospel will dissipate his errors, as Minerva did the mists from the eyes of Diomed, and the noble prophecy of the Tusculan be fulfilled: "Perfecta mens, id est absoluta ratio, quod est idem virtus."

Such is the agitated, hopeful world, and such the crisis of its changes in which we are called to

labor; but our immediate sphere is our own country, the sphere where our zeal will tell most effectively on the destinies of mankind. The example of our national character, developed by our liberal institutions, has, more than all other causes combined, waked up the spirit of the Old World. The radiance of our well-adjusted freedom is melting away the icy fetters that have, from time immemorial, frozen to moral numbness the larger portion of Continental Europe. The name of America sounds like that of heaven on earth to the voluntary exiles who leave their fatherlands in the confidence of finding, for themselves and their children, a better country, fulness of bread, and the rights of their own sweat. The eyes of their kindred follow them to our shores. The news of our advancement, our state papers, the issues of our unshackled press, go back, despite of the keenest *surveillance*, with their endorsement to their native hamlets. Political philosophers and ardent philanthropists come westward, that they may study our recent but vigorous systems, as the Greek once went to the older land of the Nile. A strong word, distinctly spoken here, echoes through hut and palace, cabinet and camp, of distant but anxious listeners. O, then, let us work now, that we may work for the stupendous future; let us work for our country, that we may benefit the world!

There are those who will turn away in disgust, sallow and smoke-dried as a mediæval legend, from these exhortations to the present and future, as from the ravings of an upsetting radical; — men, so

oppugnant in their mental temper, that they can never think out of an antithesis to common sense, counting it glory when they deny the obvious and advocate the exploded, — or who, shuddering, without faith in the Presiding Spirit, at the friction, the order-working friction, of conflicting opinions, imagine that chaos is come again, and grasp, like drowning swimmers, at any floating fragment of precedent or authority. There is a fashion (for fashion dresses the inside as well as the outside of the head) of tergiversant sentimentality, a sombre affectation, which looks back admiringly and regretfully upon the middle centuries, as Lot's wife would have looked upon the Dead Sea, had she survived till the next morning; whining "like a sick girl" over the sturdy plainness, the prosaic directness, the unpoetical utilitarianism, of our modern republican ways; sighing for the priestly pomps, the brilliant chivalry, the royal stateliness of feudal times, when portly abbots locked up the rare Bible, but doled fragments of the monkish feasts to the ragged, kneeling, cruci-signing rabble of pilgrims at the refectory gate; or the letterless vassal tilled the soil for his lord's profit, fought in his lord's quarrel, and held his life by his lord's caprice. Shocked at the crowding of the vulgar many into the very *penetralia* of knowledge and social amenities, these resurrectionists of mortified deformity shudder at the scream of a locomotive as though it were a fiery dragon, while there is no Saint George to meet its fury; the hum of machinery threatens them with a moral earthquake; and a primary school they re-

gard as a nursery of precocious conspirators against prescribed faith and stagnant order. The evil spares nothing it can reach. The delicious, dreamy seat, to whose undulating excellence Boston had the honor of giving invention and a name, is thrust aside for a high, straight-backed chair of torture, after an Elizabethan pattern of old-maidish prudery; nor can we approach our nightly resting-place without danger of being knocked on the head by some Gothic hobgoblin. Our fairest books and their delicate etchings are overlaid by facsimiles of illuminated parchments, on whose pages a clumsy-fingered cenobite has plastered rickety angels and epileptic martyrs, in patches of coarse gold-leaf, staring azure, and red lead.* Nay, you may see our own poets set forth with such barbaric embellishment, in which they figure as appropriately as Piers Ploughman would in gaiter-boots, or Juliana Berners in a *Jenny-Lind.* Head-men of parishes are ridden by architectural nightmare, until the white, airy, clapboarded meeting-house, where their fathers worshipped God in the simple Man of Nazareth, gives place to a low-eaved, steep-roofed, cold, damp, rough-stone barn, in which the preacher's voice is lost among the groined rafters, and his people cannot see to read his text by the dim light that comes through painted, lanceolated windows, streaming a distorted rainbow over the congregation, making the wife wonder why her husband looks so blue,

