

I The Lord's Supper



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Lord's Supper

The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. -- ROMANS XIV. 17.

In the history of the Church no subject has been more fruitful of controversy than the Lord's Supper. There never has been any unanimity in the understanding of its nature, nor any uniformity in the mode of celebrating it. Without considering the frivolous questions which have been lately debated as to the posture in which men should partake of it; whether mixed or unmixed wine should be served; whether leavened or unleavened bread should be broken; the questions have been settled differently in every church, who should be admitted to the feast, and how often it should be prepared. In the Catholic Church, infants were at one time permitted and then forbidden to partake; and, since the ninth century, the laity receive the bread only, the cup being reserved to the priesthood. So, as to the time of the solemnity. In the fourth Lateran Council, it was decreed that any believer should communicate at least once in a year -- at Easter. Afterwards it was determined that this Sacrament should be received three times in the year -- at Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas. But more important controversies have arisen respecting its nature. The famous question of the Real Presence was the main controversy between the Church of England and the Church of Rome. The doctrine of the Consubstantiation taught by Luther was denied by Calvin. In the Church of England, Archbishops Laud and Wake maintained that the elements were an Eucharist or sacrifice of Thanksgiving to God; Cudworth and Warburton, that this was not a sacrifice, but a sacrificial feast; and Bishop Hoadley, that it was neither a sacrifice nor a feast after sacrifice, but a simple commemoration. And finally, it is now near two hundred years since the Society of Quakers denied the authority of the rite altogether, and gave good reasons for disusing it.

I allude to these facts only to show that, so far from the supper being a tradition in which men are fully agreed, there always been the widest room for difference of opinion upon this particular.

Having recently given particular attention to this subject, I was led to the conclusion that Jesus did not intend to establish an institution for perpetual observance when he ate the Passover with his disciples; and, further, to the opinion, that it is not expedient to celebrate it as we do. I shall now endeavor to state distinctly my reasons for these two opinions.

I. The authority of the rite.

An account of the last supper of Christ with his disciples is given by the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

In St. Matthew's Gospel (Matt. XXVI. 26-30) are recorded the words of Jesus in giving bread and wine on that occasion to his disciples, but no expression occurs intimating that this feast was hereafter to be commemorated.

In St. Mark (Mark XIV. 23) the same words are recorded, and still with no intimation that the occasion

was to be remembered.

St. Luke (Luke XXII. 15), after relating the breaking of the bread, has these words: This do in remembrance of me.

In St. John, although other occurrences of the same evening are related, this whole transaction is passed over without notice.

Now observe the facts. Two of the Evangelists, namely, Matthew and John, were of the twelve disciples, and were present on that occasion. Neither of them drops the slightest intimation of any intention on the part of Jesus to set up anything permanent. John, especially, the beloved disciple, who has recorded with minuteness the conversation and the transactions of that memorable evening, has quite omitted such a notice. Neither does it appear to have come to the knowledge of Mark who, though not an eye-witness, relates the other facts. This material fact, that the occasion was to be remembered, is found in Luke alone, who was not present. There is no reason, however, that we know, for rejecting the account of Luke. I doubt not, the expression was used by Jesus. I shall presently consider its meaning. I have only brought these accounts together, that you may judge whether it is likely that a solemn institution, to be continued to the end of time by all mankind, as they should come, nation after nation, within the influence of the Christian religion, would have been established in this slight manner -- in a manner so slight, that the intention of commemorating it should not appear, from their narrative, to have caught the ear or dwelt in the mind of the only two among the twelve who wrote down what happened.

Still we must suppose that the expression, "This do in remembrance of me," had come to the ear of Luke from some disciple who was present. What did it really signify? It is a prophetic and an affectionate expression. Jesus is a Jew, sitting with his countrymen, celebrating their national feast. He thinks of his own impending death, and wishes the minds of his disciples to be prepared for it. "When hereafter," he says to them, "you shall keep the Passover, it will have an altered aspect to your eyes. It is now a historical covenant of God with the Jewish nation. Hereafter, it will remind you of a new covenant sealed with my blood. In years to come, as long as your people shall come up to Jerusalem to keep this feast, the connection which has subsisted between us will give a new meaning in your eyes to the national festival, as the anniversary of my death." I see natural feeling and beauty in the use of such language from Jesus, a friend to his friends; I can readily imagine that he was willing and desirous, when his disciples met, his memory should hallow their intercourse; but I cannot bring myself to believe that in the use of such an expression he looked beyond the living generation, beyond the abolition of the festival he was celebrating, and the scattering of the nation, and meant to impose a memorial feast upon the whole world.

Without presuming to fix precisely the purpose in the mind of Jesus, you will see that many opinions may be entertained of his intention, all consistent with the opinion that he did not design a perpetual ordinance. He may have foreseen that his disciples would meet to remember him, and that with good effect. It may have crossed his mind that this would be easily continued a hundred or a thousand years -- as men more easily transmit a form than a virtue -- and yet have been altogether out of his purpose to fasten it upon men in all times and all countries.

But though the words, Do this in remembrance of me, do occur in Matthew, Mark, or John, and although it should be granted us that, taken alone, they do not necessarily import so much as is usually

thought, yet many persons are apt to imagine that the very striking and personal manner in which this eating and drinking is described, indicates a striking and formal purpose to found a festival. And I admit that this impression might probably be left upon the mind of one who read only the passages under consideration in the New Testament. But this impression is removed by reading any narrative of the mode in which the ancient or the modern Jews have kept the Passover. It is then perceived that the leading circumstances in the Gospels are only a faithful account of that ceremony. Jesus did not celebrate the Passover, and afterwards the Supper, but the Supper was the Passover. He did with his disciples exactly what every master of a family in Jerusalem was doing at the same hour with his household. It appears that the Jews ate the lamb and the unleavened bread, and drank wine after a prescribed manner. It was the custom for the master of the feast to break the bread and to bless it, using this formula, which the Talmudists have preserved to us, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who hast produced this food from the earth," -- and to give it to every one at the table. It was the custom of the master of the family to take the cup which contained the wine, and to bless it, saying, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who givest us the fruit of the vine," -- and then to give the cup to all. Among the modern Jews who in their dispersion retain the Passover, a hymn is also sung after this ceremony, specifying the twelve great works done by God for the deliverance of their fathers out of Egypt.

But still it may be asked, why did Jesus make expressions so extraordinary and emphatic as these -- "This is my body which is broken for you. Take; eat. This is my blood which is shed for you. Drink it." -- I reply they are not extraordinary expressions from him. They were familiar in his mouth. He always taught by parables and symbols. It was the national way of teaching and was largely used by him. Remember the readiness which he always showed to spiritualize every occurrence. He stooped and wrote on the sand. He admonished his disciples respecting the leaven of the Pharisees. He instructed the woman of Samaria respecting living water. He permitted himself to be anointed, declaring that it was for his interment. He washed the feet of his disciples. These are admitted to be symbolical actions and expressions. Here, in like manner, he calls the bread his body, and bids the disciples eat. He had used the same expression repeatedly before. The reason why St. John does not repeat his words on this occasion, seems to be that he had reported a similar discourse of Jesus to the people of Capernaum more at length already (John VI. 27). He there tells the Jews, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." And when the Jews on that occasion complained that they did not comprehend what he meant, he added for their better understanding, and as if for our understanding, that we might not think his body was to be actually eaten, that he only meant, we should live by his commandment. He closed his discourse with these explanatory expressions: "The flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak to you, they are spirit and they are life."

Whilst I am upon this topic, I cannot help remarking that it is not a little singular that we should have preserved this rite and insisted upon perpetuating one symbolical act of Christ whilst we have totally neglected all others -- particularly one other which had at least an equal claim to our observance. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and told them that, as he had washed their feet, they ought to wash one another's feet; for he had given them an example, that they should do as he had done to them. I ask any person who believes the Supper to have been designed by Jesus to be commemorated forever, to go and read the account of it in the other Gospels, and then compare with it the account of this transaction in St. John, and tell me if this be not much more explicitly authorized than the Supper. It only differs in this, that we have found the Supper used in New England and the washing of the feet not. But if we had found it an established rite in our churches, on grounds of mere authority, it would have been impossible to have argued against it. That rite is used by the Church of Rome, and

by the Sandemanians. It has been very properly dropped by other Christians. Why? For two reasons: (1) because it was a local custom, and unsuitable in western countries; and (2) because it was typical, and all understand that humility is the thing signified. But the Passover was local too, and does not concern us, and its bread and wine were typical, and do not help us to understand the redemption which they signified.

These views of the original account of the Lord's Supper lead me to esteem it an occasion full of solemn and prophetic interest, but never intended by Jesus to be the foundation of a perpetual institution.

It appears however in Christian history that the disciples had very early taken advantage of these impressive words of Christ to hold religious meetings, where they broke bread and drank wine as symbols.

I look upon this fact as very natural in the circumstances of the church. The disciples lived together; they threw all their property into a common stock; they were bound together by the memory of Christ, and nothing could be more natural than that this eventful evening should be affectionately remembered by them; that they, Jews like Jesus, should adopt his expressions and his types, and furthermore, that what was done with peculiar propriety by them, his personal friends, with less propriety should come to be extended to their companions also. In this way religious feasts grew up among the early Christians. They were readily adopted by the Jewish converts who were familiar with religious feasts, and also by the Pagan converts whose idolatrous worship had been made up of sacred festivals, and who very readily abused these to gross riot, as appears from the censures of St. Paul. Many persons consider this fact, the observance of such a memorial feast by the early disciples, decisive of the question whether it ought to be observed by us. For my part I see nothing to wonder at in its originating with them; all that is surprising is that it should exist among us. There was good reason for his personal friends to remember their friend and repeat his words. It was only too probable that among the half converted Pagans and Jews, any rite, any form, would find favor, whilst yet unable to comprehend the spiritual character of Christianity.

The circumstance, however, that St. Paul adopts these views, has seemed to many persons conclusive in favor of the institution. I am of opinion that it is wholly upon the epistle to the Corinthians, and not upon the Gospels, that the ordinance stands. Upon this matter of St. Paul's view of the Supper, a few important considerations must be stated.

The end which he has in view, in the eleventh chapter of the first epistle is, not to enjoin upon his friends to observe the Supper, but to censure their abuse of it. We quote the passage now-a-days as if it enjoined attendance upon the Supper; but he wrote it merely to chide them for drunkenness. To make their enormity plainer he goes back to the origin of this religious feast to show what sort of feast that was, out of which this riot of theirs came, and so relates the transactions of the Last Supper. "I have received of the Lord," he says, "that which I delivered to you."

By this expression it is often thought that a miraculous communication is implied; but certainly without good reason, if it is remembered that St. Paul was living in the lifetime of all the apostles who could give him an account of the transaction; and it is contrary to all reason to suppose that God should work a miracle to convey information that could so easily be got by natural means. So that the import of the expression is that he had received the story of an eye-witness such as we also possess.

But there is a material circumstance which diminishes our confidence in the correctness of the Apostle's view; and that is, the observation that his mind had not escaped the prevalent error of the primitive church, the belief, namely, that the second coming of Christ would shortly occur, until which time, he tells them, this feast was to be kept. Elsewhere he tells them, that, at that time the world would be burnt up with fire, and a new government established, in which the Saints would sit on thrones; so slow were the disciples during the life, and after the ascension of Christ, to receive the idea which we receive, that his second coming was a spiritual kingdom, the dominion of his religion in the hearts of men, to be extended gradually over the whole world.

In this manner we may see clearly enough how this ancient ordinance got its footing among the early Christians, and this single expectation of a speedy reappearance of a temporal Messiah, which kept its influence even over so spiritual a man as St. Paul, would naturally tend to preserve the use of the rite when once established.

We arrive then at this conclusion, first, that it does not appear, from a careful examination of the account of the Last Supper in the Evangelists, that it was designed by Jesus to be perpetual; secondly, that it does not appear that the opinion of St. Paul, all things considered, ought to alter our opinion derived from the evangelists.

One general remark before quitting this branch of the subject. We ought to be cautious in taking even the best ascertained opinions and practices of the primitive church, for our own. If it could be satisfactorily shown that they esteemed it authorized and to be transmitted forever, that does not settle the question for us. We know how inveterately they were attached to their Jewish prejudices, and how often even the influence of Christ failed to enlarge their views. On every other subject succeeding times have learned to form a judgment more in accordance with the spirit of Christianity than was the practice of the early ages.

But it is said: "Admit that the rite was not designed to be perpetual. What harm doth it? Here it stands, generally accepted, under some form, by the Christian world, the undoubted occasion of much good; is it not better it should remain?"

II. This is the question of expediency.

I proceed to state a few objections that in my judgment lie against its use in its present form.

1. If the view which I have taken of the history of the institution be correct, then the claim of authority should be dropped in administering it. You say, every time you celebrate the rite, that Jesus enjoined it; and the whole language you use conveys that impression. But if you read the New Testament as I do, you do not believe he did.

2. It has seemed to me that the use of this ordinance tends to produce confusion in our views of the relation of the soul to God. It is the old objection to the doctrine of the Trinity, -- that the true worship was transferred from God to Christ, or that such confusion was introduced into the soul, that an undivided worship was given nowhere. Is not that the effect of the Lord's Supper? I appeal now to the convictions of communicants -- and ask such persons whether they have not been occasionally

conscious of a painful confusion of thought between the worship due to God and the commemoration due to Christ. For, the service does not stand upon the basis of a voluntary act, but is imposed by authority. It is an expression of gratitude to Christ, enjoined by Christ. There is an endeavor to keep Jesus in mind, whilst yet the prayers are addressed to God. I fear it is the effect of this ordinance to clothe Jesus with an authority which he never claimed and which distracts the mind of the worshipper. I know our opinions differ much respecting the nature and offices of Christ, and the degree of veneration to which he is entitled. I am so much a Unitarian as this: that I believe the human mind cannot admit but one God, and that every effort to pay religious homage to more than one being, goes to take away all right ideas. I appeal, brethren, to your individual experience. In the moment when you make the least petition to God, though it be but a silent wish that he may approve you, or add one moment to your life, -- do you not, in the very act, necessarily exclude all other beings from your thought? In that act, the soul stands alone with God, and Jesus is no more present to the mind than your brother or your child.

But is not Jesus called in Scripture the Mediator? He is the mediator in that only sense in which possibly any being can mediate between God and man -- that is an Instructor of man. He teaches us how to become like God. And a true disciple of Jesus will receive the light he gives most thankfully; but the thanks he offers, and which an exalted being will accept, are not compliments -- commemorations, -- but the use of that instruction.

3. Passing other objections, I come to this, that the use of the elements, however suitable to the people and the modes of thought in the East, where it originated, is foreign and unsuited to affect us. Whatever long usage and strong association may have done in some individuals to deaden this repulsion, I apprehend that their use is rather tolerated than loved by any of us. We are not accustomed to express our thoughts or emotions by symbolical actions. Most men find the bread and wine no aid to devotion and to some, it is a painful impediment. To eat bread is one thing; to love the precepts of Christ and resolve to obey them is quite another.

The statement of this objection leads me to say that I think this difficulty, wherever it is felt, to be entitled to the greatest weight. It is alone a sufficient objection to the ordinance. It is my own objection. This mode of commemorating Christ is not suitable to me. That is reason enough why I should abandon it. If I believed that it was enjoined by Jesus on his disciples, and that he even contemplated making permanent this mode of commemoration, every way agreeable to an eastern mind, and yet, on trial, it was disagreeable to my own feelings, I should not adopt it. I should choose other ways which, as more effectual upon me, he would approve more. For I choose that my remembrances of him should be pleasing, affecting, religious. I will love him as a glorified friend, after the free way of friendship, and not pay him a stiff sign of respect, as men do to those whom they fear. A passage read from his discourses, a moving provocation to works like his, any act or meeting which tends to awaken a pure thought, a flow of love, an original design of virtue, I call a worthy, a true commemoration.

4. Fourthly, the importance ascribed to this particular ordinance is not consistent with the spirit of Christianity. The general object and effect of this ordinance is unexceptionable. It has been, and is, I doubt not, the occasion of indefinite good; but an importance is given by Christians to it which never can belong to any form. My friends, the apostle well assures us that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy, in the Holy Ghost." I am not so foolish as to declaim against forms. Forms are as essential as bodies; but to exalt particular forms, to adhere to one form a

moment after it is out-grown, is unreasonable, and it is alien to the spirit of Christ. If I understand the distinction of Christianity, the reason why it is to be preferred over all other systems and is divine is this, that it is a moral system; that it presents men with truths which are their own reason, and enjoins practices that are their own justification; that if miracles may be said to have been its evidence to the first Christians, they are not its evidence to us, but the doctrines themselves; that every practice is Christian which praises itself, and every practice unchristian which condemns itself. I am not engaged to Christianity by decent forms, or saving ordinances; it is not usage, it is not what I do not understand, that binds me to it -- let these be the sandy foundations of falsehoods. What I revere and obey in it is its reality, its boundless charity, its deep interior life, the rest it gives to my mind, the echo it returns to my thoughts, the perfect accord it makes with my reason through all its representation of God and His Providence; and the persuasion and courage that come out thence to lead me upward and onward. Freedom is the essence of this faith. It has for its object simply to make men good and wise. Its institutions, then, should be as flexible as the wants of men. That form out of which the life and suitableness have departed, should be as worthless in its eyes as the dead leaves that are falling around us.

And therefore, although for the satisfaction of others, I have labored to show by the history that this rite was not intended to be perpetual; although I have gone back to weigh the expressions of Paul, I feel that here is the true point of view. In the midst of considerations as to what Paul thought, and why he so thought, I cannot help feeling that it is time misspent to argue to or from his convictions, or those of Luke and John, respecting any form. I seem to lose the substance in seeking the shadow. That for which Paul lived and died so gloriously; that for which Jesus gave himself to be crucified; the end that animated the thousand martyrs and heroes who have followed his steps, was to redeem us from a formal religion, and teach us to seek our well-being in the formation of the soul. The whole world was full of idols and ordinances. The Jewish was a religion of forms. The Pagan was a religion of forms; it was all body -- it had no life -- and the Almighty God was pleased to qualify and send forth a man to teach men that they must serve him with the heart; that only that life was religious which was thoroughly good; that sacrifice was smoke, and forms were shadows. This man lived and died true to this purpose; and now, with his blessed word and life before us, Christians must contend that it is a matter of vital importance -- really a duty, to commemorate him by a certain form, whether that form be agreeable to their understandings or not.

Is not this to make vain the gift of God? Is not this to turn back the hand on the dial? Is not this to make men -- to make ourselves -- forget that not forms, but duties; not names, but righteousness and love are enjoined; and that in the eye of God there is no other measure of the value of any one form than the measure of its use?

There remain some practical objections to the ordinance into which I shall not now enter. There is one on which I had intended to say a few words; I mean the unfavorable relation in which it places that numerous class of persons who abstain from it merely from disinclination to the rite.

Influenced by these considerations, I have proposed to the brethren of the Church to drop the use of the elements and the claim of authority in the administration of this ordinance, and have suggested a mode in which a meeting for the same purpose might be held free of objection.

My brethren have considered my views with patience and candor, and have recommended unanimously an adherence to the present form. I have, therefore, been compelled to consider whether it becomes

me to administer it. I am clearly of opinion I ought not. This discourse has already been so far extended, that I can only say that the reason of my determination is shortly this: -- It is my desire, in the office of a Christian minister, to do nothing which I cannot do with my whole heart. Having said this, I have said all. I have no hostility to this institution; I am only stating my want of sympathy with it. Neither should I ever have obtruded this opinion upon other people, had I not been called by my office to administer it. That is the end of my opposition, that I am not interested in it. I am content that it stand to the end of the world, if it please men and please heaven, and I shall rejoice in all the good it produces.

As it is the prevailing opinion and feeling in our religious community, that it is an indispensable part of the pastoral office to administer this ordinance, I am about to resign into your hands that office which you have confided to me. It has many duties for which I am feebly qualified. It has some which it will always be my delight to discharge, according to my ability, wherever I exist. And whilst the recollection of its claims oppresses me with a sense of my unworthiness, I am consoled by the hope that no time and no change can deprive me of the satisfaction of pursuing and exercising its highest functions.

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II Historical Discourse at Concord



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

II

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

AT CONCORD, ON THE SECOND CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE INCORPORATION OF THE TOWN,
SEPTEMBER 12, 1835.

BULKELEY, Hunt, Willard, Hosmer, Merriam, Flint,
Possessed the land which rendered to their toil
Hay, corn, roots, hemp, flax, apples, wool and wood.
Each of these landlords walked amidst his farm
Saying, "T is mine, my children's and my name's."

Where are these men ? Asleep beneath their grounds:
And strangers, fond as they, their furrows plough.
Earth laughs in flowers, to see her boastful boys
Earth-proud, proud of the earth which is not theirs.

I will have never a noble,
No lineage counted great;
Fishers and choppers and ploughmen
Shall constitute a state.

Lo now! if these poor men
Can govern the land and sea
And make just laws below the sun,
As planets faithful be.

I cause from every creature
His proper good to flow:
As much as he is and doeth,
So much he shall bestow.

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

FELLOW CITIZENS : The town of Concord begins, this day, the third century of its history. By a common consent, the people of New England, for a few years past, as the second centennial anniversary of each of its early settlements arrived, have seen fit to observe the day. You have thought it becoming to commemorate the planting of the first inland town. The sentiment is just, and the practice is wise. Our ears shall not be deaf to the voice of time. We will review the deeds of our fathers, and pass that just verdict on them we expect from posterity on our own.

And yet, in the eternity of Nature, how recent our antiquities appear ! The imagination is impatient of a cycle so short. Who can tell how many thousand years, every day, the clouds have shaded these fields with their purple awning? The river, by whose banks most of us were born, every winter, for ages, has spread its crust of ice over the great meadows which, in ages, it had formed. But the little society of men who now, for a few years, fish in this river, plough the fields it washes, mow the grass

and reap the corn, shortly shall hurry from its banks as did their forefathers. " Man's life," said the Witan to the Saxon king, " is the sparrow that enters at a window, flutters round the house, and flies out at another, and none knoweth whence he came, or whither he goes." The more reason that we should give to our being what permanence we can ; - that we should recall the Past, and expect the Future.

Yet the race survives whilst the individual dies. In the country, without any interference of the law, the agricultural life favors the permanence of families. Here are still around me the lineal descendants of the first settlers of this town. Here is Blood, Flint, Willard, Meriam, Wood, Hosmer, Barrett, Wheeler, Jones, Brown, Buttrick, Brooks, Stow, Hoar, Hey-wood, Hunt, Miles, - the names of the inhabit-ants for the first thirty years ; and the family is in many cases represented, when the name is not. If the name of Bulkeley is wanting, the honor you have done me this day, in making me your organ, testifies your persevering kindness to his blood.'