---

* *Minium*, red oxide of lead, was much used in the embellishment of manuscripts. Hence *miniatores*, and, as some think, *illumination*.

while the good man fears she is seized with jaundice and the children with scarlet fever; yet, after all, the grotesque pigmy no more resembles the grand picturesque of England's old churches, than a graveyard obelisk Cleopatra's Needle.

Far be it from us to speak disrespectfully of the few minds which shone in the twilight of Europe, looming larger through the fog, yet heralding the dawn. No true-hearted student is without a strong antiquarian sense of the interest attached to the beginning of art, letters, and civilization; neither can one, who has visited the minsters and cathedrals of Britain by day, or Melrose and Glastonbury by moonlight, ever forget his admiration of the creative genius which combined more than Cyclopean strength with more than Corinthian luxuriance; but we must protest against this sacrificing of convenience for an imitation of the antique, this making venerable of all that is old, this condemnation of the useful as the unspiritual. To an elevated, healthy imagination, there is more poetry in a nicely constructed steam-engine, working with its Titan sinews and Briarean hands, yet breathing softly as a sleeping child, than in all the knightly tournaments and sacerdotal shows that our ancestors ever wondered at; all the troubadours of Provence had not a tithe of the romance that a clear, æsthetical eye can see hanging round a village of factory-girls, every one of whom is a living story of love, hope, constancy, and courage; a modern linen-weaver's label often presents as fine specimens of Arabesque as can be

found in a virtuoso's cabinet; nay, if richness of design, grace of drawing, and harmonious contrasts of color be criteria of good taste, we may point to a Sunday group of servant-maids, in the fresh pride of their Lowell printed calicoes, and say, — "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these!"

Be it our aim, gentlemen, as it is our privilege, to learn all that the past can teach us by its successes and its failures, to take out of it only what is good, beautiful, true, and right. It were the folly of dotage to do more. As for the rest, "Let the dead bury their dead," but let us "go and preach the Gospel," light for the ignorant, justice for the laborer, freedom for the slave, "peace on earth and good-will towards men." Antiquity! What is antiquity? Is the world growing younger? Had our fathers more experience than we, who have their experience added to our own? "We are the ancients," said the great leader of modern science. The present is the better antiquity; the future will be the best.

It were presumption to set forth before you the methods in which we, as literary men, may serve our country. Our responsibilities are in accordance with our faculties and our opportunities. There are various degrees of mental force, some forms of talent are better adapted to have power over men than others, and equal chances for exercising zeal are not given; but every literary man, because he can reach many, is, by calling, a public servant, and bound to act upon a larger theatre

than the less gifted individual, who can reach only a few. Whatever tends to promote true religion and the happiness necessarily connected with sound morals, to improve the arts of life, to refine the general taste, to enlarge the public mind, to throw elevating or endearing associations around our country, is a patriotic service. The preacher of Christ in his pulpit, the teacher of youth in his school, the man of science in his experimental lucubrations, the historian in his researches, the artist in his studio, the poet in the melodies of his lute or lyre, every man who employs his educated powers, should act from patriotic motive; not the patriotism of a section, but of our whole country; which, unless this argument has been sadly erroneous, is eminently consistent with duty to God and devotion to our race. The stern Dordrechtian theology of your orator (which, he is well aware, has but little favor here, even among the straitest sects of the Orthodox) will not allow him to speak of disinterested benevolence; for, as he believes, the Divine system recognizes no such virtue. The harmony of a soul, which Aristotle considers its moral perfection, lies in an accurate adjustment of self and love. Self is an authorized motive, but only when hand in hand with love. The delight accompanying intellectual exertion and desire of fame, both of which every literary man feels so keenly, becomes a noble enthusiasm when we make the aim of our scholar's life the benefit and illustration of our native land. True as the oft-repeated maxim may be, —

"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori," —

it is not less sweet and honorable to live and labor for its lasting interests. The most perilous warfare is that in which only fearless reason can win victory for the right; and there are knots in the cords binding man's soul, which can be cut by no sword, however keen, but must be untied by strong, persevering logic. Neither warrior nor statesman adorns his birth-place with more imperishable glory than the author who achieves immortal usefulness. In a single night were written both verse and melody of that Marseilles Hymn, which, like a whirlwind, has swept down successive tyrannies, and will be chanted as a spell of liberating might, until the brave shall no longer need to arm at the call of freedom. Shame upon our men of genius, that our people have as yet neither national song nor air worthy of the name! The poet who will indite for us such a song, the composer who will give us such an air, may be sure of a fame to which that of Pindar is poor. Where on earth is there a river, except the old Nile, the yellow Tiber, or the sacred Jordan, to which a pilgrim turns with higher emotion than the "Silver Avon"? Virgil, when, amidst the splendors of the Augustan city, he recalled, as the Shepherd Tityrus, his early haunts, sang smilingly, —

> "Urbem, quam dicunt Romam, Melibœe, putavi
> Stultus ego huic nostræ similem";—

but when the author of the Æneid came to die, the first words he dictated for his funeral urn were a legacy of his fame to his native village, —

> "Mantua me genuit."

The waves of the Ægean, as they dash against its vine-surmounted cliffs, echo the name of him who from his misty throne looks down without a peer in epic grandeur, —

"The blind old man of Scio's rocky isle."

A curious traveller may find on the innermost curve of the Gulf of Contessa the wretched village of Stauros. There once stood the strong, magnificent city of a mighty people, who, with mortal courage, contending against perfidious Athens, perished amidst its ruins. All the names of those martyrs for liberty with whose blood the Strymon ran red are passed from the memory of man, and their grand examples lost in the obscurity of unrecorded time; but a mention of *The Stagirite* comes upon our souls like a charm of power, as the name of him who, through more than two decades of centuries, since he died an exile on the shore of the Euripus, has swayed the widest empire over human thought ever granted to an uninspired mind. Gentlemen, be it yours to glorify with similar, if not equal, trophies the land of your birth!

Under those governments which fetter the press and allow the people no just share in deciding their own fortunes, where words of right are no sooner heard than the fearless voice that uttered them is hushed by death or the dungeon door, there may be excuse for educated men who give themselves up wholly to mere abstract studies or pursuits strictly scholastical. The guilt of their

silence is on their oppressors. Here, not only is there perfect freedom in expressing opinion, but, in speaking to the people, we address the governing will. Of that governing will we are ourselves a part, and therefore we are bound by our share in the government to contribute all we can for its direction and prosperity. Our simple votes are not enough; the most ignorant boor, the vilest ragamuffin of our cities, can cast his vote as well as we. It is our duty, because it is within our power, to enlighten others who vote with us. The principles of our government are few, and firmly, logically settled by the Constitution, in so plain a manner as scarcely to leave room for an honest doubt; yet its nature is so unexampled, that it must continue to be, as it has been, eminently one of experiment. The questions that will arise will be such as should receive the intelligent consideration of every citizen; but, at the same time, they will be chiefly questions of political ethics and political economy. If the moral integrity and substantial wealth of the country be cared for, there remains little, if anything, else to demand our attention. Both these subjects come fairly within the reach of the studious man. It may even be said, that he only is capable of investigating them candidly and of treating them thoroughly. In those countries where rule is usurped by the few, the privileged classes repress the knowledge of the rest; in ours, where the people have the power, and, through our diffused education, more or less a habit of reasoning, the effort of designing