I shall not be expected, on this occasion, to repeat the details of that oppression which drove our fathers out hither. Yet the town of Con-cord was settled by a party of non-conformists, immediately from Great Britain. The best friend the Massachusetts colony had, though much against his will, was Archbishop Laud in England. In consequence of his famous proclamation setting up certain novelties in the rites of public worship, fifty godly ministers were suspended for contumacy, in the course of two years and a half. Hindered from speaking, some of these dared to print the reasons of their dissent, and were punished with imprisonment or mutilation.¹ This severity brought some of the best men in England to overcome that natural repugnance to emigration which holds the serious and moderate of every nation to their own soil. Among the silenced clergymen was a distinguished minister of Woodhill, in Bedford-shire, Rev. Peter Bulkeley, descended from a noble family, honored for his own virtues, his learning and gifts as a preacher, and adding to his influence the weight of a large estate.² Persecution readily knits friendship between its victims. Mr. Bulkeley, having turned his estate into money and set his face towards New England, was easily able to persuade a good number of planters to join him. They arrived in Boston in 1634.³ Probably there had been a previous correspondence with Governor Winthrop, and an agreement that they should settle at Musketaquid. With them joined Mr. Simon Willard, a merchant from Kent in England. They petitioned the General Court for a grant of a township, and on the 2d of September, 1635, corresponding in New Style to 12th September, two hundred years ago this day, leave to begin a plantation at Musketaquid was given to Peter Bulkeley, Simon Willard, and about twelve families more.' A month later, Rev. John Jones and a large number of settlers destined for the new town arrived in Boston.²

The grant of the General Court was but a preliminary step. The green meadows of Musketaquid or Grassy Brook were far up in the woods, not to be reached without a painful and dangerous journey through an uninterrupted wilderness. They could cross the Massachusetts or Charles River, by the ferry at Newtown; they could go up the river as far as Watertown. But the Indian paths leading up and down the country were a foot broad. They must then plunge into the thicket, and with their axes cut a road for their teams, with their women and children and their household stuff, forced to make long circuits too, to avoid hills and swamps. Edward Johnson of Woburn has described in an affecting narrative their labors by the way. " Some-times passing through thickets where their hands are forced to make way for their bodies' passage, and their feet clambering over the crossed trees, which when they missed, they sunk into an uncertain bottom in water, and wade up to their knees, tumbling sometimes higher, sometimes lower. At the end of this, they meet a scorching plain, yet not so plain but that the ragged bushes scratch their legs foully, even to wearing their stockings to their bare skin in two or three hours. Some of them, having no leggins, have had the blood trickle down at every step. And in time of summer, the sun casts such a reflecting heat from the sweet fern, whose scent is very strong, that

some nearly fainted." They slept on the rocks, wherever the night found them. Much time was lost in travelling they knew not whither, when the sun was hidden by clouds ; for " their compass miscarried in crowding through the bushes," and the Indian paths, once lost, they did not easily find.

Johnson, relating undoubtedly what he had himself heard from the pilgrims, intimates that they consumed many days in exploring the country, to select the best place for the town. Their first temporary accommodation was rude enough. " After they have found a place of abode, they burrow themselves in the earth for their first shelter, under a hillside, and casting the soil aloft upon timbers, they make a fire against the earth, at the highest side. And thus these poor servants of Christ provide shelter for themselves, their wives and little ones, keeping off the short showers from their lodgings, but the long rains penetrate through, to their great disturbance in the night season. Yet in these poor wigwams they sing psalms, pray and praise their God, till they can provide them houses, which they could not ordinarily, till the earth, by the Lord's blessing, brought forth bread to feed them. This they attain with sore travail, every one that can lift a hoe to strike into the earth standing stoutly to his labors, and tearing up the roots and bushes from the ground, which, the first year, yielded them a lean crop, till the sod of the earth was rotten, and therefore they were forced to cut their bread very thin for a long season. But the Lord is pleased to provide for them great store of fish in the spring-time, and especially, alewives, about the bigness of a herring." ' These served them also for manure. For flesh, they looked not for any, in those times, unless they could barter with the Indians for venison and raccoons. " Indian corn, even the coarsest, made as pleasant meal as rice." All kinds of garden fruits grew well, " and let no man," writes our pious chronicler, in another place, " make a jest of pumpkins, for with this fruit the Lord was pleased to feed his people until their corn and cattle were increased."2

The great cost of cattle, and the sickening of their cattle upon such wild fodder as was never cut before ; the loss of their sheep and swine by wolves ; the sufferings of the people in the great snows and cold soon following ; and the fear of the Pequots ; are the other disasters enumerated by the historian.

The hardships of the journey and of the first encampment are certainly related by their con-temporary with some air of romance, yet they can scarcely be exaggerated. A march of a number of families with their stuff, through twenty miles of unknown forest, from a little rising town that had not much to spare, to an Indian town in the wilderness that had nothing, must be laborious to all, and for those who were new to the country and bred in softness, a formidable adventure. But the pilgrims had the preparation of an armed mind, better than any hardihood of body. And the rough welcome which the new land gave them was a fit introduction to the life they must lead in it.

But what was their reception at Musketaquid ? This was an old village of the Massachusetts Indians. Tahattawan, the Sachem, with Waban his son-in-law, lived near Nashawtuck, now Lee's Hill.' Their tribe, once numerous, the epidemic had reduced. Here they planted, hunted and fished. The moose was still trotting in the country, and of his sinews they made their bowstring. Of the pith elder, that still grows beside our brooks, they made their arrow. Of the Indian hemp they spun their nets and lines for summer angling, and, in winter, they sat around holes in the ice, catching salmon, pickerel, breams and perch, with which our river abounded.2 Their physical powers, as our fathers found them, and before yet the English alcohol had proved more fatal to them than the English sword, astonished the white men.3 Their sight was so excellent, that, standing on the seashore, they often told of the coming of a ship at sea, sooner by one hour, yea, two hours' sail, than any Englishman that stood by, on purpose to look out.4 Roger Williams affirms that he has known them run between eighty and a hundred miles in a summer's day, and back again within two days. A little pounded parched corn or no-cake sufficed them on the march. To his bodily perfection, the wild man added some noble traits of

character. He was open as a child to kindness and justice. Many instances of his humanity were known to the Englishmen who suffered in the woods from sickness or cold. " When you came over the morning waters," said one of the Sachems, " we took you into our arms. We fed you with our best meat. Never went white man cold and hungry from Indian wigwam."

The faithful dealing and brave good will, which, during the life of the friendly Massasoit, they uniformly experienced at Plymouth and at Boston, went to their hearts. So that the peace was made, and the ear of the savage already secured, before the pilgrims arrived at his seat of Musketaquid, to treat with him for his lands.

It is said that the covenant made with the Indians, by Mr. Bulkelev and Major Willard, was made under a great oak, formerly standing near the site of the Middlesex Hotel.' Our Records affirm that Squaw Sachem, Tahattawan, and Nimrod did sell a tract of six miles square to the English, receiving for the same, some fathoms of Wampumpeag, hatchets, hoes, knives, cotton cloth and shirts. Wibbacowet, the husband of Squaw Sachem, received a suit of cloth, a hat, a white linen band, shoes, stockings and a greatcoat; and, in conclusion, the said Indians declared themselves satisfied, and told the Englishmen they were welcome. And after the bargain was concluded, Mr. Simon Willard, pointing to the four corners of the world, declared that they had bought three miles from that place, east, west, north and south.¹

The Puritans, to keep the remembrance of their unity one with another, and of their peaceful compact with the Indians, named their forest settlement CONCORD. They proceeded to build, under the shelter of the hill that extends for a mile along the north side of the Boston road, their first dwellings. The labors of a new plantation were paid by its excitements. I seem to see them, with their pious pastor, addressing themselves to the work of clearing the land. Natives of another hemisphere, they beheld, with curiosity, all the pleasing features of the American forest. The landscape before them was fair, if it was strange and rude. The little flower which at this season stars our woods and roadsides with its profuse blooms, might attract even eyes as stern as theirs with its humble beauty. The useful pine lifted its cones into the frosty air. The maple, which is already making the forest gay with its orange hues, reddened over those houseless men. The majestic summits of Wachusett and Monadnoc towering in the horizon, invited the steps of adventure westward.

As the season grew later, they felt its inconveniences. " Many were forced to go barefoot and bareleg, and some in time of frost and snow, yet were they more healthy than now they are."¹ The land was low but healthy ; and if, in common with all the settlements, they found the air of America very cold, they might say with Higginson, after his description of the other elements, that " New England may boast of the element of fire, more than all the rest ; for all Europe is not able to afford to make so great fires as New England. A poor servant, that is to possess but fifty acres, may afford to give more wood for fire as good as the world yields, than many noblemen in England." ² Many were their wants, but more their privileges. The light struggled in through windows of oiled paper,' but they read the word of God by it. They were fain to make use of their knees for a table, but their limbs were their own. Hard labor and spare diet they had, and off wooden trenchers, but they had peace and freedom, and the wailing of the tempest in the woods sounded kindlier in their ear than the smooth voice of the prelates, at home, in England. " There is no people," said their pastor to his little flock of exiles, " but will strive to excel in something. What can we excel in, if not in holiness ? If we look to number, we are the fewest; if to strength, we are the weakest ; if to wealth and riches, we are the poorest of all the people of God through the whole world. We cannot excel nor so much as equal other people in these things; and if we come short in grace and holiness too, we are the most despicable people under heaven. Strive we, therefore, herein to excel, and suffer not this crown to be taken away from us."¹

The sermon fell into good and tender hearts ; the people conspired with their teacher. Their religion was sweetness and peace amidst toil and tears. And, as we are informed, " the edge of their appetite was greater to spiritual duties at their first coming, in time of wants, than afterwards."

The original Town Records, for the first thirty years, are lost. We have records of marriages and deaths, beginning nineteen years after the settlement; and copies of some of the doings of the town in regard to territory, of the same date. But the original distribution of the land, or an account of the principles on which it was divided, are not preserved. Agreeably to the custom of the times, a large portion was reserved to the public, and it appears from a petition of some newcomers, in 1643, that a part had been divided among the first settlers without price, on the single condition of improving it.' Other portions seem to have been successively divided off and granted to individuals, at the rate of sixpence or a shilling an acre. But, in the first years, the land would not pay the necessary public charges, and they seem to have fallen heavily on the few wealthy planters. Mr. Bulkeley, by his generosity, spent his estate, and, doubtless in consideration of his charges, the General Court, in 1639, granted him 300 acres towards Cambridge; and to Mr. Spencer, probably for the like reason, 300 acres by the Ale-wife River. In 1638, 1200 acres were granted to Governor Winthrop, and 1000 to Thomas Dudley, of the lands adjacent to the town, and Governor Winthrop selected as a building spot the land near the house of Captain Humphrey Hunt.' The first record now remaining is that of a reservation of land for the minister, and the appropriation of new lands as commons or pastures to some poor men. At the same date, in 1654, the town having divided itself into three districts, called the North, South and East quarters, ordered, " that the North quarter are to keep and maintain all their highways and bridges over the great river, in their quarter, and, in respect of the greatness of their charge thereabout, and in regard of the ease of the East quarter above the rest, in their highways, they are to allow the North quarter L3." '

Fellow citizens, this first recorded political act of our fathers, this tax assessed on its inhabitants by a town, is the most important event in their civil history, implying, as it does, the exercise of a sovereign power, and connected with all the immunities and powers of a corporate town in Massachusetts. The greater speed and success that distinguish the planting of the human race in this country, over all other plantations in history, owe themselves mainly to the new subdivisions of the State into small corporations of land and power. It is vain to look for the inventor. No man made them. Each of the parts of that perfect structure grew out of the necessities of an instant occasion. The germ was formed in England. The charter gave to the freemen of the Company of Massachusetts Bay the election of the Governor and Council of Assistants. It moreover gave them the power of prescribing the manner in which freemen should be elected; and ordered that all fundamental laws should be enacted by the freemen of the colony. But the Company removed to New England; more than one hundred freemen were admitted the first year, and it was found inconvenient to assemble them all.' And when, presently, the design of the colony began to fulfil itself, by the settlement of new plantations in the vicinity of Boston, and parties, with grants of land, straggled into the country to truck with the Indians and to clear the land for their own benefit, the Governor and freemen in Boston found it neither desirable nor possible to control the trade and practices of these farmers. What could the body of freemen, meeting four times a year, at Boston, do for the daily wants of the planters at Musketaquid ? The wolf was to be killed; the Indian to be watched and resisted ; wells to be dug; the forest to be felled; pastures to be cleared; corn to be raised ; roads to be cut ; town and farm lines to be run. These things must be done, govern who might. The nature of man and his condition in the world, for the first time within the period of certain history, controlled the formation of the State. The necessity of the colonists wrote the law. Their wants, their poverty, their manifest convenience made them bold to ask of the Governor and of the General Court, immunities, and, to certain purposes, sovereign powers. The townsmen's words were heard and weighed, for all knew that it was a petitioner that

could not be slighted; it was the river, or the winter, or famine, or the Pequots, that spoke through them to the Governor and Council of Massachusetts Bay. Instructed by necessity, each little company organized itself after the pattern of the larger town, by appointing its constable, and other petty half-military officers. As early as 1633,' the office of townsman or selectman appears, who seems first to have been appointed by the General Court, as here, at Concord, in 1639. In 1635, the Court say, "whereas particular towns have many things which concern only themselves, it is Ordered, that the freemen of every town shall have power to dispose of their own lands, and woods, and choose their own particular officers." 2 This pointed chiefly at the office of constable, but they soon chose their own selectmen, and very early assessed taxes ; a power at first resisted,' but speedily confirmed to them.

Meantime, to this paramount necessity, a milder and more pleasing influence was joined. I esteem it the happiness of this country that its settlers, whilst they were exploring their granted and natural rights and determining the power of the magistrate, were united by personal affection. Members of a church before whose searching covenant all rank was abolished, they stood in awe of each other, as religious men. They bore to John Winthrop, the Governor, a grave but hearty kindness. For the first time, men examined the powers of the chief whom they loved and revered. For the first time, the ideal social compact was real. The bands of love and reverence held fast the little state, whilst they untied the great cords of authority to examine their soundness and learn on what wheels they ran. They were to settle the internal constitution of the towns, and, at the same time, their power in the commonwealth. The Governor conspires with them in limiting his claims to their obedience, and values much more their love than his chartered authority. The disputes between that forbearing man and the deputies are like the quarrels of girls, so much do they turn upon complaints of unkindness, and end in such loving reconciliations. It was on doubts concerning their own power, that, in 1634, a committee repaired to him for counsel, and he advised, seeing the freemen were grown so numerous, to send deputies from every town once in a year to revise the laws and to assess all monies. And the General Court, thus constituted, only needed to go into separate session from the Council, as they did in 1644,2 to become essentially the same assembly they are this day.

By this course of events, Concord and the other plantations found themselves separate and independent of Boston, with certain rights of their own, which, what they were, time alone could fully determine; enjoying, at the same time, a strict and loving fellowship with Boston, and sure of advice and aid, on every emergency. Their powers were speedily settled by obvious convenience, and the towns learned to exercise a sovereignty in the laying of taxes ; in the choice of their deputy to the house of representatives; in the disposal of the town lands; in the care of public worship, the school and the poor ; and, what seemed of at least equal importance, to exercise the right of expressing an opinion on every question before the country. In a town-meeting, the great secret of political science was uncovered, and the problem solved, how to give every individual his fair weight in the government, without any disorder from numbers. In a town-meeting, the roots of society were reached. Here the rich gave counsel, but the poor also ; and moreover, the just and the unjust. He is ill informed who expects, on running down the Town Records for two hundred years, to find a church of saints, a metropolis of patriots, enacting wholesome and creditable laws. The constitution of the towns forbid it. In this open democracy, every opinion had utterance ; every objection, every fact, every acre of land, every bushel of rye, its entire weight. The moderator was the passive mouth-piece, and the vote of the town, like the vane on the turret overhead, free for every wind to turn, and always turned by the last and strongest breath. In these assemblies, the public weal, the call of interest, duty, religion, were heard ; and every local feeling, every private grudge, every suggestion of petulance and ignorance, were not less faith-fully produced. Wrath and love came up to town-meeting in company. By the law of 1641, every man - freeman or not - inhabitant or not-might introduce any

business into a public meeting. Not a complaint occurs in all the volumes of our Records, of any inhabitant being hindered from speaking, or suffering from any violence or usurpation of any class. The negative ballot of a ten-shilling freeholder was as fatal as that of the honored owner of Blood's Farms or Willard's Purchase. A man felt him-self at liberty to exhibit, at town-meeting, feelings and actions that he would have been ashamed of anywhere but amongst his neighbors. Individual protests are frequent. Peter Wright [1705] desired his dissent might be re-corded from the town's grant to John Shepard.' In 1795, several town-meetings are called, upon the compensation to be made to a few proprietors for land taken in making a bridle-road ; and one of them demanding large damages, many offers were made him in town-meeting, and refused ; " which the town thought very unreasonable." The matters there debated are such as to invite very small considerations. The ill-spelled pages of the Town Records contain the result. I shall be excused for confessing that I have set a value upon any symptom of meanness and private pique which I have met with in these antique books, as proof that justice was done ; that if the results of our history are approved as wise and good, it was vet a free strife ; if the good counsel prevailed, the sneaking counsel did not fail to be suggested; freedom and virtue, if they triumphed, triumphed in a fair field. And so be it an everlasting testimony for them, and so much ground of assurance of man's capacity for self-government.

It is the consequence of this institution that not a school-house, a public pew, a bridge, a pound, a mill-dam, hath been set up, or pulled down, or altered, or bought, or sold, without the whole population of this town having a voice in the affair. A general contentment is the result. And the people truly feel that they are lords of the soil. In every winding road, in every stone fence, in the smokes of the poor-house chimney, in the clock on the church, they read their own power, and consider, at leisure, the wisdom and error of their judgments.

The British government has recently presented to the several public libraries of this country, copies of the splendid edition of the Domesday Book, and other ancient public re-cords of England. I cannot but think that it would be a suitable acknowledgment of this national munificence, if the records of one of our towns, - of this town, for example, - should be printed, and presented to the governments of Europe ; to the English nation, as a thank-offering, and as a certificate of the progress of the Saxon race ; to the Continental nations as a lesson of humanity and love. Tell them, the Union has twenty-four States, and Massachusetts is one. Tell them, Massachusetts has three hundred towns, and Concord is one ; that in Concord are five hundred ratable polls, and every one has an equal vote.

About ten years after the planting of Con-cord, efforts began to be made to civilize the Indians, and " to win them to the knowledge of the true God." This indeed, in so many words, is expressed in the charter of the colony as one of its ends ; and this design is named first in the printed " Considerations,"¹ that inclined Hampden, and determined Winthrop and his friends, to come hither. The interest of the Puritans in the natives was heightened by a suspicion at that time prevailing that these were the lost ten tribes of Israel. The man of the woods might well draw on himself the compassion of the planters. His erect and perfect form, though disclosing some irregular virtues, was found joined to a dwindled soul. Master of all sorts of wood-craft, he seemed a part of the forest and the lake, and the secret of his amazing skill seemed to be that he partook of the nature and fierce instincts of the beasts he slew. Those who dwelled by ponds and rivers had some tincture of civility, but the hunters of the tribe were found intractable at catechism. Thomas Hooker anticipated the opinion of Humboldt, and called them " the ruins of man-kind."

Early efforts were made to instruct them, in which Mr. Bulkeley, Mr. Flint, and Captain Willard, took an active part. In 1644, Squaw Sachem, the widow of Nanepashemet, the great Sachem of Concord and Mystic, with two sachems of Wachusett, made a formal submission to the English government, and

intimated their desire, "as opportunity served, and the English lived among them, to learn to read God's word, and know God aright ; " and the General Court acted on their request.' John Eliot, in October, 1646, preached his first sermon in the Indian language at Noonantum ; Waban, Tahattawan, and their sannaps, going thither from Concord to hear him. There under the rubbish and ruins of barbarous life, the human heart heard the voice of love, and awoke as from a sleep. The questions which the Indians put betray their reason and their ignorance. " Can Jesus Christ understand prayers in the Indian language? " " If a man be wise, and his sachem weak, must he obey him ? " At a meeting which Eliot gave to the squaws apart, the wife of Wampooas propounded the question, "Whether do I pray when my husband prays, if I speak nothing as he doth, yet if I like what he saith ? "-" which questions were accounted of by some, as part of the whitenings of the harvest to-ward." ' Tahattawan, our Concord sachem, called his Indians together, and bid them not oppose the courses which the English were taking for their good ; for, said he, all the time you have lived after the Indian fashion, under the power of the higher sachems, what did they care for you ? They took away your skins, your kettles and your wampum, at their own plea-sure, and this was all they regarded. But you may see the English mind no such things, but only seek your welfare, and instead of taking away, are ready to give to you. Tahattawan and his son-in-law Waban, besought Eliot to come and preach to them at Concord, and here they entered, by his assistance, into an agreement to twenty-nine rules, all breathing a desire to conform themselves to English customs.² They requested to have a town given them within the bounds of Concord, near unto the English. When this question was pro-pounded by Tahattawan, he was asked, why he desired a town so near, when there was more room for them up in the country? The sachem replied that he knew if the Indians dwelt far from the English, they would not so much care to pray, nor could they be so ready to hear the word of God, but would be, all one, Indians still ; but dwelling near the English, he hoped it might be otherwise with them then. We, who see in the squalid remnants of the twenty tribes of Massachusetts, the final failure of this benevolent enterprise, can hardly learn without emotion the earnestness with which the most sensible individuals of the copper race held on to the new hope they had conceived, of being elevated to equality with their civilized brother. It is piteous to see their self-distrust in their re-quest to remain near the English, and their unanimous entreaty to Captain Willard, to be their Recorder, being very solicitous that what they did agree upon might be faithfully kept without alteration. It was remarkable that the preaching was not wholly new to them. "Their forefathers," the Indians told Eliot, "did know God, but after this, they fell into a deep sleep, and when they did awake, they quite forgot him." ' "

At the instance of Eliot, in 1651, their desire was granted by the General Court, and Nashobah, lying near Nagog Pond, now partly in Littleton, partly in Acton, became an Indian town, where a Christian worship was established under an Indian ruler and teacher. Wilson relates that, at their meetings, " the Indians sung a psalm, made Indian by Eliot, in one of our ordinary English tunes, melodiously." ' Such was, for half a century, the success of the general enterprise, that, in 1676, there were five hundred and sixty-seven praying Indians, and in 1689, twenty-four Indian preachers, and eighteen assemblies.

Meantime, Concord increased in territory and population. The lands were divided ; highways were cut from farm to farm, and from this town to Boston. A military company had been organized in 1636. The Pequots, the terror of the farmer, were exterminated in 1637. Captain Underhill, in 1638, declared, that " the new plantations of Dedham and Concord do afford large accommodation, and will contain abundance of people."² In 1639, our first selectmen, Mr. Flint, Lieutenant Willard, and Richard Griffin were appointed. And in 1640, when the colony rate was J1200, Concord was assessed £50.' The country already began to yield more than was consumed by the inhabitants.' The very great immigration from England made the lands more valuable every year, and supplied a market for the produce. In 1643, the colony was so numerous that it became expedient to divide it into four counties, Concord being included in Middlesex.' In 1644, the town contained sixty families.