self-seekers is to mislead by specious sophistry, garbled facts, or distorted statistics. Every present, accidental, temporary uneasiness, every sectional interest, every prejudice attached to the sound of words, (and they are as manifold as they are mischievous,) is eagerly seized upon to create a popular excitement for the furtherance of narrow or unnational views. The charm of party is thrown round selfish ends. The priests of the idol *taboo* every subject, a misrepresentation of which can help them to office, that none others may open it and expose their iniquity. It is our duty, as educated men, trained in the calmness of study, acquainted with the certainties of knowledge, to disabuse our people of the false and edify them on the true. We are, or should be, elevated by the advantages we profess above many of the difficulties and temptations which hinder common minds in searches after truth. Prejudice of every kind, like the mists of the lowlands, should lie far beneath us; for it is our privilege, if we deserve our name, to breathe a clear, rarefied atmosphere, where no exhalations of earth come between us and the sunlight. From these heights we have a wide circuit of vision. The past opens to us its experience, the great present is spread out before us, and, so far as they can be inferred from the comparison of the past with the present, we discern the contingencies of the future. If it be impossible not to feel the influences of sect, party, or vicinage, let us not be in bondage to either. Christianity is more than sect, patriotism more than party, our country

than the section where we live. It is our vocation to make known truth, and, while bad men, or narrow-minded men, or ignorant men, reasoning falsely from isolated facts, would distract or mislead the people, to show them that human legislation should be ever in accordance with the fixed, fundamental laws of God; that the best welfare of the whole is the best welfare of each; our best policy, an unwavering vindication of the general right; our best freedom, fidelity to God, each other, and mankind. Motives of personal gain should in us be overborne by a liberal love of the beautiful, the proper, and the good. Such demonstration of sound political doctrine is most urgently needed. It is high time that the discussion of themes so vitally important should be no longer abandoned to mere traders for votes, who now superciliously denounce the moralist and the student as intermeddlers, if they speak of things concerning the public weal; it is high time that questions of social right and national economy should be treated on better grounds than the pecuniary profits of classes who insist upon contending as rivals when they should be coadjutors; it is high time that the people should hear voices of warning or encouragement from those who ask nothing and aim at nothing but the general good. Never will justice be done to inquiries which most affect our national advantage, until the name of politician be taken from the office-seeker, and given to the Christian philosopher, who, from the fear of God and for the sake of man, studies and "speaks the

truth in love," "out of good conscience," and "with the meekness of wisdom."

Let us not be driven from a duty so sacred and so honorable by the sneering assertion, that such matters can be rightly handled only by what are called "practical men," and that bookish theorists are out of place in the busy world. Practice? Theory? When was there ever right practice but where theory had gone before? What guides the merchant's ship, drives the manufacturer's engine, enriches the farmer's ground, flashes instant news across and throughout a continent, but theory? Mark, we say theory, not hypothesis; for the pert bunglers always confound those terms. Hypothesis is a guess; but theory is hypothesis proved by induction from facts. What were your practical men without theorists? Precisely what the hands, feet, and other working parts of the human system would be without the brain. Are we less capable of distinguishing fact from falsity because our eyes are not sanded by gold, our ears stuffed with cotton, or our consciences hypothecated in bonds payable six months hence? Because some screaming geese once saved the Capitol, shall intellect be drummed off guard? Justice, candor, gratitude, forbid an insinuation of the least disrespect for the admirable virtues, public spirit, mental ability, and munificent appreciation of knowledge, which dignify many of those who are truly practical men, — of whom there are nowhere finer examples than among your own neighbours. They would repudiate the attempts of their weaker brethren to cut them off from an

alliance with investigating mind. The most humble laborer in the workshop or the field has a title to our thankful esteem that shall never be denied. But we would fain lash, till they howled, the vapid dunces who think that there can be no practical judgment beyond what they have learned from a petty practice, or an acquaintance with the price-current and stock-list, yet not unfrequently aspire to be theorists themselves, parading their puny sciolism on stilts of preposterous English and worse logic.