But, in 1640, all immigration ceased, and the country produce and farm-stock depreciated.' Other difficulties accrued. The fish, which had been the abundant manure of the settlers, was found to injure the land.⁴ The river, at this period, seems to have caused some distress now by its overflow, now by its drought.' A cold and wet summer blighted the corn ; enormous flocks of pigeons beat down and eat up all sorts of English grain ; and the crops suffered much from mice.⁶ New plantations and better land had been opened, far and near ; and whilst many of the colonists at Boston thought to remove, or did remove to England, the Concord people became uneasy, and looked around for new seats. In 1643, one seventh or one eighth part of the inhabitants went to Connecticut with Reverend Mr. Jones, and settled Fairfield. Weakened by this loss, the people begged to be released from a part of their rates, to which the General Court consented. Mr. Bulkeley dissuaded his people from removing, and admonished them to increase their faith with their griefs. Even this check which befell them acquaints us with the rapidity of their growth, for the good man, in dealing with his people, taxes them with luxury. " We pretended to come hither," he says, " for ordinances ; but now ordinances are light matters with us ; we are turned after the prev. We have among us excess and pride of life ; pride in apparel, daintiness in diet, and that in those who, in times past, would have been satisfied with bread. This is the sin of the lowest of the people." ` Better evidence could not be desired of the rapid growth of the settlement.

The check was but momentary. The earth teemed with fruits. The people on the bay built ships, and found the way to the West Indies, with pipe-staves, lumber and fish ; and the country people speedily learned to supply themselves with sugar, tea and molasses. The college had been already gathered in 1638. Now the school-house went up. The General Court, in 1647, " to the end that learning may not be buried in the graves of our forefathers, Ordered, that every township, after the Lord had increased them to the number of fifty house-holders, shall appoint one to teach all children to write and read ; and where any town shall increase to the number of one hundred families, they shall set up a Grammar school, the masters thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the University." With these requirements Concord not only complied, but, in 1653, subscribed a sum for several years to the support of Harvard College.'

But a new and alarming public distress retarded the growth of this, as of the sister towns, during more than twenty years from 1654 to 1676. In 1654, the four united New England Colonies agreed to raise 270 foot and 40 horse, to reduce Ninigret, Sachem of the Niantics, and appointed Major Simon Willard, of this town, to the command.² This war seems to have been pressed by three of the colonies, and reluctantly entered by Massachusetts. Accordingly, Major Willard did the least he could, and incurred the censure of the Commissioners, who write to their " loving friend Major Willard," " that they leave to his consideration the inconveniences arising from his non-attendance to his commission." ³ This expedition was but the introduction of the war with King Philip. In 1670, the Wampanoags began to grind their hatchets, and mend their guns, and insult the English. Philip surrendered seventy guns to the Commissioners in Taunton Meeting-house,' but revenged his humiliation a few years after, by carrying fire and the tomahawk into the English villages. From Narragansett to the Connecticut River, the scene of war was shifted as fast as these red hunters could traverse the forest. Concord was a military post. The in-activity of Major Willard, in Ninigret's war, had lost him no confidence. He marched from Concord to Brookfield, in season to save the people whose houses had been burned, and who had taken shelter in a fortified house.² But he fought with disadvantage against an enemy who must be hunted before every battle. Some flourishing towns were burned. John Monoco, a formidable savage, boasted that " he had burned Medfield and Lancaster, and would burn Groton, Concord, Watertown and Boston ; " adding, " what me will, me do." He did burn Groton, but before he had executed the remainder of his threat he was hanged, in Boston, in September, 1676.³

A still more formidable enemy was removed, in the same year, by the capture of Canonchet, the faithful ally of Philip, who was soon after-wards shot at Stonington. He stoutly declared to the Commissioners that " he would not de-liver up a Wampanoag, nor the paring of a Wampanoag's nail," and when he was told that his sentence was death, he said " he liked it well that he was to die before his heart was soft, or he had spoken anything unworthy of himself." '

We know beforehand who must conquer in that unequal struggle. The red man may destroy here and there a straggler, as a wild beast may ; he may fire a farm-house, or a village ; but the association of the white men and their arts of war give them an overwhelming advantage, and in the first blast of their trumpet we already hear the flourish of victory. I confess what chiefly interests me, in the annals of that war, is the grandeur of spirit exhibited by a few of the Indian chiefs. A nameless Wampanoag who was put to death by the Mohicans, after cruel tortures, was asked by his butchers, during the torture, how he liked the war ? - he said, " he found it as sweet as. sugar was to Englishmen."

The only compensation which war offers for its manifold mischiefs, is in the great personal qualities to which it gives scope and occasion. The virtues of patriotism and of prodigious courage and address were exhibited on both sides, and, in many instances, by women. The historian of Concord has preserved an instance of the resolution of one of the daughters of the town. Two young farmers, Abraham and Isaac Shepherd, had set their sister Mary, a girl of fifteen years, to watch whilst they threshed grain in the barn. The Indians stole upon her before she was aware, and her brothers were slain. She was carried captive into the Indian country, but, at night, whilst her captors were asleep, she plucked a saddle from under the head of one of them, took a horse they had stolen from Lancaster, and having girt the saddle on, she mounted, swam across the Nashua River, and rode through the forest to her home.'

With the tragical end of Philip, the war ended. Beleaguered in his own country, his corn cut down, his piles of meal and other provision wasted by the English, it was only a great thaw in January, that, melting the snow and opening the earth, enabled his poor followers to come at the ground-nuts, else they had starved. Hunted by Captain Church, he fled from one swamp to another ; his brother, his uncle, his sister, and his beloved squaw being taken or slain, he was at last shot down by an Indian deserter, as he fled alone in the dark of the morning, not far from his own fort.'

Concord suffered little from the war. This is to be attributed no doubt, in part, to the fact that troops were generally quartered here, and that it was the residence of many noted soldiers. Tradition finds another cause in the sanctity of its minister. The elder Bulkeley was gone. In 1659,¹ his bones were laid at rest in the forest. But the mantle of his piety and of the people's affection fell upon his son Edward,' the fame of whose prayers, it is said, once saved Concord from an attack of the Indian.' A great defence undoubtedly was the village of Praying Indians, until this settlement fell a victim to the envenomed prejudice against their countrymen. The worst feature in the history of those years, is, that no man spake for the Indian. When the Dutch, or the French, or the English royalist disagreed with the Colony, there was always found a Dutch, or French, or tory party, - an earnest minority, - to keep things from extremity. But the Indian seemed to inspire such a feeling as the wild beast inspires in the people near his den. It is the misfortune of Concord to have permitted a disgraceful outrage upon the friendly Indians settled within its limits, in February, 1676, which ended in their forcible expulsion from the town.⁴

This painful incident is but too just an ex-ample of the measure which the Indians have generally received from the whites. For them the heart of charity, of humanity, was stone. After Philip's death,

their strength was irrecoverably broken. They never more disturbed the interior settlements, and a few vagrant families, that are now pensioners on the bounty of Massachusetts, are all that is left of the twenty tribes.

"Alas! for them - their day is o'er,
 Their fires are out from hill and shore,
 No more for them the wild deer bounds,
 The plough is on their hunting grounds;
 The pale man's axe rings in their woods,
 The pale man's sail skims o'er their floods,
 Their pleasant springs are dry."

I turn gladly to the progress of our civil history. Before 1666, 15,000 acres had been added by grants of the General Court to the original territory of the town,' so that Concord then included the greater part of the towns of Bedford, Acton, Lincoln and Carlisle.

In the great growth of the country, Concord participated, as is manifest from its increasing polls and increased rates. Randolph at this period writes to the English government, concerning the country towns; " The farmers are numerous and wealthy, live in good houses ; are given to hospitality; and make good advantage by their corn, cattle, poultry, butter and cheese." Edward Bulkeley was the pastor, until his death, in 1696. His youngest brother, Peter, was deputy from Concord, and was chosen speaker of the house of deputies in 1676. The following year, he was sent to England, with Mr. Stough-ton, as agent for the Colony ; and on his return, in 1685, was a royal councillor. But I am sorry to find that the servile Randolph speaks of him with marked respect.' It would seem that his visit to England had made him a courtier. In 1689, Concord partook of the general indignation of the province against Andros. A company marched to the capital under Lieutenant Heald, forming a part of that body concerning which we are informed, " the country people came armed into Boston, on the afternoon (of Thursday, 18th April) in such rage and heat, as made us all tremble to think what would follow ; for nothing would satisfy them but that the governor must be bound in chains or cords, and put in a more secure place, and that they would see done before they went away; and to satisfy them he was guarded by them to the fort." 3 But the Town Records of that day confine themselves to descriptions of lands, and to conferences with the neighboring towns to run boundary lines. In 1699, so broad was their territory, I find the selectmen running the lines with Chelmsford, Cambridge and Watertown.' Some interesting peculiarities in the manners and customs of the time appear in the town's books. Proposals of marriage were made by the parents of the parties, and minutes of such private agreements sometimes entered on the clerk's records.2 The public charity seems to have been bestowed in a manner now obsolete. The town lends its commons as pastures, to poor men ; and " being informed of the great present want of Thomas Pellit, gave order to Stephen Hosmer to deliver a town cow, of a black color, with a white face, unto said Pellit, for his present supply."

From the beginning to the middle of the eighteenth century, our records indicate no interruption of the tranquillity of the inhabitants, either in church or in civil affairs. After the death of Rev. Mr. Estabrook, in 711, it was propounded at the town-meeting, "whether one of the three gentlemen lately improved here in preaching, namely, Mr. John Whiting, Mr. Holyoke and Mr. Prescott, shall be now chosen in the work of the ministry? Voted affirmatively."4 Mr. Whiting, who was chosen, was, we are told in his epitaph, "a universal lover of mankind." The charges of education and of legislation, at this period, seem to have afflicted the town ; for they vote to petition the General Court to be eased of the law relating to providing a school-master; happily, the Court refused; and in 1712, the selectmen agreed with Captain James Minott, " for his son Timothy to keep the school at the school-house for the

town of Concord, for half a year beginning 2d June; and if any scholar shall come, within the said time, for larning exceeding his son's ability, the said Captain doth agree to instruct them himself in the tongues, till the above said time be fulfilled; for which service, the town is to pay Captain Minott ten pounds." Captain Minott seems to have served our prudent fathers in the double capacity of teacher and representative. It is an article in the selectmen's warrant for the town-meeting, "to see if the town will lay in for a representative not exceeding four pounds." Captain Minott was chosen, and after the General Court was adjourned received of the town for his services, an allowance of three shillings per day. The country was not yet so thickly settled but that the inhabitants suffered from wolves and wild-cats, which infested the woods; since bounties of twenty shillings are given as late as 1735, to Indians and whites, for the heads of these animals, after the constable has cut off the ears.'

Mr. Whiting was succeeded in the pastoral office by Rev. Daniel Bliss, in 1738. Soon after his ordination, the town seems to have been divided by ecclesiastical discords. In 1741, the celebrated Whitfield preached here, in the open air, to a great congregation² Mr. Bliss heard that great orator with delight, and by his earnest sympathy with him, in opinion and practice, gave offence to a part of his people. Party and mutual councils were called, but no grave charge was made good against him. I find, in the Church Records, the charges preferred against him, his answer thereto, and the result of the Council. The charges seem to have been made by the lovers of order and moderation against Mr. Bliss, as a favorer of religious excitements. His answer to one of the counts breathes such true piety that I cannot forbear to quote it. The ninth allegation is " That in praying for himself, in a church-meeting, in December last, he said, he was a poor vile worm of the dust, that was allowed as Mediator between God and this people.' " To this Mr. Bliss replied, " I n the prayer you speak of, Jesus Christ was acknowledged as the only Mediator between God and man ; at which time, I was filled with wonder, that such a sinful and worthless worm as I am, was allowed to represent Christ, in any manner, even so far as to be bringing the petitions and thank-offerings of the people unto God, and God's will and truths to the people ; and used the word Mediator in some differing light from that you have given it ; but I confess I was soon uneasy that I had used the word, lest some would put a wrong meaning thereupon." ' The Council admonished Mr. Bliss of some improprieties of expression, but bore witness to his purity and fidelity in his office. In 1764, Whitfield preached again at Concord, on Sunday afternoon ; Mr. Bliss preached in the morning, and the Concord people thought their minister gave them the better sermon of the two. It was also his last?

The planting of the colony was the effect of religious principle. The Revolution was the fruit of another principle, - the devouring thirst for justice. From the appearance of the article in the Selectmen's warrant, in 1765, " to see if the town will give the Representative any instructions about any important affair to be transacted by the General Court, concerning the Stamp Act,"³ to the peace of 1783, the Town Records breathe a resolute and warlike spirit, so bold from the first as hardly to admit of increase.

It would be impossible on this occasion to recite all these patriotic papers. I must content myself with a few brief extracts. On the 24th January, 1774, in answer to letters received from the united committees of correspondence, in the vicinity of Boston, the town say :

" We cannot possibly view with indifference the past and present obstinate endeavors of the enemies of this, as well as the mother country, to rob us of those rights, that are the distinguishing glory and felicity of this land ; rights, that we are obliged to no power, under heaven, for the enjoyment of; as they are the fruit of the heroic enterprises of the first settlers of these American colonies. And though we cannot but be alarmed at the great majority, in the British parliament, for the imposition of unconstitutional taxes on the colonies, yet, it gives life and strength to every attempt to oppose them,

that not only the people of this, but the neighboring provinces are remarkably united in the important and interesting opposition, which, as it succeeded be-fore, in some measure, by the blessing of heaven, so, we cannot but hope it will be attended with still greater success, in future.

"Resolved, That these colonies have been and still are illegally taxed by the British parliament, as they are not virtually represented therein.

" That the purchasing commodities subject to such illegal taxation is an explicit, though an impious and sordid resignation of the liberties of this free and happy people.

"That, as the British parliament have em-powered the East India Company to export their tea into America, for the sole purpose of raising a revenue from hence ; to render the design abortive, we will not, in this town, either by our-selves, or any from or under us, buy, sell, or use any of the East India Company's tea, or any other tea, whilst there is a duty for raising a revenue thereon in America ; neither will we suffer any such tea to be used in our families.

"That all such persons as shall purchase; sell, or use any such tea, shall, for the future, be deemed unfriendly to the happy constitution of this country.

"That, in conjunction with our brethren in America, we will risk our fortunes, and even our lives, in defence of his majesty, King George the Third, his person, crown and dignity; and will, also, with the same resolution, as his free-born subjects in this country, to the utmost of our power, defend all our rights inviolate to the latest posterity.

" That, if any person or persons, inhabitants of this province, so long as there is a duty on tea, shall import any tea from the India House, in England, or be factors for the East India Company, we will treat them, in an eminent degree, as enemies to their country, and with contempt and detestation.

" That we think it our duty, at this critical time of our public affairs, to return our hearty thanks to the town of Boston, for every rational measure they have taken for the preservation or recovery of our invaluable rights and liberties infringed upon ; and we hope, should the state of our public affairs require it, that they will still remain watchful and persevering; with a steady zeal to espy out everything that shall have a tendency to subvert our happy constitution."

On the 27th June, near three hundred per-sons, upwards of twenty-one years of age, in-habitants of Concord, entered into a covenant, "solemnly engaging with each other, in the presence of God, to suspend all commercial intercourse with Great Britain, until the act for blocking the harbor of Boston be repealed ; and neither to buy nor consume any merchandise imported from Great Britain, nor to deal with those who do." '

In August, a County Convention met in this town, to deliberate upon the alarming state of public affairs, and published an admirable report.² In September, incensed at the new royal law which made the judges dependent on the crown, the inhabitants assembled on the common, and forbade the justices to open the court of sessions. This little town then assumed the sovereignty. It was judge and jury and council and king. On the 26th of the month, the whole town resolved itself into a committee of safety, " to suppress all riots, tumults, and disorders in said town, and to aid all untainted magistrates in the execution of the laws of the land." It was then voted, to raise one or more companies of minute-men, by enlistment, to be paid by the town whenever called out of town ; and to provide arms and ammunition, " that those who are unable to purchase them themselves, may have the advantage of them, if necessity calls for it." In October, the Provincial Congress met in Concord.

John Hancock was President. This body was composed of the foremost patriots, and adopted those efficient measures whose progress and issue belong to the history of the nation.'

The clergy of New England were, for the most part, zealous promoters of the Revolution. A deep religious sentiment sanctified the thirst for liberty. All the military movements in this town were solemnized by acts of public worship. In January, 1775, a meeting was held for the enlisting of minute-men. Reverend William Emerson, the chaplain of the Provincial Congress, preached to the people. Sixty men en-listed and, in a few days, many more. On 13th March, at a general review of all the military companies, he preached to a very full assembly, taking for his text, 2 Chronicles xiii. 12, "And, behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you." It is said that all the services of that day made a deep impression on the people, even to the singing of the psalm.

A large amount of military stores had been deposited in this town, by order of the Provincial Committee of Safety. It was to destroy those stores that the troops who were attacked in this town, on the 19th April, 1775, were sent hither by General Gage.

The story of that day is well known. In these peaceful fields, for the first time since a hundred years, the drum and alarm-gun were heard, and the farmers snatched down their rusty firelocks from the kitchen walls, to make good the resolute words of their town debates. In the field where the western abutment of the old bridge may still be seen, about half a mile from this spot, the first organized resistance was made to the British arms. There the Americans first shed British blood. Eight hundred British soldiers, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Smith, had marched from Boston to Concord; at Lexington had fired upon the brave handful of militia, for which a speedy revenge was reaped by the same militia in the afternoon. When they entered Concord, they found the militia and minute-men assembled under the command of Colonel Barrett and Major Buttrick. This little battalion, though in their hasty council some were urgent to stand their ground, retreated before the enemy to the high land on the other bank of the river, to wait for reinforcement. Colonel Barrett ordered the troops not to fire, unless fired upon. The British following them across the bridge, posted two companies, amounting to about one hundred men, to guard the bridge, and secure the return of the plundering party. Meantime, the men of Acton, Bedford, Lincoln and Carlisle, all once included in Concord, remembering their parent town in the hour of danger, arrived and fell into the ranks so fast, that Major Buttrick found himself superior in number to the enemy's party at the bridge. And when the smoke began to rise from the village where the British were burning cannon-carriages and military stores, the Americans resolved to force their way into town. The English beginning to pluck up some of the planks of the bridge, the Americans quickened their pace, and the British fired one or two shots up the river (our ancient friend here, Master Blood, saw the water struck by the first ball); then a single gun, the ball from which wounded Luther Blanchard and Jonas Brown, and then a volley, by which Captain Isaac Davis and Abner Hosmer of Acton were instantly killed. Major Buttrick leaped from the ground, and gave the command to fire, which was repeated in a simultaneous cry by all his men. The Americans fired, and killed two men and wounded eight. A head-stone and a foot-stone, on this bank of the river, mark the place where these first victims lie.' The British retreated immediately towards the village, and were joined by two companies of grenadiers, whom the noise of the firing had hastened to the spot. The militia and minutemen-every one from that moment being his own commander - ran over the hills opposite the battle-field, and across the great fields, into the east quarter of the town, to waylay the enemy, and annoy his retreat. The British, as soon as they were rejoined by the plundering detachment, began that disastrous retreat to Boston, which was an omen to both parties of the event of the war.

In all the anecdotes of that day's events we may discern the natural action of the people. It was not an

extravagant ebullition of feeling, but might have been calculated on by any one acquainted with the spirits and habits of our community. Those poor farmers who came up, that day, to defend their native soil, acted from the simplest instincts. They did not know it was a deed of fame they were doing. "These men did not babble of glory. They never dreamed their children would contend who had done the most. They supposed they had a right to their corn and their cattle, without paying tribute to any but their own governors. And as they had no fear of man, they yet did have a fear of God. Captain Charles Miles, who was wounded in the pursuit of the enemy, told my venerable friend who sits by me, that " he went to the services of that day, with the same seriousness and acknowledgment of God, which he carried to church."1

The presence of these aged men who were in arms on that day seems to bring us nearer to it. The benignant Providence which has prolonged their lives to this hour gratifies the strong curiosity of the new generation. The Pilgrims are gone ; but we see what manner of persons they were who stood in the worst perils of the Revolution. We hold by the hand the last of the invincible men of old, and confirm from living lips the sealed records of time.

And you, my fathers, whom God and the history of your country have ennobled, may well bear a chief part in keeping this peaceful birth-day of our town. You are indeed extraordinary heroes. If ever men in arms had a spotless cause, you had. You have fought a good fight. And having quit you like men in the battle, you have quit yourselves like men in your virtuous families ; in your cornfields; and in society. We will not hide your honorable gray hairs under perishing laurel-leaves, but the eye of affection and veneration follows you. You are set apart- and forever-for the esteem and gratitude of the human race. To you belongs a better badge than stars and ribbons. This prospering country is your ornament, and this expanding nation is multiplying your praise with millions of tongues.1

The agitating events of those days were duly remembered in the church. On the second day after the affray, divine service was attended, in this house, by 700 soldiers. William Emerson, the pastor, had a hereditary claim to the affection of the people, being descended in the fourth generation from Edward Bulkeley, son of Peter. But he had merits of his own. The cause of the Colonies was so much in his heart that he did not cease to make it the subject of his preaching and his prayers, and is said to have deeply in-spired many of his people with his own enthusiasm. He, at least, saw clearly the pregnant consequences of the 19th April. I have found within a few days, among some family papers, his almanac of 1775, in a blank leaf of which he has written a narrative of the fight;2 and at the close of the month, he writes, " This month remarkable for the greatest events of the present age." To promote the same cause, he asked, and obtained of the town, leave to accept the commission of chaplain to the Northern army, at Ticonderoga, and died, after a few months, of the distemper that prevailed in the camp.'

In the whole course of the war the town did not depart from this pledge it had given. Its little population of 1300 souls behaved like a party to the contest. The number of its troops constantly in service is very great. Its pecuniary burdens are out of all proportion to its capital. The economy so rigid, which marked its earlier history, has all vanished. It spends profusely, affectionately, in the service. " Since," say the plaintive records, "General Washington, at Cam-bridge, is not able to give but 24s. per cord for wood, for the army; it is Voted, that this town encourage the inhabitants to supply the army, by paying two dollars per cord, over and above the General's price, to such as shall carry wood thither ; " 2 and 210 cords of wood were carried. A similar order is taken respecting hay. Whilst Boston was occupied by the British troops, Concord contributed to the relief of the inhabitants, £70, in money ; 225 bushels of grain ; and a quantity of meat and wood. When, presently, the poor of Boston were quartered by the Provincial Congress on the neighboring country, Concord received 82 persons to

its hospitality.