Such exhibitions are rather ridiculous than melancholy; but sadness mingles with indignation when we see genius or strong reason selling itself, for the price of bread or pleasure, to do the drudgery of scheming avarice.

"In lächerlichem Zuge
Erblickt man Ochs und Flügelpferd am Pfluge."

In this respect our politics have been a very Tartarus of talent, where we discover one ever rolling arduously a sugar-hogshead; another sweating in a furnace; another lashed to extravagant eccentricities of ethics and logic by a vindictive negro, whom he will carry chained on his back as a proof of eminent republicanism; another whirling, like Ixion, with the constant revolutions of a factory driving-wheel.

Such are the momentous changes now rapidly succeeding each other, that a faithful scholar, at a crisis perhaps not apparent to himself, may, by a few well-digested thoughts, couched in a few well-

directed sentences, save his country from impending ruin. History has not a finer instance of the power which eloquence may exert over popular fury, than that of a year since, when a single modulated voice stayed the most sanguinary mob the world has ever known, — stayed them for long hours, when bent ravingly on destruction, and then turned them back with the *tricolor* waving where the red flag had glared. He, who won that triumph of such incalculable value, was not a practical man, and has since, unfortunately, proved himself not a successful statesman: yet, with all his subsequent failures, honor, honor to Lamartine, the literary man, the orator! Honor to the Cocles, who, single-handed, kept the bridge against the impetuous hordes of murderous incendiaries! For that one act of devotion, he deserves, like his prototype, bread while he lives, and a statue on the spot where he dies. God keep our country from such a day of peril! But, should our voice or our pen be needed, and we delay our duty beyond the juncture of apt circumstances, our most strenuous endeavours may be met by the fatal response, which sealed the fate of a splendid dynasty, "*C'est trop tard!*"

The popular mind of this country is well prepared and not ill-disposed to acknowledge our frank zeal on their behalf; though, at the same time, what are opportunities for good are also opportunities for evil. A general conviction, that each participant of the democratic sovereignty should be fitted as far as possible for the exercise of his

elective power, has made the education of the young a care of every State government; not always as wisely or thoroughly as might be wished, yet, where the difficulties of recent settlement have been passed through, or the incubus of slavery does not weigh down the nominally free, it is eminently the popular policy. In no other country are there so many readers, or readers who read so much. In no other country does the press labor more to supply the demand for newspapers, periodicals, and books. The cheapness of publication naturally increases the demand, which, again, lowers the price of the supply. There are always caterpillars on the "tree of knowledge," which itself bears a double fruit, "of good and evil." It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that the land has been overrun by trashy and dangerously immoral writings; but the good is out-working the evil. Our principal publishing-houses have found, by profitable experiments, that the market for the most substantial books has grown in a far greater ratio than the population; and that large editions of works on the most useful branches of general science or literature have been rapidly sold, which, a few years since, would have lain like lumber in their garrets. The treasures of old English have been ransacked to meet in compendious forms the appetite of a healthy taste. Writers of the first class have arisen from among ourselves, and some foremost of the foremost from your own ranks, gentlemen, to compete successfully with those of the Old World's former centuries; while others, of

less, though not despicable, character, especially in the belles-lettres, are springing up like buttercups in a meadow. Prejudice against reading an American book, never so great as disappointed scribblers supposed, has given place to an overweening partiality for home productions, not only in literature, but in art. Not content with boasting of our truly great names, of which any land or age might be proud, we resent it as wrong done America, when superlative laudation is denied any pretty pen that traces a pleasing story or a string of creditable verses; we discover Ciceros plenty as the stumps which serve our orators for *rostra;* and we execrate by Apollo all unable to detect a future Angelo in every untaught youth who chips a head out of stone, or dashes a crude conception on canvas. There is no country where reputation for talent or scholarship is so easily won, or mental labor, except of the highest kind, is better paid.

No doubt this has in a measure repressed the ambition of some, who, conscious of high powers, are unwilling to be jostled on so crowded an arena. When extreme epithets of praise are lavished upon hasty, ephemeral trifles, there remain no terms worthily to designate the productions of deep, long thought. The Virgilian patience, which spends a day upon an hexameter, will not endure being evened with the fatal facility which improvises a hundred lines *stans pede in uno.* The Olympian eloquence, which labored for twenty years on a eulogy of democratic Athens, would have but little chance against the torrent hyperbole of a Western Pericles,

who lords it over his shouting constituents by an inspiration caught from the buffalo-hunt, the flow of the Mississippi, the crash of the forest before the axe, or the solitude of the ocean-wide prairie, yet which as seldom fails to hit the centre of human enthusiasm, as his rifle-ball the heart of a flying deer. Nor is it surprising that a devotee to one particular branch of science, more than sufficient of itself for ten lives, should sometimes shrink from the omnigenous competition which is equally ready at inventing a cooking-stove or an ethical system, and will take to the pulpit, the bar, a professor's chair, a seat in the Senate, or the Presidency of the United States, if only sure that the emoluments of the new speculation will exceed those of a quack-medicine, a peddling-wagon, or a singing-school. But such readiness to honor intellectual effort proves a liberal, upward tendency of our people, who, though they may now applaud excessively the less worthy, will sooner or later appreciate the more deserving; and such restless versatility of talent shows an energy of mental enterprise, which, if the rich soil be cultivated aright, promises no scanty harvest.

Besides, there is an unmistakable and increasing disposition to philosophical methods of thought and action. The cry is for ideas, and, though often affected, the fashion is to demand principles, and at least a show of demonstration. Our people claim for themselves, and would transmit to their children, the right of private judgment; and the faculty, nurtured by political habits, is exercised

on all subjects brought before them. It is as natural for an American to reason as to breathe; and his favorite method (no doubt, from shrewd New England example) is the Socratic. He will believe nothing, do nothing, submit to nothing, without knowing, or thinking that he knows, *why*. He is much fonder of the lecture-room than of the spectacle. He will listen to any one on any subject, provided the lecturer offers proof; but his questions Why? and How? readily silence the most plausible declaimer. From these and other causes, there is throughout our country (though, for obvious reasons, greater in some sections than others) an activity and sensitiveness of mind unexampled and increasing. The advocate of truth can desire no opportunity more magnificent.

One thought more. With the history of this country, God began a revolution in his treatment and development of human nature. Up to that moment, the great divisions, even the larger subdivisions, of our race had been kept apart from each other, separated and made distinct by climate, by language, by hereditary habits. The eastern and southern quarters of the globe we leave for the present out of our calculation, as their time of revival is yet far in the future, and speak of Europe. Even Christianity has failed to accomplish a coalescence. The mysteries of Osiris still linger around the altars of Magna Græcia. The Druids have left in the customs of Britain monuments lasting as Stonehenge. Tacitus may serve

the modern traveller as an Itinerary throughout what was Germania Antiqua. The fetters of national prejudice have eaten into the bone, and the quick flesh is grown over them. Each nation has married only with its own blood, and the evils of the incest are upon their offspring. Each has kept its own characteristic vices and virtues apart from those of the others; yet it is a law of Providence, that distinct vices act as checks upon their rival passions, while virtue is stimulated by virtue. The Italian is only an Italian, the Frank a Frank, the Spaniard a Spaniard; and so each of the rest is now wellnigh as distinct as when Cæsar wrote his Commentaries. Some changes have been wrought by Religion and the Press, but neither Religion nor the Press has had its fair influence; the one has been distorted, the other manacled, both abused by national law and national sentiment. The higher orders of society, who travel and read, may assimilate from a common creed of etiquette; but the people, the plebeians, remain distinct and the same. The men, and even the women, (*varium et mutabile fœmina,*) of separate cantons, departments, duchies, or shires, have inherited fashions of dress from their grandfathers and grandmothers, great, great, great beyond arithmetic. The war of races and tribes is now deluging Europe with blood. The enmity among them there seems ineradicable.