In the year 1775, it raised 100 minute-men, and 74 soldiers to serve at Cambridge. In March, 1776, 145 men were raised by this town to serve at Dorchester Heights.¹ In June, the General Assembly of Massachusetts resolved to raise 5000 militia for six months to reinforce the Continental army. "The numbers," say they, "are large, but this Court has the fullest assurance that their brethren, on this occasion, will not confer with flesh and blood, but will, with-out hesitation, and with the utmost alacrity and despatch, fill up the numbers proportioned to the several towns."² On that occasion, Concord furnished 67 men, paying them itself, at an expense of £62 And so on, with every levy, to the end of the war. For these men it was continually providing shoes, stockings, shirts, coats, blankets and beef. The taxes, which, before the war, had not much exceeded £200 per annum, amounted, in the year 1782, to \$9544, in silver.;

The great expense of the war was borne with cheerfulness, whilst the war lasted ; but years passed, after the peace, before the debt was paid. As soon as danger and injury ceased, the people were left at leisure to consider their poverty and their debts. The Town Records show how slowly the inhabitants recovered from the strain of excessive exertion. Their instructions to their representatives are full of loud complaints of the disgraceful state of public credit, and the excess of public expenditure. They may be pardoned, under such distress, for the mistakes of an extreme frugality. They fell into a common error, not yet dismissed to the moon, that the remedy was, to forbid the great importation of foreign commodities, and to prescribe by law the prices of articles. The operation of a new government was dreaded, lest it should prove expensive, and the country towns thought it would be cheaper if it were removed from the capital. They were jealous lest the General Court should pay itself too liberally, and our fathers must be forgiven by their charitable posterity, if, in 1782, before choosing a representative, it was "Voted, that the person who should be chosen representative to the General Court should receive 6s. per day, whilst in actual service, an account of which time he should bring to the town, and if it should be that the General Court should resolve, that, their pay should be more than 6s., then the representative shall be hereby directed to pay the overplus into the town treasury." ' This was securing the prudence of the public servants.

But whilst the town had its own full share of the public distress, it was very far from desiring relief at the cost of order and law. In 1786, when the general sufferings drove the people in parts of Worcester and Hampshire counties to insurrection, a large party of armed insurgents arrived in this town, on the 12th September, to hinder the sitting of the Court of Common Pleas. But they found no countenance here.' The same people who had been active in a County Convention to consider grievances, condemned the rebellion, and joined the authorities in putting it down.² In 1787, the admirable instructions given by the town to its representative are a proud monument of the good sense and good feeling that prevailed. The grievances ceased with the adoption of the Federal Constitution. The constitution of Massachusetts had been already accepted. It was put to the town of Concord, in October, 1776, by the Legislature, whether the existing house of representatives should enact a constitution for the State ? The town answered No.³ The General Court, notwithstanding, draughted a constitution, sent it here, and asked the town whether they would have it for the law of the State ? The town answered No, by a unanimous vote. In 1780, a constitution of the State, proposed by the Convention chosen for that purpose, was accepted by the town with the reservation of some articles.' And, in 1788, the town, by its delegate, accepted the new Constitution of the United States, and this event closed the whole series of important public events in which this town played a part.

From that time to the present hour, this town has made a slow but constant progress in population and wealth, and the arts of peace. It has suffered neither from war, nor pestilence, nor famine, nor

flagrant crime. Its population, in the census of 1830, was 2020 souls. The public expenses, for the last year, amounted to \$4290 ; for the present year, to \$5040.' If the community stints its expense in small matters, it spends freely on great duties. The town raises, this year, \$1800 for its public schools ; besides about \$1200 which are paid, by subscription, for private schools. This year, it expends \$800 for its poor; the last year it expended \$900. Two religious societies, of differing creed, dwell together in good understanding, both promoting, we hope, the cause of righteousness and love., Concord has always been noted for its ministers. The living need no praise of mine. Yet it is among the sources of satisfaction and gratitude, this day, that the aged with whom is wisdom, our fathers' counsellor and friend, is spared to counsel and intercede for the sons.¹

Such, fellow citizens, is an imperfect sketch of the history of Concord. I have been greatly indebted, in preparing this sketch, to the printed but unpublished History of this town, furnished me by the unhesitating kindness of its author, long a resident in this place. I hope that History will not long remain unknown. The author has done us and posterity a kindness, by the zeal and patience of his research, and has wisely enriched his pages with the resolutions, addresses and instructions to its agents, which from time to time, at critical periods, the town has voted.² Meantime, I have read with care the Town Records themselves. They must ever be the fountains of all just information respecting your character and customs. They are the history of the town. They exhibit a pleasing picture of a community almost exclusively agricultural, where no man has much time for words, in his search after things ; of a community of great simplicity of manners, and of a manifest love of justice. For the most part, the town has deserved the name it wears. I find our annals marked with a uniform good sense. I find no ridiculous laws, no eavesdropping legislators, no hanging of witches, no ghosts, no whipping of Quakers, no unnatural crimes. The tone of the Records rises with the dignity of the event. These soiled and musty books are luminous and electric within. The old town clerks did not spell very correctly, but they contrive to make pretty intelligible the will of a free and just community. Frugal our fathers were, - very frugal, - though, for the most part, they deal generously by their minister, and provide well for the schools and the poor. If, at any time, in common with most of our towns, they have carried this economy to the verge of a vice, it is to be remembered that a town is, in many respects, a financial corporation. They economize, that they may sacrifice. They stint and higgles on the price of a pew, that they may send 200 soldiers to General Washington to keep Great Britain at bay. For splendor, there must somewhere be rigid economy. That the head of the house may go brave, the members must be plainly clad, and the town must save that the State may spend. Of late years, the growth of Concord has been slow. Without navigable waters, without mineral riches, without any considerable mill privileges, the natural increase of her population is drained by the constant emigration of the youth. Her sons have settled the region around us, and far from us. Their wagons have rattled down the remote western hills. And in every part of this country, and in many foreign parts, they plough the earth, they traverse the sea, they engage in trade and in all the professions.¹

Fellow citizens ; let not the solemn shadows of two hundred years, this day, fall over us in vain. I feel some unwillingness to quit the remembrance of the past. With all the hope of the new I feel that we are leaving the old. Every moment carries us farther from the two great epochs of public principle, the Planting, and the Revolution of the colony. Fortunate and favored this town has been, in having received so large an infusion of the spirit of both of those periods. Humble as is our village in the circle of later and prouder towns that whiten the land, it has been consecrated by the presence and activity of the purest men. Why need I remind you of our own Hosmers, Minotts, Cumings, Barretts, Beattons, the departed benefactors of the town ? On the village green have been the steps of Winthrop and Dudley; of John Eliot, the Indian apostle, who had a courage that intimidated those savages whom his love could not melt; of Whitfield, whose silver voice melted his great congregation into tears ; of Hancock, and his compatriots of the Provincial Congress ; of Langdon, and the college over which he

pre-sided. But even more sacred influences than these have mingled here with the stream of human life. The merit of those who fill a space in the world's history, who are borne forward, as it were, by the weight of thousands whom they lead, sheds a perfume less sweet than do the sacrifices of private virtue. I have had much opportunity of access to anecdotes of families, and I believe this town to have been the dwelling-place, in all times since its planting, of .pious and excellent persons, who walked meekly through the paths of common life, who served God, and loved man, and never let go the hope of immortality. The benediction of their prayers and of their principles lingers around us. The acknowledgment of the Supreme Being exalts the history of this people. It brought the fathers hither. In a war of principle, it delivered their sons. And so long as a spark of this faith survives among the children's children so long shall the name of Concord be honest and venerable.

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III Letter to President Van Buren



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

III
LETTER

TO MARTIN VAN BUREN, PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES

A PROTEST AGAINST THE REMOVAL OF THE
CHEROKEE INDIANS FROM THE
STATE OF GEORGIA

" SAY, what is Honour ? 'T is the finest sense
Of justice which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence,
Suffered or done."

LETTER

TO MARTIN VAN BUREN, PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED STATES
CONCORD, MASS., April 23, 1838.

SIR : The seat you fill places you in a relation of credit and nearness to every citizen. By right and natural position, every citizen is your friend. Before any acts contrary to his own judgment or interest have repelled the affections of any man, each may look with trust and living anticipation to your government. Each has the highest right to call your attention to such subjects as are of a public nature, and properly belong to the chief magistrate ; and the good magistrate will feel a joy in meeting such confidence. I n this belief and at the instance of a few of my friends and neighbors, I crave of your patience a short hearing for their sentiments and my own : and the circumstance that my name will be utterly unknown to you will only give the fairer chance to your equitable construction of what I have to say.

Sir, my communication respects the sinister rumors that fill this part of the country concerning the Cherokee people. The interest always felt in the aboriginal population-an interest naturally growing as that decays - has been heightened in regard to this tribe. Even in our distant State some good rumor of their worth and civility has arrived. We have learned with joy their improvement in the social arts. We have read their newspapers. We have seen some of them in our schools and colleges. In common with the great body of the American people, we have witnessed with sympathy the painful labors of these red men to redeem their own race from the doom of eternal inferiority, and to borrow and domesticate in the tribe the arts and customs of the Caucasian race. And notwithstanding the unaccountable apathy with which of late years the Indians have been some-times abandoned to their enemies, it is not to be doubted that it is the good pleasure and the understanding of all humane persons in the Republic, of the men and the matrons sitting in the thriving independent families all over the land, that they shall be duly cared for ; that they shall taste justice and love from all to

whom we have delegated the office of dealing with them.

The newspapers now inform us that, in December, 1835, a treaty contracting for the exchange of all the Cherokee territory was pre-tended to be made by an agent on the part of the United States with some persons appearing on the part of the Cherokees; that the fact afterwards transpired that these deputies did by no means represent the will of the nation; and that, out of eighteen thousand souls composing the nation, fifteen thousand six hundred and sixty-eight have protested against the so-called treaty. It now appears that the government of the United States choose to hold the Cherokees to this sham treaty, and are proceeding to execute the same. Almost the entire Cherokee Nation stand up and say, " This is not our act. Behold us. Here are we. Do not mistake that handful of deserters for us ; " and the American President and the Cabinet, the Senate and the House of Representatives, neither hear these men nor see them, and are contracting to put this active nation into carts and boats, and to drag them over mountains and rivers to a wilderness at a vast distance beyond the Mississippi. And a paper purporting to be an army order fixes a month from this day as the hour for this doleful removal.

In the name of God, sir, we ask you if this be so. Do the newspapers rightly inform us? Men and women with pale and perplexed faces meet one another in the streets and churches here, and ask if this be so. We have inquired if this be a gross misrepresentation from the party opposed to the government and anxious to blacken it with the people. We have looked in the newspapers of different parties and find a horrid confirmation of the tale. We are slow to believe it. We hoped the Indians were misinformed, and that their remonstrance was pre-mature, and will turn out to be a needless act of terror.

The piety, the principle that is left in the United States, if only in its coarsest form, a regard to the speech of men, - forbid us to entertain it as a fact. Such a dereliction of all faith and virtue, such a denial of justice, and such deafness to screams for mercy were never heard of in times of peace and in the dealing of a nation with its own allies and wards, since the earth was made. Sir, does this government think that the people of the United States are become savage and mad? From their mind are the sentiments of love and a good nature wiped clean out? The soul of man, the justice, the mercy that is the heart's heart in all men, from Maine to Georgia, does abhor this business.

In speaking thus the sentiments of my neighbors and my own, perhaps I overstep the bounds of decorum. But would it not be a higher indecorum coldly to argue a matter like this? We only state the fact that a crime is projected that confounds our understandings by its magnitude, -a crime that really deprives us as well as the Cherokees of a country ? for how could we call the conspiracy that should crush these poor Indians our government, or the land that was cursed by their parting and dying imprecations our country, any more? You, sir, will bring down that renowned chair in which you sit into infamy if your seal is set to this instrument of perfidy ; and the name of this nation, hitherto the sweet omen of religion and liberty, will stink to the world.

You will not do us the injustice of connecting this remonstrance with any sectional and party feeling. It is in our hearts the simplest commandment of brotherly love. We will not have this great and solemn claim upon national and human justice huddled aside under the flimsy plea of its being a party act. Sir, to us the questions upon which the government and the people have been agitated during the past year, touching the prostration of the currency and of trade, seem but motes in comparison. These hard times, it is true, have brought the discussion home to every farmhouse and poor man's house in this town ; but it is the chirping of grasshoppers beside the immortal question whether justice shall be done by the race of civilized to the race of savage man, - whether all the attributes of reason, of

civility, of justice, and even of mercy, shall be put off by the American people, and so vast an outrage upon the Cherokee Nation and upon human nature shall be consummated.

One circumstance lessens the reluctance with which I intrude at this time on your attention my conviction that the government ought to be admonished of a new historical fact, which the discussion of this question has disclosed, namely, that there exists in a great part of the Northern people a gloomy diffidence in the moral character of the government.

On the broaching of this question, a general expression of despondency, of disbelief that any good will accrue from a remonstrance on an act of fraud and robbery, appeared in those men to whom we naturally turn for aid and counsel. Will the American government steal? Will it lie? Will it kill? - We ask triumphantly. Our counsellors and old statesmen here say that ten years ago they would have staked their lives on the affirmation that the proposed Indian measures could not be executed; that the unanimous country would put them down. And now the steps of this crime follow each other so fast, at such fatally quick time, that the millions of virtuous citizens, whose agents the government are, have no place to interpose, and must shut their eyes until the last howl and wailing of these tormented villages and tribes shall afflict the ear of the world.

I will not hide from you, as an indication of the alarming distrust, that a letter addressed as mine is, and suggesting to the mind of the Executive the plain obligations of man, has a burlesque character in the apprehensions of some of my friends. I, sir, will not beforehand treat you with the contumely of this distrust. I will at least state to you this fact, and show you how plain and humane people, whose love would be honor, regard the policy of the government, and what injurious inferences they draw as to the minds of the governors. A man with your experience in affairs must have seen cause to appreciate the futility of opposition to the moral sentiment. However feeble the sufferer and however great the oppressor, it is in the nature of things that the blow should recoil upon the aggressor. For God is in the sentiment, and it cannot be withstood. The potentate and the people perish before it; but with it, and as its executor, they are omnipotent.

I write thus, sir, to inform you of the state of mind these Indian tidings have awakened here, and to pray with one voice more that you, whose hands are strong with the delegated power of fifteen millions of men, will avert with that might the terrific injury which threatens the Cherokee tribe.

With great respect, sir, I am your fellow citizen,

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

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IV Emancipation in the British West Indies



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

IV
ADDRESS
DELIVERED IN CONCORD ON THE ANNIVERSARY
OF THE EMANCIPATION OF THE NEGROES,
IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES,
AUGUST 1, 1844.

THERE a captive sat in chains, Crooning ditties treasured well From his Afric's torrid plains. Sole estate his sire bequeathed, - Hapless sire to hapless son, - Was the wailing song he breathed, And his chain when life was done.

ADDRESS
EMANCIPATION IN THE BRITISH
WEST INDIES

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS: We are met to exchange congratulations on the anniversary of an event singular in the history of civilization ; a day of reason ; of the clear light ; of that which makes us better than a flock of birds and beasts ; a day which gave the immense fortification of a fact, of gross history, to ethical abstractions. It was the settlement, as far as a great Empire was concerned, of a question on which almost every leading citizen in it had taken care to record his vote; one which for many years absorbed the attention of the best and most eminent of mankind. I might well hesitate, coming from other studies, and without the smallest claim to be a special laborer in this work of humanity, to undertake to set this matter before you ; which ought rather to be done by a strict cooperation of many well-advised persons ; but I shall not apologize for my weakness. In this cause, no man's weakness is any prejudice : it has a thousand sons ; if one man cannot speak, ten others can ; and, whether by the wisdom of its friends, or by the folly of the adversaries ; by speech and by silence; by doing and by omitting to do, it goes forward. Therefore I will speak, - or, not I, but the might of liberty in my weakness. The subject is said to have the property of making dull men eloquent.

It has been in all men's experience a marked effect of the enterprise in behalf of the African, to generate an overbearing and defying spirit. The institution of slavery seems to its opponent to have but one side, and he feels that none but a stupid or a malignant person can hesitate on a view of the facts. Under such an impulse, I was about to say, If any cannot speak, or cannot hear the words of freedom, let him go hence, - I had almost said, Creep into your grave, the universe has no need of you ! But I have thought better : let him not go. When we consider what remains to be done for this interest in this country, the dictates of humanity make us tender of such as are not yet persuaded.' The hardest selfishness is to be borne with. Let us withhold every reproachful, and, if we can, every indignant remark. In this cause, we must renounce our temper, and the risings of pride. If there be any man who thinks the ruin of a race of men a small matter, compared with the last decoration and completions of his own comfort, - who would not so much as part with his ice-cream, to save them from rapine and manacles, I think I must not hesitate to satisfy that man that also his cream and vanilla are safer and cheaper by placing the negro nation on a fair footing than by robbing them. If the Virginian piques him-self on the picturesque luxury of his vassalage, on the heavy Ethiopian manners of his house-servants, their silent obedience, their hue of bronze, their turbaned heads, and would not

exchange them for the more intelligent but precarious hired service of whites, I shall not refuse to show him that when their free-papers are made out, it will still be their interest to remain on his estate, and that the oldest planters of Jamaica are convinced that it is cheaper to pay wages than to own the slave.

The history of mankind interests us only as it exhibits a steady gain of truth and right, in the incessant conflict which it records between the material and the moral nature. From the earliest monuments it appears that one race was victim and served the other races. In the oldest temples of Egypt, negro captives are painted on the tombs of kings, in such attitudes as to show that they are on the point of being executed ; and Herodotus, our oldest historian, relates that the Troglodytes hunted the Ethiopians in four-horse chariots. From the earliest time, the negro has been an article of luxury to the commercial nations. So has it been, down to the day that has just dawned on the world. Language must be raked, the secrets of slaughter-houses and infamous holes that cannot front the day, must be ransacked, to tell what negro slavery has been. These men, our benefactors, as they are producers of corn and wine, of coffee, of tobacco, of cotton, of sugar, of rum and brandy ; gentle and joyous themselves, and producers of comfort and luxury for the civilized world, - there seated in the finest climates of the globe, children of the sun, - I am heart-sick when I read how they came there, and how they are kept there. Their case was left out of the mind and out of the heart of their brothers. The prizes of society, the trumpet of fame, the privileges of learning, of culture, of religion, the decencies and joys of marriage, honor, obedience, personal authority and a perpetual melioration into a finer civility, - these were for all, but not for them. For the negro, was the slave-ship to begin with, in whose filthy hold he sat in irons, unable to lie down ; bad food, and insufficiency of that ; disfranchisement ; no property in the rags that covered him ; no marriage, no right in the poor black woman that cherished him in her bosom, no right to the children of his body ; no security from the humors, none from the crimes, none from the appetites of his master : toil, famine, insult and flogging ; and, when he sank in the furrow, no wind of good fame blew over him, no priest of salvation visited him with glad tidings : but he went down to death with dusky dreams of African shadow-catchers and Obeahs hunting him.' Very sad was the negro tradition, that the Great Spirit, in the beginning offered the black man, whom he loved better than the buckra, or white, his choice of two boxes, a big and a little one. The black man was greedy, and chose the largest. " The buckra box was full up with pen, paper and whip, and the negro box with hoe and bill ; and hoe and bill for negro to this day."

But the crude element of good in human affairs must work and ripen, spite of whips and plantation laws and West Indian interest. Con-science rolled on its pillow, and could not sleep. We sympathize very tenderly here with the poor aggrieved planter, of whom so many unpleasant things are said ; but if we saw the whip applied to old men, to tender women ; and, undeniably, though I shrink to say so, pregnant women set in the treadmill for refusing to work ; when, not they, but the eternal law of animal nature re-fused to work ; - if we saw men's backs flayed with cowhides, and " hot rum poured on, super-induced with brine or pickle, rubbed in with a cornhusk, in the scorching heat of the sun ; "-if we saw the runaways hunted with bloodhounds into swamps and hills ; and, in cases of passion, a planter throwing his negro into a copper of boiling cane juice, - if we saw these things with eyes, we too should wince. They are not pleasant sights. The blood is moral : the blood is anti-slavery : it runs cold in the veins : the stomach rises with disgust, and curses slavery. Well, so it happened ; a good man or woman, a country boy or girl, - it would so fall out, - once in a while saw these injuries and had the indiscretion to tell of them. The horrid story ran and flew ; the winds blew it all over the world. They who heard it asked their rich and great friends if it was true, or only missionary lies. The richest and greatest, the prime minister of England, the king's privy council were obliged to say that it was too true. It became plain to all men, the more this business was looked into, that the crimes and cruelties

of the slave-traders and slave-owners could not be overstated. The more it was searched, the more shocking anecdotes came up, -things not to be spoken. Humane persons who were informed of the reports insisted on proving them. Granville Sharpe was accidentally made acquainted with the sufferings of a slave, whom a West Indian planter had brought with him to London and had beaten with a pistol on his head, so badly that his whole body became diseased, and the man useless to his master, who left him to go whither he pleased. The man applied to Mr. William Sharpe, a charitable surgeon, who attended the diseases of the poor. In process of time, he was healed. Granville Sharpe found him at his brother's and pro-cured a place for him in an apothecary's shop. The master accidentally met his recovered slave, and instantly endeavored to get possession of him again. Sharpe protected the slave. In consulting with the lawyers, they told Sharpe the laws were against him. Sharpe would not believe it; no prescription on earth could ever render such iniquities legal. ` But the decisions are against you, and Lord Mansfield, now Chief Justice of England, leans to the decisions.' Sharpe instantly sat down and gave himself to the study of English law for more than two years, until he had proved that the opinions re-plied on, of Talbot and Yorke, were incompatible with the former English decisions and with the whole spirit of English law. He published his book in 1769, and he so filled the heads and hearts of his advocates that when he brought the case of George Somerset, another slave, before Lord Mansfield, the slavish decisions were set aside, and equity affirmed.¹ There is a sparkle of God's righteousness in Lord Mansfield's judgment, which does the heart good. Very unwilling had that great lawyer been to reverse the late decisions ; he suggested twice from the bench, in the course of the trial, how the question might be got rid of: but the hint was not taken ; the case was adjourned again and again, and judgment delayed. At last judgment was demanded, and on the 22d June, 1772, Lord Mansfield is reported to have decided in these words :

"Immemorial usage preserves the memory of positive law, long after all traces of the occasion, reason, authority and time of its introduction, are lost ; and in a case so odious as the condition of slaves, must be taken strictly (tracing the subject to natural principles, the claim of slavery never can be supported). The power claimed by this return never was in use here. We cannot say the cause set forth by this return is allowed or approved of by the laws of this kingdom; and therefore the man must be discharged."

This decision established the principle that the " air of England is too pure for any slave to breathe," but the wrongs in the islands were not thereby touched. Public attention, however, was drawn that way, and the methods of the stealing and the transportation from Africa became noised abroad. The Quakers got the story. In their plain meeting-houses and prim dwellings this dismal agitation got entrance. They were rich : they owned, for debt or by inheritance, island property ; they were religious, tender-hearted men and women ; and they had to hear the news and digest it as they could. Six Quakers met in London on the 6th of July, 1783, -William Dillwyn, Samuel Hoar, George Harrison, Thomas Knowles, John Lloyd, Joseph Woods, "to consider what step they should take for the relief and liberation of the negro slaves in the West Indies, and for the discouragement of the slave-trade on the coast of Africa." They made friends and raised money for the slave; they interested their Yearly Meeting; and all English and all American Quakers. John Woolman of New Jersey, whilst yet an apprentice, was uneasy in his mind when he was set to write a bill of sale of a negro, for his master. He gave his testimony against the traffic, in Maryland and Virginia. Thomas Clarkson was a youth at Cambridge, England, when the subject given out for a Latin prize dissertation was, " Is it right to make slaves of others against their will ? " He wrote an essay, and won the prize ; but he wrote too well for his own peace ; he began to ask himself if these things could be true ; and if they were, he could no longer rest. He left Cambridge ; he fell in with the six Quakers. They engaged him to act for them. He himself interested Mr. Wilberforce in the matter. The shipmasters in that trade were the greatest miscreants, and guilty of every barbarity to their own crews. Clarkson went to Bristol, made himself

acquainted with the interior of the slave-ships and the details of the trade. The facts confirmed his sentiment, " that Providence had never made that to be wise which was immoral, and that the slave-trade was as impolitic as it was unjust;" that it was found peculiarly fatal to those WEST INDIA EMANCIPATION employed in it. More seamen died in that trade in one year than in the whole remaining trade of the country in two. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox were drawn into the generous enterprise. In 1788, the House of Commons voted Parliamentary inquiry. In 1791, a bill to abolish the trade was brought in by Wilberforce, and supported by him and by Fox and Burke and Pitt, with the utmost ability and faithfulness ; resisted by the planters and the whole West Indian interest, and lost. During the next sixteen years, ten times, year after year, the attempt was renewed by Mr. Wilberforce, and ten times defeated by the planters. The king, and all the royal family but one, were against it. These debates are instructive, as they show on what grounds the trade was assailed and defended. Everything generous, wise and sprightly is sure to come to the attack. On the other part are found cold prudence, bare-faced selfishness and silent votes. But the nation was aroused to enthusiasm. Every horrid fact became known. In 1791, three hundred thousand persons in Britain pledged themselves to abstain from all articles of island produce. The planters were obliged to give way ; and in 1807, on the 25th March, the bill passed, and the slave-trade was abolished.

The assailants of slavery had early agreed to limit their political action on this subject to the abolition of the trade, but Granville Sharpe, as a matter of conscience, whilst he acted as chairman of the London Committee, felt constrained to record his protest against the limitation, declaring that slavery was as much a crime against the Divine law as the slave-trade. The trade, under false flags, went on as before. In 1821, according to official documents presented to the American government by the Colonization Society, 200,000 slaves were deported from Africa. Nearly 30,000 were landed in the port of Havana alone. In consequence of the dangers of the trade growing out of the act of abolition, ships were built sharp for swiftness, and with a frightful disregard of the comfort of the victims they were destined to transport. They carried five, six, even seven hundred stowed in a ship built so narrow as to be unsafe, being made just broad enough on the beam to keep the sea. In attempting to make its escape from the pursuit of a man-of-war, one ship flung five hundred slaves alive into the sea. These facts went into Parliament. In the islands was an ominous state of cruel and licentious society ; every house had a dungeon attached to it; every slave was worked by the whip. There is no end to the tragic anecdotes in the municipal records of the colonies. The boy was set to strip and flog his own mother to blood, for a small offence. Looking in the face of his master by the negro was held to be violence by the island courts. He was worked sixteen hours, and his ration by law, in some islands, was a pint of flour and one salt herring a day. He suffered insult, stripes, mutilation at the humor of the master : iron collars were riveted on their necks with iron prongs ten inches long; capsicum pepper was rubbed in the eyes of the females ; and they were done to death with the most shocking levity between the master and manager, without fine or inquiry. And when, at last, some Quakers, Moravians, and Wesleyan and Baptist missionaries, following in the steps of Carey and Ward in the East Indies, had been moved to come and cheer the poor victim with the hope of some reparation, in a future world, of the wrongs he suffered in this, these missionaries were persecuted by the planters, their lives threatened, their chapels burned, and the negroes furiously forbidden to go near them. These outrages rekindled the flame of British indignation. Petitions poured into Parliament : a million persons signed their names to these; and in 1833, on the 14th May, Lord Stanley, Minister of the Colonies, introduced into the House of Commons his bill for the Emancipation.

The scheme of the Minister, with such modification as it received in the legislature, proposed gradual emancipation ; that on 1st August, 1834, all persons now slaves should be entitled to be registered as apprenticed laborers, and to acquire thereby all the rights and privileges of freemen, subject to the restriction of laboring under certain conditions. These conditions were, that the prædials should owe

three fourths of the profits of their labor to their masters for six years, and the non-prædials for four years.' The other fourth of the apprentice's time was to be his own, which he might sell to his master, or to other persons ; and at the end of the term of years fixed, he should be free.

With these provisions and conditions, the bill proceeds, in the twelfth section, in the following terms : " Be it enacted, that all and every person who, on the first August, 1834, shall be holden in slavery within any such British colony as aforesaid, shall upon and from and after the said first August, become and be to all intents and purposes free, and discharged of and from all manner of slavery, and shall be absolutely and forever manumitted; and that the children thereafter born to any such persons, and the offspring of such children, shall, in like manner, be free, from their birth ; and that from and after the first August, 1834, slavery shall be and is hereby utterly and forever abolished and declared unlawful throughout the British colonies, plantations, and possessions abroad."

The Ministers, having estimated the slave products of the colonies in annual exports of sugar, rum and coffee, at £1,500,000 per annum, estimated the total value of the slave property at 30,000,000 pounds sterling, and proposed to give the planters, as a compensation for so much of the slaves' time as the act took from them, 20,000,000 pounds sterling, to be divided into nineteen shares for the nineteen colonies, and to be distributed to the owners of slaves by commissioners, whose appointment and duties were regulated by the Act. After much debate, the bill passed by large majorities. The apprentice-ship system is understood to have proceeded from Lord Brougham, and was by him urged on his colleagues, who, it is said, were inclined to the policy of immediate emancipation.

The colonial legislatures received the act of Parliament with various degrees of displeasure, and, of course, every provision of the bill was criticised with severity. The new relation between the master and the apprentice, it was feared, would be mischievous ; for the bill required the appointment of magistrates who should hear every complaint of the apprentice and see that justice was done him. It was feared that the interest of the master and servant would now produce perpetual discord between them. In the island of Antigua, containing 37,000 people, 30,000 being negroes, these objections had such weight that the legislature rejected the apprenticeship system, and adopted absolute emancipation. In the other islands the system of the Ministry was accepted.

The reception of it by the negro population was equal in nobleness to the deed. The negroes were called together by the missionaries and by the planters, and the news explained to them. On the night of the 31st July, they met every-where at their churches and chapels, and at midnight, when the clock struck twelve, on their knees, the silent, weeping assembly became men ; they rose and embraced each other ; they cried, they sung, they prayed, they were wild with joy, but there was no riot, no feasting. I have never read anything in history more touching than the moderation of the negroes. Some American captains left the shore and put to sea, anticipating insurrection and general murder. With far different thoughts, the negroes spent the hour in their huts and chapels. I will not repeat to you the well-known paragraph, in which Messrs. Thorne and Kimball, the commissioners sent out in the year 1837 by the American Anti-Slavery Society, describe the occurrences of that night in the island of Antigua. It has been quoted in every newspaper, and Dr. Channing has given it additional fame. But I must be indulged in quoting a few sentences from the pages that follow it, narrating the behavior of the emancipated people on the next day.¹

" The first of August came on Friday, and a release was proclaimed from all work until the next Monday. The day was chiefly spent by the great mass of the negroes in the churches and chapels. The clergy and missionaries through-out the island were actively engaged, seizing the opportunity to enlighten the people on all the duties and responsibilities of their new relation, and urging them to the

attainment of that higher liberty with which Christ maketh his children free. In every quarter, we were assured, the day was like a Sabbath. Work had ceased. The hum of business was still : tranquillity pervaded the towns and country. The planters informed us that they went to the chapels where their own people were assembled, greeted them, shook hands with them, and exchanged the most hearty good wishes. At Grace Hill, there were at least a thousand persons around the Moravian Chapel who could not get in. For once the house of God suffered violence, and the violent took it by force. At Grace Bay, the people, all dressed in white, formed a procession, and walked arm in arm into the chapel. We were told that the dress of the negroes on that occasion was uncommonly simple and modest. There was not the least disposition to gayety. Throughout the island, there was not a single dance known of, either day or night, nor so much as a fiddle played."

On the next Monday morning, with very few exceptions, every negroes on every plantation was in the field at his work. In some places, they waited to see their master, to know what bargain he would make; but for the most part, through-out the islands, nothing painful occurred. In June, 1835, the Ministers, Lord Aberdeen and Sir George Grey, declared to the Parliament that the system worked well; that now for ten months, from 1st August, 1834, no injury or violence had been offered to any white, and only one black had been hurt in 800,000 negroes : and, contrary to many sinister predictions, that the new crop of island produce would not fall short of that of the last year.

But the habit of oppression was not destroyed by a law and a day of jubilee. It soon appeared in all the islands that the planters were disposed to use their old privileges, and overwork the apprentices ; to take from them, under various pretences, their fourth part of their time; and to exert the same licentious despotism as before. The negroes complained to the magistrates and to the governor. In the island of Jamaica, this ill blood continually grew worse. The govern-ors, Lord Belmore, the Earl of Sligo, and after-wards Sir Lionel Smith (a governor of their own class, who had been sent out to gratify the planters), threw themselves on the side of the oppressed, and were at constant quarrel with the angry and bilious island legislature. Nothing can exceed the ill humor and sulkiness of the addresses of this assembly.

I may here express a general remark, which the history of slavery seems to justify, that it is not founded solely on the avarice of the planter. We sometimes say, the planter does not want slaves, he only wants the immunities and the luxuries which the slaves yield him ; give him money, give him a machine that will yield him as much money as the slaves, and he will thank-fully let them go. He has no love of slavery, he wants luxury, and he will pay even this price of crime and danger for it. But I think experience does not warrant this favorable distinction, but shows the existence, beside the covetousness, of a bitterer element, the love of power, the voluptuousness of holding a human being in his absolute control. We sometimes observe that spoiled children contract a habit of annoying quite wantonly those who have charge of them, and seem to measure their own sense of well-being, not by what they do, but by the degree of reaction they can cause. It is vain to get rid of them by not minding them : if purring and humming is not noticed, they squeal and screech ; then if you chide and console them, they find the experiment succeeds, and they begin again. The child will sit in your arms contented, provided you do nothing. If you take a book and read, he commences hostile operations. The planter is the spoiled child of his unnatural habits, and has contracted in his indolent and luxurious climate the need of excitement by irritating and tormenting his slave.

Sir Lionel Smith defended the poor negro girls, prey to the licentiousness of the planters ; they shall not be whipped with tamarind rods if they do not comply with their master's will; he defended the negro women; they should not be made to dig the cane-holes (which is the very hardest of the field work); he defended the Baptist preachers and the stipendiary magistrates, who are the negroes'

friends, from the power of the planter. The power of the planters, however, to oppress, was greater than the power of the apprentice and of his guardians to withstand. Lord Brougham and Mr. Buxton declared that the planter had not fulfilled his part in the contract, whilst the apprentices had fulfilled theirs; and demanded that the emancipation should be hastened, and the apprenticeship abolished. Parliament was compelled to pass additional laws for the defence and security of the negro, and in ill humor at these acts, the great island of Jamaica, with a population of half a million, and 300,000 negroes, early in 1838, resolved to throw up the two remaining years of apprenticeship, and to emancipate absolutely on the 1st August, 1838. In British Guiana, in Dominica, the same resolution had been earlier taken with more good will; and the other islands fell into the measure ; so that on the 1st August, 1838, the shackles dropped from every British slave. The accounts which we have from all parties, both from the planters (and those too who were originally most opposed to the measure), and from the new freemen, are of the most satisfactory kind. The manner in which the new festival was celebrated, brings tears to the eyes. The First of August, 1838, was observed in Jamaica as a day of thanksgiving and prayer. Sir Lionel Smith, the governor, writes to the British Ministry, " It is impossible for me to do justice to the good order, decorum and gratitude which the whole laboring population manifested on that happy occasion. Though joy beamed on every countenance, it was throughout tempered with solemn thank-fulness to God, and the churches and chapels were everywhere filled with these happy people in humble offering of praise."

The Queen, in her speech to the Lords and Commons, praised the conduct of the emancipated population : ' and in 1840 Sir Charles Metcalfe, the new governor of Jamaica, in his address to the Assembly expressed himself to that late exasperated body in these terms: "All those who are acquainted with the state of the island know that our emancipated population are as free, as independent in their conduct, as well conditioned, as much in the enjoyment of abundance, and as strongly sensible of the blessings of liberty, as any that we know of in any country. All disqualifications and distinctions of color have ceased; men of all colors have equal rights in law, and an equal footing in society, and every man's position is settled by the same circumstances which regulate that point in other free countries, where no difference of color exists. It may be asserted, without fear of denial, that the former slaves of Jamaica are now as secure in all social rights, as freeborn Britons." He further describes the erection of numerous churches, chapels and schools which the new population required, and adds that more are still demanded. The legislature, in their reply, echo the governor's statement, and say, "The peaceful demeanor of the emancipated population redounds to their own credit, and affords a proof of their continued comfort and prosperity."

I said, this event is signal in the history of civilization. There are many styles of civilization, and not one only. Ours is full of barbarities. There are many faculties in man, each of which takes its turn of activity, and that faculty which is paramount in any period and exerts itself through the strongest nation, determines the civility of that age : and each age thinks its own the perfection of reason. Our culture is very cheap and intelligible. Unroof any house, and you shall find it. The well-being consists in having a sufficiency of coffee and toast, with a daily newspaper; a well glazed parlor, with marbles, mirrors and centre-table ; and the excitement of a few parties and a few rides in a year. Such as one house, such are all. The owner of a New York manor imitates the mansion and equipage of the London nobleman; the Boston merchant rivals his brother of New York; and the villages copy Boston. There have been nations elevated by great sentiments. Such was the civility of Sparta and the Dorian race, whilst it was defective in some of the chief elements of ours. That of Athens, again, lay in an intellect dedicated to beauty. That of Asia Minor in poetry, music and arts ; that of Palestine in piety ; that of Rome in military arts and virtues, exalted by a prodigious magnanimity ; that of China and Japan in the last exaggeration of decorum and etiquette. Our civility, England determines the style of, inasmuch as England is the strongest of the family of existing nations, and as

we are the expansion of that people. It is that of a trading nation ; it is a shopkeeping civility. The English lord is a retired shopkeeper, and has the prejudices and timidities of that profession. And we are shopkeepers, and have acquired the vices and virtues that belong to trade. We peddle, we truck, we sail, we row, we ride in cars, we creep in teams, we go in canals, - to market, and for the sale of goods. The national aim and employment streams into our ways of thinking, our laws, our habits and our manners. The customer is the immediate jewel of our souls. Him we flatter, him we feast, compliment, vote for, and will not contradict. It was, or it seemed the dictate of trade, to keep the negro down. We had found a race who were less warlike, and less energetic shopkeepers than we; who had very little skill in trade. We found it very convenient to keep them at work, since, by the aid of a little whipping, we could get their work for nothing but their board and the cost of whips. What if it cost a few unpleasant scenes on the coast of Africa? That was a great way off; and the scenes could be endured by some sturdy, unscrupulous fellows, who could go, for high wages, and bring us the men, and need not trouble our ears with the disagreeable particulars. If any mention was made of homicide, madness, adultery, and intolerable tortures, we would let the church-bells ring louder, the church-organ swell its peal and drown the hideous sound. The sugar they raised was excellent: nobody tasted blood in it. The coffee was fragrant; the tobacco was incense; the brandy made nations happy; the cotton clothed the world. What! all raised by these men, and no wages? Excellent! What a convenience! They seemed created by Providence to bear the heat and the whipping, and make these fine articles.

But unhappily, most unhappily, gentlemen, man is born with intellect, as well as with a love of sugar ; and with a sense of justice, as well as a taste for strong drink. These ripened, as well as those. You could not educate him, you could not get any poetry, any wisdom, any beauty in woman, any strong and commanding character in man, but these absurdities would still come flashing out, - these absurdities of a demand for justice, a generosity for the weak and oppressed. Unhappily, too, for the planter, the laws of nature are in harmony with each other : that which the head and the heart demand is found to be, in the long run, for what the grossest calculator calls his advantage. The moral sense is always supported by the permanent interest of the parties. Else, I know not how, in our world, any good would ever get done.' It was shown to the planters that they, as well as the negroes, were slaves ; that though they paid no wages, they got very poor work ; that their estates were ruining them, under the finest climate ; and that they needed the severest mono-poly laws at home to keep them from bankruptcy. The oppression of the slave recoiled on them. They were full of vices ; their children were lumps of pride, sloth, sensuality and rottenness. The position of woman was nearly as bad as it could be ; and, like other robbers, they could not sleep in security. Many planters have said, since the emancipation, that, before that day, they were the greatest slaves on the estates. Slavery is no scholar, no improver; it does not love the whistle of the railroad ; it does not love the newspaper, the mail-bag, a college, a book or a preacher who has the absurd whim of saying what he thinks ; it does not increase the white population; it does not improve the soil ; everything goes to decay. For these reasons the islands proved bad customers to England. It was very easy for manufacturers less shrewd than those of Birmingham and Manchester to see that if the state of things in the islands was altered, if the slaves had wages, the slaves would be clothed, would build houses, would fill them with tools, with pottery, with crockery, with hardware ; and negro women love fine clothes as well as white women. In every naked negro of those thousands, they saw a future customer. Meantime, they saw further that the slave-trade, by keeping in barbarism the whole coast of eastern Africa, deprives them of countries and nations of customers, if once freedom and civility and European manners could get a foothold there. But the trade could not be abolished whilst this hungry West Indian market, with an appetite like the grave, cried, 'More, more, bring me a hundred a day ;' they could not expect any mitigation in the madness of the poor African war-chiefs. These considerations opened the eyes of the

dullest in Britain. More than this, the West Indian estate was owned or mortgaged in England, and the owner and the mortgagee had very plain intimations that the feeling of English liberty was gaining every hour new mass and velocity, and the hostility to such as resisted it would be fatal. The House of Commons would destroy the protection of island produce, and interfere in English politics in the island legislation: so they hastened to make the best of their position, and accepted the bill.

These considerations, I doubt not, had their weight ; the interest of trade, the interest of the revenue, and, moreover, the good fame of the action. It was inevitable that men should feel these motives. But they do not appear to have had an excessive or unreasonable weight. On reviewing this history, I think the whole trans-action reflects infinite honor on the people and parliament of England. It was a stately spectacle, to see the cause of human rights argued with so much patience and generosity and with such a mass of evidence before that powerful people. It is a creditable incident in the history that when, in 1789, the first privy council re-port of evidence on the trade (a bulky folio embodying all the facts which the London Committee had been engaged for years in collecting, and all the examinations before the council) was presented to the House of Commons, a late day being named for the discussion, in order to give members time,- Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Pitt, the Prime Minister, and other gentlemen, took advantage of the postponement to retire into the country to read the report. For months and years the bill was debated, with some consciousness of the extent of its relations, by the first citizens of England, the foremost men of the earth; every argument was weighed, every particle of evidence was sifted and laid in the scale; and, at last, the right triumphed, the poor man was vindicated, and the oppressor was flung out. I know that England has the advantage of trying the question at a wide distance from the spot where the nuisance exists ; the planters are not, excepting in rare examples, members of the legislature. The extent of the empire, and the magnitude and number of other questions crowding into court, keep this one in balance, and prevent it from obtaining that ascendancy, and being urged with that intemperance which a question of property tends to acquire. There are causes in the composition of the British legislature, and the relation of its leaders to the country and to Europe, which exclude much that is pitiful and injurious in other legislative assemblies. From these reasons, the question was discussed with a rare independence and magnanimity. It was not narrowed down to a paltry electioneering trap ; and, I must say, a delight in justice, an honest tenderness for the poor negro, for man suffering these wrongs, combined with the national pride, which refused to give the support of English soil or the protection of the English flag to these disgusting violations of nature.

Forgive me, fellow citizens, if I own to you, that in the last few days that my attention has been occupied with this history, I have not been able to read a page of it without the most painful comparisons. Whilst I have read of England, I have thought of New England. Whilst I have meditated in my solitary walks on the magnanimity of the English Bench and Senate, reaching out the benefit of the law to the most helpless citizen in her world-wide realm, I have found myself oppressed by other thoughts. As I have walked in the pastures and along the edge of woods, I could not keep my imagination on those agreeable figures, for other images that intruded on me. I could not see the great vision of the patriots and senators who have adopted the slave's cause:- they turned their backs on me. No : I see other pictures, --of mean men ; I see very poor, very ill-clothed, very ignorant men, not surrounded by happy friends,- to be plain, - poor black men of obscure employment as mariners, cooks or stewards, in ships, yet citizens of this our Commonwealth of Massachusetts, - freeborn as we, - whom the slave-laws of the States of South Carolina, Georgia and Louisiana have arrested in the vessels in which they visited those ports, and shut up in jails so long as the vessel remained in port, with the stringent addition, that if the shipmaster fails to pay the costs of this official arrest and the board in jail, these citizens are to be sold for slaves, to pay that expense. This man, these men, I see, and no law to save them. Fellow citizens, this crime will not be hushed up any longer. I have learned

that a citizen of Nantucket, walking in New Orleans, found a freeborn citizen of Nantucket, a man, too, of great personal worth, and, as it happened, very dear to him, as having saved his own life, working chained in the streets of that city, kid-napped by such a process as this. In the sleep of the laws, the private interference of two excellent citizens of Boston has, I have ascertained, rescued several natives of this State from these Southern prisons. Gentlemen, I thought the deck of a Massachusetts ship was as much the territory of Massachusetts as the floor on which we stand. It should be as sacred as the temple of God. The poorest fishing-smack that floats under the shadow of an iceberg in the Northern seas, or hunts whale in the Southern ocean, should be encompassed by her laws with comfort and protection, as much as within the arms of Cape Ann or Cape Cod. And this kidnap-ping is suffered within our own land and federation, whilst the fourth article of the Constitution of the United States ordains in terms, that, " The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States." If such a damnable outrage can be committed on the person of a citizen with impunity, let the Governor break the broad seal of the State ; he bears the sword in vain.' The Governor of Massachusetts is a trifler; the State-House in Boston is a play-house; the General Court is a dishonored body, if they make laws which they cannot execute. The great-hearted Puritans have left no posterity. The rich men may walk in State Street, but they walk without honor; and the farmers may brag their democracy in the country, but they are disgraced men. If the State has no power to defend its own people in its own outraged. Is it an union and covenant in which the State of Massachusetts agrees to be imprisoned, and the State of Carolina to imprison? Gentlemen, I am loath to say harsh things, and perhaps I know too little of politics for the smallest weight to attach to any censure of mine, - but I am at a loss how to characterize the tameness and silence of the two senators and the ten representatives of the State at Washington. To what purpose have we clothed each of those representatives with the power of seventy thousand persons, and each senator with near half a million, if they are to sit dumb at their desks and see their constituents captured and sold ; - perhaps to gentlemen sitting by them in the hall ? There is a scandalous rumor that has been swelling louder of late years, -perhaps wholly false, - that members are bullied into silence by Southern gentlemen. It is so easy to omit to speak, or even to be absent when delicate things are to be handled. I may as well say, what all men feel, that whilst our very amiable and very innocent representatives and senators at Washington are accomplished lawyers and merchants, and very eloquent at dinners and at caucuses, there is a disastrous want of men from New England. I would gladly defend the weak and the poor and the injured party; the rich and the strong can better take care of themselves. And as an omen and assurance of success, I point you to the bright example which England set you, on this day, ten years ago.

There are other comparisons and other imperative duties which come sadly to mind, - but I do not wish to darken the hours of this day by crimination ; I turn gladly to the rightful theme, to the bright aspects of the occasion.

This event was a moral revolution. The history of it is before you. Here was no prodigy, no fabulous hero, no Trojan horse, no bloody war, but all was achieved by plain means of plain men, working not under a leader, but under a sentiment. Other revolutions have been the insurrection of the oppressed; this was the repentance of the tyrant. It was the masters revolting from their mastery. The slaveholder said, ` I will not hold slaves.' The end was noble and the means were pure. Hence the elevation and pathos of this chapter of history. The lives of the advocates are pages of greatness, and the connection of the eminent senators with this question constitutes the immortalizing moments of those men's lives. The bare enunciation of the theses at which the lawyers and legislators arrived, gives a glow to the heart of the reader. Lord Chancellor Northington is the author of the famous sentence, " As soon as any man puts his foot on English ground, he becomes free." " I was a slave," said the counsel of Somerset, speaking for his client, " for I was in America : I am now in a country where the common rights of mankind are known and regarded." Granville Sharpe filled the ear of the judges with the

sound principles that had from time to time been affirmed by the legal authorities : " Derived power cannot be superior to the power from which it is derived : " " The reasonableness of the law is the soul of the law : " " It is better to suffer every evil, than to consent to any." Out it would come, the God's truth, out it came, like a bolt from a cloud, for all the mumbling of the lawyers. One feels very sensibly in all this history that a great heart and soul are behind there, superior to any man, and making use of each, in turn, and infinitely attractive to every person according to the degree of reason in his own mind, so that this cause has had the power to draw to it every particle of talent and of worth in England, from the beginning. All the great geniuses of the British senate, Fox, Pitt, Burke, Grenville, Sheridan, Grey, Canning, ranged themselves on its side ; the poet Cowper wrote for it : Franklin, Jefferson, Washington, in this country, all recorded their votes. All men remember the subtlety and the fire of indignation which the " Edinburgh Review " contributed to the cause ; and every liberal mind, poet, preacher, moralist, statesman, has had the fortune to appear somewhere for this cause. On the other part, appeared the reign of pounds and shillings, and all manner of rage and stupidity ; a resistance which drew from Mr. Huddleston in Parliament the observation, " That a curse attended this trade even in the mode of defending it. By a certain fatality, none but the vilest arguments were brought forward, which corrupted the very persons who used them. Every one of these was built on the narrow ground of interest, of pecuniary profit, of sordid gain, in opposition to every motive that had reference to humanity, justice, and religion, or to that great principle which comprehended them all." This moral force perpetually reinforces and dignifies the friends of this cause. It gave that tenacity to their point which has insured ultimate triumph ; and it gave that superiority in reason, in imagery, in eloquence, which makes in all countries anti-slavery meetings so attractive to the people, and has made it a proverb in Massachusetts, that "eloquence is dog-cheap at the anti-slavery chapel."

I will say further that we are indebted mainly to this movement and to the continuers of it, for the popular discussion of every point of practical ethics, and a reference of every question to the absolute standard. It is notorious that the political, religious and social schemes, with which the minds of men are now most occupied, have been matured, or at least broached, in the free and daring discussions of these assemblies. Men have become aware, through the emancipation and kindred events, of the presence of powers which, in their days of darkness, they had over-looked. Virtuous men will not again rely on political agents. They have found out the deleterious effect of political association. Up to this day we have allowed to statesmen a paramount social standing, and we bow low to them as to the great. We cannot extend this deference to them any longer. The secret cannot be kept, that the seats of power are filled by underlings, ignorant, timid and selfish to a degree to destroy all claim, excepting that on compassion, to the society of the just and generous. What happened notoriously to an American ambassador in England, that he found himself compelled to palter and to disguise the fact that he was a slave-breeder, happens to men of state. Their vocation is a presumption against them among well-meaning people. The superstition respecting power and office is going to the ground. The stream of human affairs flows its own way, and is very little affected by the activity of legislators. What great masses of men wish done, will be done; and they do not wish it for a freak, but because it is their state and natural end. There are now other energies than force, other than political, which no man in future can allow himself to disregard. There is direct conversation and influence. A man is to make himself felt by his proper force. The tendency of things runs steadily to this point, namely, to put every man on his merits, and to give him so much power as he naturally exerts, - no more, no less. Of course, the timid and base persons, all who are conscious of no worth in themselves, and who owe all their place to the opportunities which the older order of things allowed them, to deceive and defraud men, shudder at the change, and would fain silence every honest voice, and lock up every house where liberty and innovation can be pleaded for. They would raise mobs, for fear is very cruel. But the strong and healthy yeomen and husbands of the land, the self-sustaining class of inventive and

industrious men, fear no competition or superiority. Come what will, their faculty cannot be spared.

The First of August marks the entrance of a new element into modern politics, namely, the civilization of the negro. A man is added to the human family. Not the least affecting part of this history of abolition is the annihilation of the old indecent nonsense about the nature of the negro. In the case of the ship *Zong*, in 1781, whose master had thrown one hundred and thirty-two slaves alive into the sea, to cheat the underwriters, the first jury gave a verdict in favor of the master and owners: they had a right to do what they had done. Lord Mansfield is reported to have said on the bench, " The matter left to the jury is, - Was it from necessity? For they had no doubt-though it shocks one very much - that the case of slaves was the same as if horses had been thrown overboard. It is a very shocking case." But a more enlightened and humane opinion began to prevail. Mr. Clarkson, early in his career, made a collection of African productions and manufactures, as specimens of the arts and culture of the negro; comprising cloths and loom, weapons, polished stones and woods, leather, glass, dyes, ornaments, soap, pipe-bowls and trinkets. These he showed to Mr. Pitt, who saw and handled them with extreme interest. " On sight of these," says Clarkson, " many sublime thoughts seemed to rush at once into his mind, some of which he expressed ; " and hence appeared to arise a project which was always dear to him, of the civilization of Africa, - a dream which forever elevates his fame. In 1791, Mr. Wilberforce announced to the House of Commons, " We have already gained one victory : we have obtained for these poor creatures the recognition of their human nature, which for a time was most shamefully denied them." It was the sarcasm of Montesquieu, " it would not do to suppose that negroes were men, lest it should turn out that whites were not ; " for the white has, for ages, done what he could to keep the negro in that hoggish state. His laws have been furies. It now appears that the negro race is, more than any other, susceptible of rapid civilization. The emancipation is observed, in the islands, to have wrought for the negro a benefit as sudden as when a thermometer is brought out of the shade into the sun. It has given him eyes and ears. If, before, he was taxed with such stupidity, or such defective vision, that he could not set a table square to the walls of an apartment, he is now the principal if not the only mechanic in the West Indies ; and is, besides, an architect, a physician, a lawyer, a magistrate, an editor, and a valued and increasing political power. The recent testimonies of Sturge, of Thome and Kimball, of Gurney, of Philipp:), are very explicit on this point, the capacity and the success of the colored and the black population in employments of skill, of profit and of trust ; and best of all is the testimony to their moderation. They receive hints and advances from the whites that they will be gladly received as subscribers to the Exchange, as members of this or that committee of trust. They hold back, and say to each other that " social position is not to be gained by pushing."

I have said that this event interests us because it came mainly from the concession of the whites; I add, that in part it is the earning of the blacks. They won the pity and respect which they have received, by their powers and native endowments. I think this a circumstance of the highest import. Their whole future is in it. Our planet, before the age of written history, had its races of savages, like the generations of sour paste, or the animalcules that wiggle and bite in a drop of putrid water. Who cares for these or for their wars ? We do not wish a world of bugs or of birds ; neither afterward of Scythians, Caribs or Feejees. The grand style of Nature, her great periods, is all we observe in them. Who cares for oppressing whites, or oppressed blacks, twenty centuries ago, more than for bad dreams ? Eaters and food are in the harmony of Nature; and there too is the germ forever protected, unfolding gigantic leaf after leaf, a newer flower, a richer fruit, in every period, yet its next product is never to be guessed. It will only save what is worth saving; and it saves not by compassion, but by power. It appoints no police to guard the lion but his teeth and claws ; no fort or city for the bird but his wings ; no rescue for flies and mites but their spawning numbers, which no ravages can overcome. It deals with men after the same manner. If they are rude and foolish, down they must go. When at last in a race a new principle appears, an idea, -that conserves it; ideas only save races. If the black

man is feeble and not important to the existing races, not on a parity with the best race, the black man must serve, and be exterminated.' But if the black man carries in his bosom an indispensable element of a new and coming civilization ; for the sake of that element, no wrong nor strength nor circumstance can hurt him : he will survive and play his part. So now, the arrival in the world of such men as Toussaint, and the Haytian heroes, or of the leaders of their race in Barbadoes and Jamaica, outweighs in good omen all the English and American humanity. The anti-slavery of the whole world is dust in the balance before this, - is a poor squeamishness and nervousness : the might and the right are here: here is the anti-slave : here is man : and if you have man, black or white is an insignificance. The intellect, -that is miraculous! Who has it, has the talisman: his skin and bones, though they were of the color of night, are transparent, and the everlasting stars shine through, with attractive beams. But a compassion for that which is not and cannot be useful or lovely, is degrading and futile. All the songs and newspapers and money subscriptions and vituperation of such as do not think with us, will avail nothing against a fact. I say to you, you must save yourself, black or white, man or woman; other help is none. I esteem the occasion of this jubilee to be the proud discovery that the black race can contend with the white : that in the great anthem which we call history, a piece of many parts and vast compass, after playing a long time a very low and subdued accompaniment, they perceive the time arrived when they can strike in with effect and take a master's part in the music. The civility of the world has reached that pitch that their more moral genius is becoming indispensable, and the quality of this race is to be honored for itself. For this, they have been preserved in sandy deserts, in rice-swamps, in kitchens and shoe-shops, so long : now let them emerge, clothed and in their own form.

There remains the very elevated consideration which the subject opens, but which belongs to more abstract views than we are now taking, this, namely, that the civility of no race can be perfect whilst another race is degraded. It is a doctrine alike of the oldest and of the newest philosophy, that man is one, and that you can-not injure any member, without a sympathetic injury to all the members. America is not civil, whilst Africa is barbarous.'

These considerations seem to leave no choice for the action of the intellect and the conscience of the country. There have been moments in this, as well as in every piece of moral history, when there seemed room for the infusions of a skeptical philosophy; when it seemed doubtful whether brute force would not triumph in the eternal struggle. I doubt not that, sometimes, a despairing negro, when jumping over the ship's sides to escape from the white devils who surrounded him, has believed there was no vindication of right ; it is horrible to think of, but it seemed so. I doubt not that sometimes the negro's friend, in the face of scornful and brutal hundreds of traders and drivers, has felt his heart sink. Especially, it seems to me, some degree of despondency is pardonable, when he observes the men of conscience and of intellect, his own natural allies and champions, - those whose attention should be nailed to the grand objects of this cause, so hotly offended by whatever incidental petulances or infirmities of indiscreet defenders of the negro, as to permit themselves to be ranged with the enemies of the human race ; and names which should be the alarms of liberty and the watchwords of truth, are mixed up with all the rotten rabble of selfishness and tyranny.' I assure myself that this coldness and blindness will pass away. A single noble wind of sentiment will scatter them forever. I am sure that the good and wise elders, the ardent and generous youth, will not permit what is incidental and exceptional to with-draw their devotion from the essential and permanent characters of the question. There have been moments, I said, when men might be forgiven who doubted. Those moments are past. Seen in masses, it cannot be disputed, there is progress in human society. There is a blessed necessity by which the interest of men is always driving them to the right ; and, again, making all crime mean and ugly. The genius of the Saxon race, friendly to liberty; the enterprise, the very muscular vigor of this nation, are inconsistent with slavery. The Intellect, with

blazing eye, looking through history from the beginning onward, gazes on this blot and it disappears. The sentiment of Right, once very low and indistinct, but ever more articulate, because it is the voice of the universe, pronounces Freedom. The Power that built this fabric of things affirms it in the heart; and in the history of the First of August, has made a sign to the ages, of his will.

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V War



RWE.org - The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson - Volume XI - Miscellanies (1884)

Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

delivered in March, 1838 in Boston, MA

by Ralph Waldo Emerson

It has been a favorite study of modern philosophy, to indicate the steps of human progress, to watch the rising of a thought in one man's mind, the communication of it to a few, to a small minority, its expansion and general reception, until it publishes itself to the world by destroying the existing laws and institutions, and the generation of new. Looked at in this general and historical way, many things wear a very different face from that they show near by, and one at a time,—and, particularly, war. War, which, to sane men at the present day, begins to look like an epidemic insanity, breaking out here and there like the cholera or influenza, infecting men's brains instead of their bowels,—when seen in the remote past, in the infancy of society, appears a part of the connection of events, and, in its place, necessary.

As far as history has preserved to us the slow unfoldings of any savage tribe, it is not easy to see how war could be avoided by such wild, passionate, needy, ungoverned, strong- [PAGE 037] bodied creatures. For in the infancy of society, when a thin population and improvidence make the supply of food and of shelter insufficient and very precarious, and when hunger, thirst, ague, and frozen limbs universally take precedence of the wants of the mind and the heart, the necessities of the strong will certainly be satisfied at the cost of the weak, at whatever peril of future revenge. It is plain, too, that, in the first dawns of the religious sentiment, that blends itself with their passions, and is oil to the fire. Not only every tribe has war-gods, religious festivals in victory, but religious wars.

The student of history acquiesces the more readily in this copious bloodshed of the early annals, bloodshed in God's name too, when he learns that it is a temporary and preparatory state, and does actively forward the culture of man. War educates the senses, calls into action the will, perfects the physical constitution, brings men into such swift and close collision in critical moments that man measures man. On its own scale, on the virtues it loves, it endures no counterfeit, but shakes the whole society, until every atom falls into the place its specific gravity assigns it. It presently finds the value of good sense and of foresight, and Ulysses takes rank next to Achilles. The leaders, picked men of a courage and vigor tried and augmented in fifty battles, are emulous to distinguish themselves above each other by new merits, as clemency, hospitality, splendor of living. The people imitate the chiefs. The strong tribe, in which war has become an art, attack and conquer their neighbours, and teach them their arts and virtues. New territory, augmented numbers, and extended interests call out new virtues and abilities, and the tribe makes long strides. And, finally, when much progress has been made, all its secrets of wisdom and art are disseminated by its invasions. Plutarch, in his essay "On the Fortune of Alexander," considers the invasion and conquest of the East by Alexander as one of the most bright and pleasing pages in history; and it must be owned, he gives sound reason for his opinion. It had the effect of uniting into one great interest the divided commonwealths of Greece, and infusing a new and more enlarged public spirit into the coun- [PAGE 038] cils of their statesmen. It carried the arts and language and philosophy of the Greeks into the sluggish and barbarous nations of Persia, Assyria, and India. It introduced the arts of husbandry among tribes of hunters and shepherds. It

weaned the Scythians and Persians from some cruel and licentious practices, to a more civil way of life. It introduced the sacredness of marriage among them. It built seventy cities, and sowed the Greek customs and humane laws over Asia, and united hostile nations under one code. It brought different families of the human race together,—to blows at first, but afterwards to truce, to trade, and to intermarriage. It would be very easy to show analogous benefits that have resulted from military movements of later ages.

Considerations of this kind lead us to a true view of the nature and office of war. We see, it is the subject of all history; that it has been the principal employment of the most conspicuous men; that it is at this moment the delight of half the world, of almost all young and ignorant persons; that it is exhibited to us continually in the dumb show of brute nature, where war between tribes, and between individuals of the same tribe, perpetually rages. The microscope reveals miniature butchery in atomies and infinitely small biters, that swim and fight in an illuminated drop of water; and the little globe is but a too faithful miniature of the large.

What does all this war, beginning from the lowest races and reaching up to man, signify? Is it not manifest that it covers a great and beneficent principle, which nature had deeply at heart? What is that principle?—It is self-help. Nature implants with life the instinct of self-help, perpetual struggle to be, to resist opposition, to attain to freedom, to attain to a mastery, and the security of a permanent, self-defended being; and to each creature these objects are made so dear, that it risks its life continually in the struggle for these ends.

But whilst this principle, necessarily, is inwrought into the fabric of every creature, yet it is but one instinct; and though a primary one, or we may say the very first, yet the appearance of the other instincts immediately modifies and controls this; turns its energies into harmless, useful, and high courses, showing thereby what was its ultimate design; and, finally, [PAGE 039] takes out its fangs. The instinct of self-help is very early unfolded in the coarse and merely brute form of war, only in the childhood and imbecility of the other instincts, and remains in that form, only until their development. It is the ignorant and childish part of mankind that is the fighting part. Idle and vacant minds want excitement, as all boys kill cats. Bull-baiting, cockpits, and the boxer's ring, are the enjoyment of the part of society whose animal nature alone has been developed. In some parts of this country, where the intellectual and moral faculties have as yet scarcely any culture, the absorbing topic of all conversation is whipping; who fought, and which whipped? Of man, boy, or beast, the only trait that much interests the speakers is the pugnacity. And why? Because the speaker has as yet no other image of manly activity and virtue, none of endurance, none of perseverance, none of charity, none of the attainment of truth. Put him into a circle of cultivated men, where the conversation broaches the great questions that besiege the human reason, and he would be dumb and unhappy, as an Indian in church.

To men of a sedate and mature spirit, in whom is any knowledge or mental activity, the detail of battle becomes insupportably tedious and revolting. It is like the talk of one of those monomaniacs, whom we sometimes meet in society,—who converse on horses; and Fontenelle expressed a volume of meaning, when he said, "I hate war, for it spoils conversation."

Nothing is plainer than that the sympathy with war is a juvenile and temporary state. Not only the moral sentiment, but trade, learning, and whatever makes intercourse, conspire to put it down. Trade, as all men know, is the antagonist of war. Wherever there is no property, the people will put on the

knapsack for bread; but trade is instantly endangered and destroyed. And, moreover, trade brings men to look each other in the face, and gives the parties the knowledge that these enemies over sea or over the mountain are such men as we; who laugh and grieve, who love and fear, as we do. And learning and art, and especially religion, weave ties that make war look like fratricide, as it is. And as all his- [PAGE 040] tory is the picture of war, as we have said, so it is no less true that it is the record of the mitigation and decline of war. Early in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Italian cities had grown so populous and strong, that they forced the rural nobility to dismantle their castles, which were dens of cruelty, and come and reside in the towns. The Popes, to their eternal honor, declared religious jubilees, during which all hostilities were suspended throughout Christendom, and man had a breathing space. The increase of civility has abolished the use of poison and of torture, once supposed as necessary as navies now. And, finally, the art of war—what with gunpowder and tactics—has made, as all men know, battles less frequent and less murderous.

By all these means, war has been steadily on the decline; and we read with astonishment of the beastly fighting of the old times. Only in Elizabeth's time, out of the European waters, piracy was all but universal. The proverb was,—“No peace beyond the line;” and the seamen shipped on the buccaneer's bargain, “No prey, no pay.” In 1588, the celebrated Cavendish, who was thought in his times a good Christian man, wrote thus to Lord Hunsdon, on his return from a voyage round the world:—“Sept. 1588. It hath pleased Almighty God to suffer me to circumpass the whole globe of the world, entering in at the Strait of Magellan, and returning by the Cape of Buena Esperanca; in which voyage, I have either discovered or brought certain intelligence of all the rich places of the world, which were ever discovered by any Christian. I navigated along the coast of Chili, Peru, and New Spain, where I made great spoils. I burnt and sunk nineteen sail of ships, small and great. All the villages and towns that ever I landed at, I burned and spoiled. And had I not been discovered upon the coast, I had taken great quantity of treasure. The matter of most profit to me was a great ship of the king's, which I took at California,” &c. and the good Cavendish piously begins this statement,—“It hath pleased Almighty God.”

Indeed, our American annals have preserved the vestiges of barbarous warfare down to more recent times. I read in Williams's History of Maine, that “Assacombuit, the [PAGE 041] Sagamore of the Anagunticook tribe, was remarkable for his turpitude and ferocity above all other known Indians; that, in 1705, Vaudreuil sent him to France, where he was introduced to the king, When he appeared at court, he lifted up his hand, and said, ‘This hand has slain a hundred and fifty of your majesty's enemies within the territories of New England.’ This so pleased the king, that he knighted him, and ordered a pension of eight livres a day to be paid him during life.” This valuable person, on his return to America, took to killing his own neighbors and kindred with such appetite, that his tribe combined against him, and would have killed him, had he not fled his country for ever.

The scandal which we feel in such facts certainly shows, that we have got on a little. All history is the decline of war, though the slow decline. All that society has yet gained is mitigation: the doctrine of the right of war still remains.

For ages (for ideas work in ages, and animate vast societies of men) the human race has gone on under the tyranny—shall I so call it?—of this first brutish form of their effort to be men; that is, for ages they have shared so much of the nature of the lower animals, the tiger and the shark, and the savages of the water-drop. They have nearly exhausted all the good and all the evil of this form: they have held as fast to this degradation, as their worst enemy could desire; but all things have an end, and so has

this. The eternal germination of the better has unfolded new powers, new instincts, which were really concealed under this rough and base rind. The sublime question has startled one and another happy soul in different quarters of the globe. Cannot love be, as well as hate? Would not love answer the same end, or even a better? Cannot peace be, as well as war?

This thought is no man's invention, neither St. Pierre's nor Rousseau's, but the rising of the general tide in the human soul,—and rising highest, and first made visible, in the most simple and pure souls, who have therefore announced it to us beforehand; but presently we all see it. It has now become so distinct as to be a social thought: societies can be formed on it. It is expounded, illustrated, defined, with dif- [PAGE 042] ferent degrees of clearness; and its actualization, or the measures it should inspire, predicted according to the light of each seer.

The idea itself is the epoch; the fact that it has become so distinct to any small number of persons as to become a subject of prayer and hope, of concert and discussion,—that is the commanding fact. This having come, much more will follow. Revolutions go not backward. The star once risen, though only one man in the hemisphere has yet seen its upper limb in the horizon, will mount and mount, until it becomes visible to other men, to multitudes, and climbs the zenith of all eyes. And so, it is not a great matter how long men refuse to believe the advent of peace: war is on its last legs; and a universal peace is as sure as is the prevalence of civilization over barbarism, of liberal governments over feudal forms. The question for us is only, How soon?

That the project of peace should appear visionary to great numbers of sensible men; should appear laughable, even, to numbers; should appear to the grave and good-natured to be embarrassed with extreme practical difficulties,—is very natural. "This is a poor, tedious society of yours," they say: "we do not see what good can come of it. Peace! why, we are all at peace now. But if a foreign nation should wantonly insult or plunder our commerce, or, worse yet, should land on our shores to rob and kill, you would not have us sit, and be robbed and killed? You mistake the times; you overestimate the virtue of men. You forget, that the quiet which now sleeps in cities and in farms, which lets the wagon go unguarded and the farm-house unbolted, rests on the perfect understanding of all men; that the musket, the halter, and the jail stand behind there, perfectly ready to punish any disturber of it. All admit, that this would be the best policy, if the world were all a church, if all men were the best men, if all would agree to accept this rule. But it is absurd for one nation to attempt it alone."

In the first place, we answer, that we never make much account of objections which merely respect the actual state of the world at this moment, but which admit the general expediency and permanent excellence of the project. What [PAGE 043] is the best must be the true; and what is true—that is, what is at bottom fit and agreeable to the constitution of man—must at last prevail over all obstruction and all opposition. There is no good now enjoyed by society, that was not once as problematical and visionary as this. It is the tendency of the true interest of man to become his desire and steadfast aim.

But, farther, it is a lesson, which all history teaches wise men, to put trust in ideas, and not in circumstances. We have all grown up in the sight of frigates and navy yards, of armed forts and islands, of arsenals and militia. The reference to any foreign register will inform us of the number of thousand or million men that are now under arms in the vast colonial system of the British empire, of Russia, Austria, and France; and one is scared to find at what a cost the peace of the globe is kept. This vast apparatus of artillery, of fleets, of stone bastions and trenches and embankments; this

incessant patrolling of sentinels; this waving of national flags; this reveillé and evening gun; this martial music, and endless playing of marches, and singing of military and naval songs, seem to us to constitute an imposing actual, which will not yield, in centuries, to the feeble, deprecatory voices of a handful of friends of peace.

Thus always we are daunted by the appearances; not seeing that their whole value lies at bottom in the state of mind. It is really a thought that built this portentous war-establishment, and a thought shall also melt it away. Every nation and every man instantly surround themselves with a material apparatus which exactly corresponds to their moral state, or their state of thought. Observe how every truth and every error, each a thought of some man's mind, clothes itself with societies, houses, cities, language, ceremonies, newspapers. Observe how every truth and every error, each a thought of some man's mind, clothes itself with societies, houses, cities, language, ceremonies, newspapers. Observe the ideas of the present day,—orthodoxy, skepticism, missions, popular education, temperance, anti-masonry, anti-slavery; see how each of these abstractions has embodied itself in an imposing apparatus in the community; and how timber, brick, lime, and stone have flown into convenient shape, obedient to the master-idea reigning in the minds of many persons.

You shall hear, some day, of a wild fancy, which some man has in his brain, of the mischief of secret oaths. Come again, one or two years afterwards, and you shall see it has built great houses of solid wood and brick and mortar. You shall see an hundred presses printing a million sheets; you shall see men and horses and wheels made to walk, run, and roll for it: this great body of matter thus executing that one man's wild thought. This happens daily, yearly about us, with half thoughts, often with flimsy lies, pieces of policy and speculation. With good nursing, they will last three or four years, before they will come to nothing. But when a truth appears,—as, for instance, a perception in the wit of one Columbus, that there is land in the Western Sea; though he alone of all men has that thought, and they all jeer,—it will build ships; it will build fleets; it will carry over half Spain and half England; it will plant a colony, a state, nations, and half a globe full of men.

We surround ourselves always, according to our freedom and ability, with true images of ourselves in things, whether it be ships or books, or cannons or churches. The standing army, the arsenal, the camp, and the gibbet do not appertain to man. They only serve as an index to show where man is now; what a bad, ungoverned temper he has; what an ugly neighbor he is; how his affections halt; how low his hope lies. He who loves the bristle of bayonets, only sees in their glitter what beforehand he feels in his heart. It is avarice and hatred; it is that quivering lip, that cold, hating eye, which builded magazines and powder-houses.

It follows, of course, that the least change in the man will change his circumstances; the least enlargement of his ideas, the least mitigation of his feelings, in respect to other men; if, for example, he could be inspired with a tender kindness to the souls of men, and should come to feel that every man was another self, with whom he might come to join, as left hand works with right. Every degree of the ascendancy of this feeling would cause the most striking changes of external things: the tents would be struck; the men-of-war would rot ashore; the arms rust; the cannon would become street-posts; the pikes, a fisher's harpoon; the marching regiment [PAGE 045] would be a caravan of emigrants, peaceful pioneers at the fountains of the Wabash and the Missouri. And so it must and will be: bayonet and sword must first retreat a little from their present ostentatious prominence; then quite hide themselves, as the sheriff's halter does now, inviting the attendance only of relations and friends; and then, lastly, will be transferred to the museums of the curious, as poisoning and torturing

tools are at this day.

War and peace thus resolve themselves into a mercury of the state of cultivation. At a certain stage of his progress, the man fights, if he be of a sound body and mind. At a certain higher stage, he makes no offensive demonstration, but is alert to repel injury, and of an unconquerable heart. At a still higher stage, he comes into the region of holiness; passion has passed away from him; his warlike nature is all converted into an active medicinal principle; he sacrifices himself, and accepts with alacrity wearisome tasks of denial and charity; but, being attacked, he bears it, and turns the other cheek, as one engaged, throughout his being, no longer to the service of an individual, but to the common soul of all men.

Since the peace question has been before the public mind, those who affirm its right and expediency have naturally been met with objections more or less weighty. There are cases frequently put by the curious,—moral problems, like those problems in arithmetic, which in long winter evenings the rustics try the hardness of their heads in ciphering out. And chiefly it is said,—Either accept this principle for better, for worse, carry it out to the end, and meet its absurd consequences; or else, if you pretend to set an arbitrary limit, a "Thus far, no farther," then give up the principle, and take that limit which the common sense of all mankind has set, and which distinguishes offensive war as criminal, defensive war as just. Otherwise, if you go for no way, then be consistent, and give up self-defence in the highway, in your own house. Will you push it thus far? Will you stick to your principle of non-resistance, when your strong-box is broken open, when your wife and babes are insulted and slaughtered in your sight? If you say yes, you only invite the robber and assassin; and a few bloody-minded desperadoes would soon butcher the good.

In reply to this charge of absurdity on the extreme peace doctrine, as shown in the supposed consequences, I wish to say, that such deductions consider only one half of the fact. They look only at the passive side of the friend of peace, only at his passivity; they quite omit to consider his activity. But no man, it may be presumed, ever embraced the cause of peace and philanthropy, for the sole end and satisfaction of being plundered and slain. A man does not come the length of the spirit of martyrdom, without some active purpose, some equal motive, some flaming love. If you have a nation of men who have risen to that height of moral cultivation that they will not declare war or carry arms, for they have not so much madness left in their brains, you have a nation of lovers, of benefactors, of true, great, and able, men. Let me know more of that nation; I shall not find them defenceless, with idle hands springing at their sides. I shall find them men of love, honor, and truth; men of an immense industry; men whose influence is felt to the end of the earth; men whose very look and voice carry the sentence of honor and shame; and all forces yield to their energy and persuasion. Whenever we see the doctrine of peace embraced by a nation, we may be assured it will not be one that invites injury; but one, on the contrary, which has a friend in the bottom of the heart of every man, even of the violent and the base; one against which no weapon can prosper; one which is looked upon as the asylum of the human race, and has the tears and the blessings of mankind.

In the second place, as far as it respects individual action in difficult and extreme cases, I will say, such cases seldom or never occur to the good and just man; nor are we careful to say, or even to know, what in such crises is to be done. A wise man will never impawn his future being and action, and decide beforehand what he shall do in a given extreme event. Nature and God will instruct him in that hour.

The question naturally arises, How is this new aspiration of the human mind to be made visible and real? How is it to pass out of thoughts into things?

Not, certainly, in the first place, in the way of routine and mere forms,—the universal specific of modern politics; not by organizing a society, and going through a course of resolutions and public manifestoes, and being thus formally accredited to the public, and to the civility of the newspapers. We have played this game to tediousness. In some of our cities, they choose noted duellists as presidents and officers of antiduelling societies. Men who love that bloated vanity called public opinion, think all is well if they have once got their bantling through a sufficient course of speeches and cheerings, of one, two, or three public meetings, as if they could do any thing: they vote and vote, cry hurrah on both sides, no man responsible, no man caring a pin. The next season, an Indian war, or an aggression on our commerce by Malays; or the party this man votes with, have an appropriation to carry through Congress: instantly he wags his head the other way, and cries, Havoc and war!

This is not to be carried by public opinion, but by private opinion, by private conviction, by private, dear, and earnest love. For the only hope of this cause is in the increased insight, and it is to be accomplished by the spontaneous teaching, of the cultivated soul, in its secret experience and meditation,—that it is now time that it should pass out of the state of beast into the state of man; it is to hear the voice of God, which bids the devils, that have rended and torn him, come out of him, and let him now be clothed and walk forth in his right mind. [029] Nor, in the next place, is the peace principle to be carried into effect by fear. It can never be defended, it can never be executed, by cowards. Every thing great must be done in the spirit of greatness. The manhood that has been in wax must be transferred to the cause of peace, before war can lose its charm, and peace be venerable to men.

The attractiveness of war shows one thing through all the throats of artillery, the thunders of so many sieges, the sack of towns, the jousts of chivalry, the shock of hosts,—this namely, the conviction of man universally, that a man should be himself responsible, with goods, health, and life, for his behaviour; that he should not ask of the State, protection; [PAGE 048] should ask nothing of the State; should be himself a kingdom and a state; fearing no man; quite willing to use the opportunities and advantages that good government throw in his way, but nothing daunted, and not really the poorer if government, law, and order went by the board; because in himself reside infinite resources; because he is sure of himself, and never needs to ask another what in any crisis it behoves him to do.

What makes to us the attractiveness of the Greek heroes? of the Roman? What makes the attractiveness of that romantic style of living, which is the material of ten thousand plays and romances, from Shakspeare to Scott; the feudal baron, the French, the English nobility, the Warwicks, Plantagenets? It is their absolute self-dependence. I do not wonder at the dislike some of the friends of peace have expressed at Shakspeare. The veriest churl and Jacobin cannot resist the influence of the style and manners of these haughty lords. We are affected, as boys and barbarians are, by the appearance of a few rich and wilful gentlemen, who take their honor into their own keeping, defy the world, so confident are they of their courage and strength, and whose appearance is the arrival of so much life and virtue. In dangerous times, they are presently tried, and therefore their name is a flourish of trumpets. They, at least, affect us as a reality. They are not shams, but the substance of which that age and world is made. They are true heroes for their time. They make what is in their minds the greatest sacrifice. They will, for an injurious word, peril all their state and wealth, and go

to the field. Take away that principle of responsibility, and they become pirates and ruffians.

his self-subsistency is the charm of war; for this self. subsistency is essential to our idea of man. But another age comes, a truer religion and ethics open, and a man puts himself under the dominion of principles. I see him to be the servant of truth, of love, and of freedom, and immovable in the waves of the crowd. The man of principle, that is, the man who, without any flourish of trumpets, titles of lordship, or train of guards, without any notice of his action abroad, expecting none, takes in solitude the right step uni- [PAGE 049] formly, on his private choice, and disdaining consequences,—does not yield, in my imagination, to any man. He is willing to be hanged at his own gate, rather than consent to any compromise of his freedom, or the suppression of his conviction. I regard no longer those names that so tingled in my ear. This is a baron of a better nobility and a stouter stomach.

The cause of peace is not the cause of cowardice. If peace is sought to be defended or preserved for the safety of the luxurious and the timid, it is a sham, and the peace will be base. War is better, and the peace will be broken. If peace is to be maintained, it must be by brave men, who have come up to the same height as the hero, namely, the will to carry their life in their hand, and stake it at any instant for their principle, but who have gone one step beyond the hero, and will not seek another man's life;—men who have, by their intellectual insight, or else by their moral elevation, attained such a perception of their own intrinsic worth, that they do not think property or their own body a sufficient good to be saved by such dereliction of principle as treating a man like a sheep.

If the universal cry for reform of so many inveterate abuses, with which society rings,—if the desire of a large class of young men for a faith and hope, intellectual and religious, such as they have not yet found, be an omen to be trusted; if the disposition to rely more in study, and in action on the unexplored riches of the human constitution,—if the search of the sublime laws of morals and the sources of hope and trust in man, and not in books,—in the present, and not in the past,—proceed; if the rising generation can be provoked to think it unworthy to nestle into every abomination of the past, and shall feel the generous darings of austerity and virtue; then war has a short day, and human blood will cease to flow.

It is of little consequence in what manner, through what organs, this purpose of mercy and holiness is effected. The proposition of the Congress of Nations is undoubtedly that at which the present fabric of our society and the present course of events do point. But the mind, once prepared for [PAGE 050] the reign of principles, will easily find modes of expressing its will. There is the highest fitness in the place and time in which this enterprise is begun. Not in an obscure corner, not in a feudal Europe, not in an antiquated appanage where no onward step can be taken without rebellion, is this seed of benevolence laid in the furrow, with tears of hope; but in this broad America of God and man, where the forest is only now falling, or yet to fall, and the green earth opened to the inundation of emigrant men from all quarters of oppression and guilt; here, where not a family, not a few men, but mankind, shall say what shall be; here, we ask, Shall it be War, or shall it be Peace?

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VI The Fugitive Slave Law

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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

VI
THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW
ADDRESS TO CITIZENS OF CONCORD
3 MAY, 1851

THE Eternal Rights,
Victors over daily wrongs:
Awful victors, they misguide
Whom they will destroy,
And their coming triumph hide
In our downfall, or our joy:
They reach no term, they never sleep,
In equal strength through space abide;
Though, feigning dwarfs, they crouch and creep,
The strong they slay, the swift outstride;
Fate's grass grows rank in valley clods,
And rankly on the castled steep, —
Speak it firmly, these are gods,
Are all ghosts beside.

THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

FELLOW CITIZENS: I accepted your invitation to speak to you on the great question of these days, with very little consideration of what I might have to offer: for there seems to be no option. The last year has forced us all into politics, and made it a paramount duty to seek what it is often a duty to shun. We do not breathe well. There is infamy in the air. I have a new experience. I wake in the morning with a painful sensation, which I carry about all day, and which, when traced home, is the odious remembrance of that ignominy which has fallen on Massachusetts, which robs the landscape of beauty, and takes the sun-shine out of every hour. I have lived all my life in this state, and never had any experience of personal inconvenience from the laws, until now. They never came near me to any discomfort before. I find the like sensibility in my neighbors; and in that class who take no interest in the ordinary questions of party politics. There are men who are as sure indexes of the equity of legislation and of the same state of public feeling, as the barometer is of the weight of the air, and- it is a bad sign when these are discontented, for though they snuff oppression and dishonor at a distance, it is because they are more impressionable : the whole population will in a short time be as painfully affected.

Every hour brings us from distant quarters of the Union the expression of mortification at the late events in Massachusetts, and at the behavior of Boston. The tameness was indeed shocking. Boston, of whose fame for spirit and character we have all been so proud ; Boston, whose citizens, intelligent people in England told me they could always distinguish by their culture among Americans; the Boston of the American Revolution, which figures so proudly in John Adams's Diary, which the whole country has been reading; Boston, spoiled by prosperity, must bow its ancient honor in the dust, and make us irretrievably ashamed. In Boston, we have said with such lofty confidence, no fugitive slave can be arrested, and now, we must transfer our vaunt to the country, and say, with a little less confidence,

no fugitive man can be arrested here ; at least we can brag thus until to-morrow, when the farmers also may be corrupted.

The tameness is indeed complete. The only haste in Boston, after the rescue of Shadrach,' last February, was, who should first put his name on the list of volunteers in aid of the marshal. I met the smoothest of Episcopal Clergy-men the other day, and allusion being made to Mr. Webster's treachery, he blandly replied, " Why, do you know I think that the great action of his life." It looked as if in the city and the suburbs all were involved in one hot haste of terror, — presidents of colleges, and professors, saints, and brokers, insurers, lawyers, importers, manufacturers : not an unpleasing sentiment, not a liberal recollection, not so much as a snatch of an old song for freedom, dares intrude on their passive obedience.

The panic has paralyzed the journals, with the fewest exceptions, so that one cannot open a newspaper without being disgusted by new records of shame. I cannot read longer even the local good news. When I look down the columns at the titles of paragraphs, " Education in M Massachusetts," " Board of Trade," " Art Union," " Revival of Religion," what bitter mockeries ! The very convenience of property, the house and land we occupy, have lost their best value, and a man looks gloomily at his children, and thinks, " What have I done that you should begin life in dishonor ? " Every liberal study is discredited, — literature and science appear effeminate, and the hiding of the head. The college, the churches, the schools, the very shops and factories are discredited ; real estate, every kind of wealth, every branch of industry, every avenue to power, suffers injury, and the value of life is reduced. Just now a friend came into my house and said, " If this law shall be repealed I shall be glad that I have lived ; if not I shall be sorry that I was born." What kind of law is that which extorts language like this from the heart of a free and civilized people ?

One intellectual benefit we owe to the late disgraces. The crisis had the illuminating power of a sheet of lightning at midnight. It showed truth. It ended a good deal of nonsense we had been wont to hear and to repeat, on the 19th of April, the 17th of June, the 4th of July. It showed the slightness and unreliableness of our social fabric, it showed what stuff reputations are made of, what straws we dignify by office and title, and how competent we are to give counsel and help in a day of trial. It showed the shallowness of leaders ; the divergence of parties from their alleged grounds ; showed that men would not stick to what they had said, that the resolutions of public bodies, or the pledges never so often given and put on record of public men, will not bind them. The fact comes out more plainly that you cannot rely on any man for the defence of truth, who is not constitutionally or by blood and temperament on that side. A man of a greedy and unscrupulous selfishness may maintain morals when they are in fashion: but he will not stick. However close Mr. Wolf's nails have been pared, however neatly he has been shaved, and tailored, and set up on end, and taught to say, " Virtue and Religion," he cannot be relied on at a pinch: he will say, morality means pricking a vein. The popular assumption that all men loved freedom, and believed in the Christian religion, was found hollow American brag ; only persons who were known and tried benefactors are found standing for freedom : the sentimentalists went down-stream.' I question the value of our civilization, when I see that the public mind had never less hold of the strongest of all truths. The sense of injustice is blunted, — a sure sign of the shallowness of our intellect. I cannot accept the railroad and telegraph in exchange for reason and charity. It is not skill in iron locomotives that makes so fine civility, as the jealousy of liberty. I cannot think the most judicious tubing a compensation for metaphysical debility. What is the use of admirable law-forms, and political forms, if a hurricane of party feeling and a combination of monied interests can beat them to the ground ? What is the use of courts, if judges only quote authorities, and no judge exerts original jurisdiction, or recurs to first principles? What is the use of a Federal Bench, if its opinions are the political breath of the hour ? And what is the use of constitutions, if all the

guaranties provided by the jealousy of ages for the protection of liberty are made of no effect, when a bad act of Congress finds a willing commissioner? The levity of the public mind has been shown in the past year by the most extravagant actions. Who could have believed it, if foretold that a hundred guns would be fired in Boston on the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill? Nothing proves the want of all thought, the absence of standard in men's minds, more than the dominion of party. Here are humane people who have tears for misery, an open purse for want; who should have been the defenders of the poor man, are found his embittered enemies, rejoicing in his rendition, — merely from party ties. I thought none, that was not ready to go on all fours, would back this law. And yet here are upright men, compotes mentis, husbands, fathers, trustees, friends, open, generous, brave, who can see nothing in this claim for bare humanity, and the health and honor of their native State, but canting fanaticism, sedition and "one idea." Because of this preoccupied mind, the whole wealth and power of Boston —two hundred thousand souls, and one hundred and eighty millions of money — are thrown into the scale of crime: and the poor black boy, whom the fame of Boston had reached in the recesses of a vile swamp, or in the alleys of Savannah, on arriving here finds all this force employed to catch him. The famous town of Boston is his master's hound. The learning of the universities, the culture of elegant society, the acumen of lawyers, the majesty of the Bench, the eloquence of the Christian pulpit, the stoutness of Democracy, the respectability of the Whig party are all combined to kidnap him.

The crisis is interesting as it shows the self-protecting nature of the world and of the Divine laws. It is the law of the world, — as much immorality as there is, so much misery. The greatest prosperity will in vain resist the greatest calamity. You borrow the succour of the devil and he must have his fee. He was never known to abate a penny of his rents. In every nation all the immorality that exists breeds plagues. But of the corrupt society that exists we have never been able to combine any pure prosperity. There is always something in the very advantages of a condition which hurts it. Africa has its malformation; England has its Ireland; Germany its hatred of classes ; France its love of gunpowder; Italy its Pope; and America, the most prosperous country in the Universe, has the greatest calamity in the Universe, negro slavery.

Let me remind you a little in detail how the natural retribution acts in reference to the statute which Congress passed a year ago. For these few months have shown very conspicuously its nature and impracticability. It is contravened:

1. By the sentiment of duty. An immoral law makes it a man's duty to break it, at every hazard. For virtue is the very self of every man. It is therefore a principle of law that an immoral contract is void, and that an immoral statute is void. For, as laws do not make right, and are simply declaratory of a right which already existed, it is not to be presumed that they can so stultify themselves as to command injustice.

It is remarkable how rare in the history of tyrants is an immoral law. Some color, some indirection was always used. If you take up the volumes of the " Universal History," you will find it difficult searching. The precedents are few. It is not easy to parallel the wickedness of this American law. And that is the head and body of this discontent, that the law is immoral.

Here is a statute which enacts the crime of kidnapping, —a crime on one footing with arson and murder. A man's right to liberty is as inalienable as his right to life.'

Pains seem to have been taken to give us in this statute a wrong pure from any mixture of right. If our resistance to this law is not right, there is no right. This is not meddling with other people's affairs :

this is hindering other people from meddling with us. This is not going crusading into Virginia and Georgia after slaves, who, it is alleged, are very comfortable where they are :— that amiable argument falls to the ground : but this is befriending in our own State, on our own farms, a man who has taken the risk of being shot, or burned alive, or cast into the sea, or starved to death, or suffocated in a wooden box, to get away from his driver : and this man who has run the gauntlet of a thousand miles for his freedom, the statute says, you men of Massachusetts shall hunt, and catch, and send back again to the dog-hutch he fled from.

It is contrary to the primal sentiment of duty, and therefore all men that are born are, in proportion to their power of thought and their moral sensibility, found to be the natural enemies of this law. The resistance of all moral beings is secured to it. I had thought, I confess, what must come at last would come at first, a handing of all men against the authority of this statute. I thought it a point on which all sane men were agreed, that the law must respect the public morality. I thought that all men of all conditions had been made sharers of a certain experience, that in certain rare and retired moments they had been made to see how man is man, or what makes the essence of rational beings, namely, that whilst animals have to do with eating the fruits of the ground, men have to do with rectitude, with benefit, with truth, with something which is, independent of appearances: and that this tie makes the substantiality of life, this, and not their ploughing, or sailing, their trade or the breeding of families. I thought that every time a man goes back to his own thoughts, these angels receive him, talk with him, and that, in the best hours, he is uplifted in virtue of this essence, into a peace and into a power which the material world cannot give : that these moments counterbalance the years of drudgery, and that this owning of a law, be it called morals, religion, or godhead, or what you will, constituted the explanation of life, the excuse and indemnity for the errors and calamities which sadden it. In long years consumed in trifles, they remember these moments, and are consoled. I thought it was this fair mystery, whose foundations are hidden in eternity, which made the basis of human society, and of law ; and that to pretend anything else, as that the acquisition of property was the end of living, was to confound all distinctions, to make the world a greasy hotel, and, instead of noble motives and inspirations, and a heaven of companions and angels around and before us, to leave us in a grimacing menagerie of monkeys and idiots. All arts, customs, societies, books, and laws, are good as they foster and concur with this spiritual element : all men are beloved as they raise us to it; hateful as they deny or resist it. The laws especially draw their obligation only from their concurrence with it.

I am surprised that lawyers can be so blind as to suffer the principles of Law to be discredited. A few months ago, in my dismay at hearing that the Higher Law was reckoned a good joke in the courts, I took pains to look into a few law-books. I had often heard that the Bible constituted a part of every technical law library, and that it was a principle in law that immoral laws are void.

I found, accordingly, that the great jurists, Cicero, Grotius, Coke, Blackstone, Burlamaqui, Montesquieu, Vattel, Burke, Mackintosh, Jefferson, do all affirm this. I have no intention to recite these passages I had marked: — such citation indeed seems to be some-thing cowardly (for no reasonable person needs a quotation from Blackstone to convince him that white cannot be legislated to be black), and shall content myself with reading a single passage. Blackstone admits the sovereignty "antecedent to any positive precept, of the law of Nature," among whose principles are, " that we should live on, should hurt nobody, and should render unto every one his due," etc. "No human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this." " Nay, if any human law should allow or enjoin us to commit a crime" (his instance is murder), "we are bound to transgress that human law ; or else we must offend both the natural and divine." Lord Coke held that where an Act of Parliament is against common right and reason, the common law shall control it, and adjudge it to be void. Chief Justice Hobart, Chief Justice Holt, and Chief Justice Mansfield held the same.

Lord Mansfield, in the case of the slave Somerset, wherein the dicta of Lords Talbot and Hardwicke had been cited, to the effect of carrying hack the slave to the West Indies, said, " I care not for the supposed dicta of judges, however eminent, if they be contrary to all principle." Even the Canon Law says (in malis promissis non expedit servare fidem), "Neither allegiance nor oath can bind to obey that which is wrong."

No engagement (to a sovereign) can oblige or even authorize a man to violate the laws of Nature. All authors who have any conscience or modesty agree that a person ought not to obey such commands as are evidently contrary to the laws of God. Those governors of places who bravely refused to execute the barbarous orders of Charles IX. for the famous "Massacre of St. Bartholomew," have been universally praised ; and the court did not dare to punish them, at least openly. " Sire," said the brave Orte, governor of Bayonne, in his letter, " I have communicated your majesty's command to your faithful inhabitants and warriors in the garrison, and I have found there only good citizens, and brave soldiers; not one hangman: therefore, both they and I must humbly entreat your majesty to be pleased to employ your arms and lives in things that are possible, however hazardous they may be, and we will exert ourselves to the last drop of our blood."

The practitioners should guard this dogma well, as the palladium of the profession, as their anchor in the respect of mankind. Against a principle like this, all the arguments of Mr. Webster are the spray of a child's squirt against a granite wall.

2. It is contravened by all the sentiments. How can a law be enforced that fines pity, and imprisons charity ? As long as men have bowels, they will disobey. You know that the Act of Congress of September 18, 18 so, is a law which every one of you will break on the earliest occasion. There is not a manly Whig, or a manly Democrat, of whom, if a slave were hidden in one of our houses from the hounds, we should not ask with confidence to lend his wagon in aid of his escape, and he would lend it. The man would be too strong for the partisan.

And here I may say that it is absurd, what I often hear, to accuse the friends of freedom in the North with being the occasion of the new stringency of the Southern slave-laws. If you starve or beat the orphan, in my presence, and I accuse your cruelty, can I help it? In the words of Electra in the Greek tragedy, " 'T is you that say it, not I. You do the deeds, and your ungodly deeds find me the words." Will you blame the ball for rebounding from the floor, blame the air for rushing in where a vacuum is made or the boiler for exploding under pressure of steam ? These facts are after laws of the world, and so is it law, that, when justice is violated, anger begins. The very defence which the God of Nature has provided for the innocent against cruelty is the sentiment of indignation and pity in the bosom of the beholder. Mr. Webster tells the President that " he has been in the North, and he has found no man, whose opinion is of any weight, who is opposed to the law." Oh, Mr. President, trust not the information ! The gravid old Universe goes spawning on ; the womb conceives and the breasts give suck to thousands and millions of hairy babes formed not in the image of your statute, but in the image of the Universe ; too many to be bought off; too many than they can be rich, and therefore peaceable ; and necessitated to express first or last every feeling of the heart. You can keep no secret, for whatever is true some of them will unreasonably say. You can commit no crime, for they are created in their sentiments conscious of and hostile to it ; and unless you can suppress the newspaper, pass a law against book-shops, gag the English tongue in America, all short of this. is futile. This dreadful English Speech is saturated with songs, proverbs and speeches that flatly contradict and defy every line of Mr. Mason's statute. Nay, unless you can draw a sponge over those seditious Ten Commandments which are the root of our European and American civilization ; and over that eleventh commandment, " Do unto

others as you would have them do to you," your labor is vain.

3. It is contravened by the written laws themselves, because the sentiments, of course, write the statutes. Laws are merely declaratory of the natural sentiments of mankind, and the language of all permanent laws will be in contradiction to any immoral enactment. And thus it happens here : Statute fights against Statute. By the law of Congress March 2, 1807, it is piracy and murder, punishable with death, to enslave a man on the coast of Africa. By law of Congress September, 18 So, it is a high crime and misdemeanor, punishable with fine and imprisonment, to resist the reenslaving a man on the coast of America. Off soundings, it is piracy and murder to enslave him. Oil soundings, it is fine and prison not to reenslave. What kind of legislation is this? What kind of constitution which covers it? And yet the crime which the second law ordains is greater than the crime which the first law forbids under penalty of the gibbet. For it is a greater crime to reenslave a man who has shown himself fit for freedom, than to enslave him at first, when it might be pretended to be a mitigation of his lot as a captive in war.

4. It is contravened by the mischiefs it operates. A wicked law cannot be executed by good men, and must be by bad. Flagitious men must be employed, and every act of theirs is a stab at the public peace. It cannot be executed at such a cost, and so it brings a bribe in its hand. This law comes with infamy in it, and out of it. It offers a bribe in its own-clauses for the consummation of the crime. To serve it, low and mean people are found by the groping of the government. No government ever found it hard to pick up tools for base actions. If you cannot find them in the huts of the poor, you shall find them in the palaces of the rich. Vanity can buy some, ambition others, and money others. The first execution of the law, as was inevitable, was a little hesitating; the second was easier; and the glib officials became, in a few weeks, quite practised and handy at stealing men. But worse, not the officials alone are bribed, but the whole community is solicited. "The scowl of the community is attempted to be averted by the mischievous whisper, " Tariff and Southern market, if you will be quiet: no tariff and loss of Southern market, if you dare to murmur." I wonder that our acute people who have learned that the cheapest police is dear schools, should not find out that an immoral law costs more than the loss of the custom of a Southern city.

The humiliating scandal of great men warping right into wrong was followed up very fast by the cities. New York advertised in South-ern markets that it would go for slavery, and posted the names of merchants who would not. Boston, alarmed, entered into the same design. Philadelphia, more fortunate, had no conscience at all, and, in this auction of the rights of mankind, rescinded all its legislation against slavery. And the Boston " Advertiser," and the " Courier," in these weeks, urge the same course on the people of Massachusetts. Nothing remains in this race of roguery but to coax Connecticut or Maine to outbid us all by adopting slavery into its constitution.

Great is the mischief of a legal crime. Every person who touches this business is contaminated. There has not been in our lifetime another moment when public men were personally lowered by their political action. But here are gentlemen whose believed probity was the confidence and fortification of multitudes, who, by fear of public opinion, or through the dangerous ascendancy of Southern manners, have been drawn into the support of this foul business. We poor men in the country who might once have thought it an honor to shake hands with them, or to dine at their boards, would now shrink from their touch, nor could they enter our humblest doors. You have a law which no man can obey, or abet the obeying, without loss of self-respect and forfeiture of the name of gentleman. What shall we say of the function. . ary by whom the recent rendition was made? If he has rightly defined his powers, and has no authority to try the case, but only to prove the prisoner's identity, and remand him, what office is this for a reputable citizen to hold? No man of honor can sit on that bench. It is the extension of the planter's whipping-post; and its incumbents must rank with a class from which the

turnkey, the hangman and the informer are taken, necessary functionaries, it may be, in a state, but to whom the dislike and the ban of society universally attaches.

5. These resistances appear in the history of the statute, in the retributions which speak so loud in every part of this business, that I think a tragic poet will know how to make it a lesson for all ages. Mr. Webster's measure was, he told us, final. It was a pacification, it was a suppression, a measure of conciliation and adjustment. These were his words at different times : " there was to be no parleying more ; " it was " irrevocable." Does it look final now? His final settlement has dislocated the foundations. The state-house shakes like a tent. His pacification has brought all the honesty in every house, all scrupulous and good-hearted men, all women, and all children, to accuse the law. It has brought United States swords into the streets, and chains round the court-house. " A measure of pacification and union." What is its effect? To make one sole subject for conversation and painful thought throughout the continent, namely, slavery. There is not a man of thought or of feeling but is concentrating his mind on it. There is not a clerk but recites its statistics ; not a politician but is watching its incalculable energy in the elections ; not a jurist but is hunting up precedents ; not a moralist but is prying into its quality ; not an economist but is computing its profit and loss : Mr. Webster can judge whether this sort of solar microscope brought to bear on his law is likely to make opposition less. The only benefit that has accrued from the law is its service to education. It has been like a university to the entire people. It has turned every dinner-table into a debating-club, and made every citizen a student of natural law. When a moral quality comes into politics, when a right is invaded, the discussion draws on deeper sources : general principles are laid bare, which cast light on the whole frame of society. And it is cheering to behold what champions the emergency called to this poor black boy ; what subtlety, what logic, what learning, what exposure of the mischief of the law ; and, above all, with what earnestness and dignity the advocates of freedom were inspired. It was one of the best compensations of this calamity.

But the Nemesis works underneath again. It is a power that makes noonday dark, and draws us on to our undoing ; and its dismal way is to pillory the offender in the moment of his triumph. The hands that put the chain on the slave are in that moment manacled. Who has seen anything like that which is now done ? The words of John Randolph, wiser than he knew, have been ringing ominously in all echoes for thirty years, words spoken in the heat of the Missouri debate. We do not govern the people of the North by our black slaves, but by their own white slaves. We know what we are doing. We have conquered you once, and we can and will conquer you again. Ay, we will drive you to the wall, and when we have you there once more, we will keep you there and nail you down like base money." These words resounding ever since from California to Oregon, from Cape Florida to Cape Cod, come down now like the cry of Fate, in the moment when they are fulfilled. By white slaves, by a white slave, are we beaten.' Who looked for such ghastly fulfilment, or to see what we see ? Hills and Halletts, servile editors by the hundred, we could have spared. But him, our best and proudest, the first man of the North, in the very moment of mounting the throne, irresistibly taking the bit in his mouth and the collar on his neck, and harnessing himself to the chariot of the planters.

The fairest American fame ends in this filthy law. Mr. Webster cannot choose but regret his law. He must learn that those who make fame accuse him with one voice; that those who have no points to carry that are not identical with public morals and generous civilization, that the obscure and private who have no voice and care for none, so long as things go well, but who feel the disgrace of the new legislation creeping like miasma into their homes, and blotting the daylight, —those to whom his name was once dear and honored, as the manly states-man to whom the choicest gifts of Nature had been accorded, disown him: that he who was their pride in the woods and mountains of New England is now their mortification, — they have torn down his picture from the wall, they have thrust his speeches

into the chimney. No roars of New York mobs can drown this voice in Mr. Webster's ear. It will outwhisper all the salvos of the "Union Committees' " cannon. But I have said too much on this painful topic. I will not pursue that bitter history.'

But passing from the ethical to the political view, I wish to place this statute, and we must use the introducer and substantial author of the bill as an illustration of the history. I have as much charity for Mr. Webster, I think, as any one has. I need not say how much I have enjoyed his fame. Who has not helped to praise him? Simply he was the one eminent American of our time, whom we could produce as a finished work of Nature. We delighted in his form and face, in his voice, in his eloquence, in his power of labor, in his concentration, in his large understanding, in his daylight statement, simple force; the facts lay like the strata of a cloud, or like the layers of the crust of the globe. He saw things as they were, and he stated them so. He has been by his clear perceptions and statements in all these years the best head in Congress, and the champion of the interests of the Northern seaboard: but as the activity and growth of slavery began to be offensively felt by his constituents, the senator became less sensitive to these evils. They were not for him to deal with: he was the commercial representative. He indulged occasionally in excellent expression of the known feeling of the New England people: but, when expected and when pledged, he omitted to speak, and he omitted to throw himself into the movement in those critical moments when his leadership would have turned the scale. At last, at a fatal hour, this sluggishness accumulated to down-right counteraction, and, very unexpectedly to the whole Union, on the 7th March, 1850, in opposition to his education, association, and to all his own most explicit language for thirty years, he crossed the line, and became the head of the slavery party in this country.

Mr. Webster perhaps is only following the laws of his blood and constitution. I suppose his pledges were not quite natural to him. Mr. Webster is a man who lives by his memory, a man of the past, not a man of faith or of hope. He obeys his powerful animal nature; — and his finely developed understanding only works truly and with all its force, when it stands for animal good; that is, for property. He believes, in so many words, that government exists for the protection of property. He looks at the Union as an estate, a large farm, and is excellent in the completeness of his defence of it so far. He adheres to the letter. Happily he was born late, — after the independence had been declared, the Union agreed to, and the constitution settled. What he finds already written, he will defend. Lucky that so much had got well written when he came. For he has no faith in the power of self-government; none whatever in extemporizing a government. Not the smallest municipal provision, if it were new, would receive his sanction. In Massachusetts, in 1776, he would, beyond all question, have been a refugee. He praises Adams and Jefferson, but it is a past Adams and Jefferson that his mind can entertain.' A present Adams and Jefferson he would denounce. So with the eulogies of liberty in his writings, — they are sentimentalism and youthful rhetoric. He can celebrate it, but it means as much from him as from Metternich or Talleyrand. This is all inevitable from his constitution. All the drops of his blood have eyes that look downward. It is neither praise or blame to say that he has no moral perception, no moral sentiment, but in that region — to use the phrase of the phrenologists — a hole in the head. The scraps of morality to be gleaned from his speeches are reflections of the mind of others; he says what he hears said, but often makes signal blunders in their use. In Mr. Webster's imagination the American Union was a huge Prince Rupert's drop, which, if so much as the smallest end be shivered off, the whole will snap into atoms. Now the fact is quite different from this. The people are loyal, law-loving, law-abiding. They prefer order, and have no taste for misrule and uproar.

The destiny of this country is great and liberal, and is to be greatly administered. It is to be administered according to what is, and is to be, and not according to what is dead and gone. The union of this people is a real thing, an alliance of men of one flock, one language, one religion, one system

of manners and ideas. I hold it to be a real and not a statute union. The people cleave to the Union, because they see their advantage in it, the added power of each.

I suppose the Union can be left to take care of itself. As much real union as there is, the statutes will be sure to express ; as much disunion as there is, no statute can long conceal. Under the Union I suppose the fact to be that there are really two nations, the North and the South. It is not slavery that severs them, it is climate and temperament. The South does not like the North, slavery or no slavery, and never did. The North likes the South well enough, for it knows its own advantages. I am willing to leave them to the facts. If they continue to have a binding interest, they will be pretty sure to find it out: if not, they will consult their peace in parting. But one thing appears certain to me, that, as soon as the constitution ordains an immoral law, it ordains disunion. The law is suicidal, and cannot be obeyed. The Union is at an end as soon as an immoral law is enacted. And he who writes a crime into the statute-book digs under the foundations of the Capitol to plant there a powder-magazine, and lays a train.

I pass to say a few words to the question, What shall we do ?

1. What in our federal capacity is our relation to the nation ?
2. And what as citizens of a state ?

I am an Unionist as we all are, or nearly all, and I strongly share the hope of mankind in the power, and therefore, in the duties of the Union ; and I conceive it demonstrated,— the necessity of common sense and justice entering into the laws. What shall we do? First, abrogate this law ; then, proceed to confine slavery to slave states, and help them effectually to make an end of it. Or shall we, as we are advised on all hands, lie by, and wait the progress of the census ? But will Slavery lie by ? I fear not. She is very industrious, gives herself no holidays. No proclamations will put her down. She got Texas and now will have Cuba, and means to keep her majority. The experience of the past gives us no encouragement to lie by. Shall we call a new Convention, or will any expert statesman furnish us a plan for the summary or gradual winding up of slavery, so far as the Republic is its patron ? Where is the South itself ? Since it is agreed by all sane men of all parties (or was yesterday) that slavery is mischievous, why does the South itself never offer the smallest counsel of her own ? I have never heard in twenty years any project except Mr. Clay's. Let us hear any project with candor and respect. Is it impossible to speak of it with reason and good nature? It is really the project fit for this country to entertain and accomplish. Everything invites emancipation. The grandeur of the design, the vast stake we hold ; the national domain, the new importance of Liberia ; the manifest interest of the slave states ; the religious effort of the free states ; the public opinion of the world ; — all join to demand it.

We shall one day bring the States shoulder to shoulder and the citizens man to man to exterminate slavery. Why in the name of common sense and the peace of mankind is not this made the subject of instant negotiation and settlement? Why not end this dangerous dispute on some ground of fair compensation on one side, and satisfaction on the other to the conscience of the free states ? It is really the great task fit for this country to accomplish, to buy that property of the planters, as the British nation bought the West Indian slaves. I say buy, —never conceding the right of the planter to own, but that we may acknowledge the calamity of his position, and bear a countryman's share in relieving him ; and because it is the only practicable course, and is innocent. Here is a right social or public function, which one man cannot do, which all men must do. 'T is said it will cost two thousand millions of dollars. Was there ever any contribution that was so enthusiastically paid as this will be ? We will have a chimney-tax. We will give up our coaches, and wine, and watches. The churches will melt their plate. The father of his country shall wait, well pleased, a little longer for his monument ; Franklin for his, the Pilgrim Fathers for theirs, and the patient Columbus for his. The mechanics will

give, the needle-women will give ; the children will have cent-societies. Every man in the land will give a week's work to dig away this accursed mountain of sorrow once and for-ever out of the world.'

Nothing is impracticable to this nation, which it shall set itself to do. Were ever men so endowed, so placed, so weaponed ? "Their power of territory seconded by a genius equal to every work. By new arts the earth is subdued, roaded, tunnelled, telegraphed, gas-lighted; vast amounts of old labor disused ; the sinews of man being relieved by sinews of steam. We are on the brink of more wonders. The sun paints; presently we shall organize the echo, as now we do the shadow. Chemistry is extorting new aids. The genius of this people, it is found, can do anything which can be done by men. These thirty nations are equal to any work, and are every moment stronger. In twenty-five years they will be fifty millions. Is it not time to do something besides ditching and draining, and making the earth mellow and friable ? Let them confront this mountain of poison, — bore, blast, excavate, pulverize, and shovel it once for all, down into the bottomless Pit. A thou-sand millions were cheap.

But grant that the heart of financiers, accustomed to practical figures, shrinks within them at these colossal amounts, and the embarrassments which complicate the problem ; granting that these contingencies are too many to be spanned by any human geometry, and that these evils are to be relieved only by the wisdom of God working in ages, — and by what instrument, whether Liberia, whether flax-cotton, whether the working out this race by Irish and Germans, none can tell, or by what sources God has guarded his law ; still the question recurs, What must we do? One thing is plain, we cannot answer for the Union, but we must keep Massachusetts true. It is of unspeakable importance that she play her honest part. She must follow no vicious examples. Massachusetts is a little state: countries have been great by ideas. Europe is little compared with Asia and Africa ; yet Asia and Africa are its ox and its ass. Europe, the least of all the continents, has almost monopolized for twenty centuries the genius and power of them all. Greece was the least part of Europe. Attica a little part of that, — one tenth of the size of Massachusetts. Yet that district still rules the intellect of men. Judea was a petty country. Yet these two, Greece and Judea, furnish the mind and the heart by which the rest of the world is sustained; and Massachusetts is little, but, if true to itself, can be the brain which turns about the behemoth.

I say Massachusetts, but I mean Massachusetts in all the quarters of her dispersion ; Massachusetts, as she is the mother of all the New England states, and as she sees her progeny scattered over the face of the land, in the farthest South, and the uttermost West. The immense power of rectitude is apt to be forgot-ten in politics. But they who have brought the great wrong on the country have not forgotten it. They avail themselves of the known probity and honor of Massachusetts, to endorse the statute. The ancient maxim still holds that never was any injustice effected except by the help of justice. The great game of the government has been to win the sanction of Massachusetts to the crime. Hitherto they have succeeded only so far as