But what has God done, what is He doing, what is He about to do, in this land? He has set it far away to the west, and made it so circumstan-

tially independent, that, if all the rest of the habitable earth were sunk, we should feel no serious curtailment of our comforts. The products of the whole world are, or may soon be, found within our confederate limits. He brought here first the sternest, most religious, most determined representatives of Europe's best blood, best faith, best intellect; men, ay, and women (it is the mother makes the child), who, because they feared God, feared no created power, — who, bowing before His absolute sovereignty, would kneel to no lord spiritual or temporal on earth, — and who, believing the Bible true, demanded its sanction for all law. To your Pilgrim Fathers the highest place may well be accorded; but forget not, that, about the time of their landing on the Rock, there came to the mouth of the Hudson men of kindred faith and descent, — men equally loving freedom, — men from the sea-washed cradle of modern constitutional freedom, whose union of free burgher-cities taught us the lesson of confederate independent sovereignties, whose sires were as free, long centuries before *Magna Charta*, as the English are now, and from whose line of republican princes Britain received the boon of religious toleration, a privilege the States-General had recognized as a primary article of their government when first established; men of that stock, which, when offered their choice of favors from a grateful monarch, asked a University *; men whose martyr-sires had baptized their

* After the eventful issue of the siege of Leyden, the Prince of Orange and the States-General, grateful to the heroic defenders of that city, of-

land with their blood; men who had flooded it with ocean-waves rather than yield it to a bigot-tyrant; men, whose virtues were sober as prose, but sublime as poetry;—the men of Holland! Mingled with these, and still farther on, were heroic Huguenots, their fortunes broken, but their spirit unbending to prelate or prelate-ridden king. There were others (and a dash of cavalier blood told well in battle-field and council);—but those were the spirits whom God made the moral substratum of our national character. Here, like Israel in the wilderness, and thousands of miles off from the land of bondage, they were educated for their high calling, until, in the fulness of times, our confederacy with its Constitution was founded. Already there had been a salutary mixture of blood, but not enough to impair the Anglo-Saxon ascendency. The nation grew morally strong from its original elements. The great work was delayed only by a just preparation. Now God is bringing hither the most vigorous scions from all the European stocks, to "make of them all *one new* MAN"; not the Saxon, not the German, not the Gaul, not the Helvetian, but the AMERICAN. Here they will unite as one brotherhood, will have one law, will share one interest. Spread over the vast region from the frigid to the torrid, from Eastern to Western ocean,

---

fered them their choice of an Annual Fair or a University. They chose the University; but, struck with the nobleness of the choice, the high authorities granted them both. The University was established in 1575, and became the *Alma Mater* of Grotius, Scaliger, Boerhaave, and many other renowned men.

every variety of climate giving them choice of pursuit and modification of temperament, the ballot-box fusing together all rivalries, they shall have one national will. What is wanting in one race will be supplied by the characteristic energies of the others; and what is excessive in either, checked by the counter-action of the rest. Nay, though for a time the newly come may retain their foreign vernacular, our tongue, so rich in ennobling literature, will be the tongue of the nation, the language of its laws, and the accent of its majesty. Eternal God! who seest the end with the beginning, thou alone canst tell the ultimate grandeur of this people!

Such, gentlemen, is the sphere, present and future, in which God calls us to work for Him, for our country, and for mankind. The language in which we utter truth will be spoken on this continent, a century hence, by thirty times more millions than those dwelling on the island of its origin. The openings for trade on the Pacific coast, and the railroad across the Isthmus, will bring the commerce of the world under the control of our race. The empire of our language will follow that of our commerce; the empire of our institutions, that of our language. The man who writes successfully for America will yet speak to all the world.


THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS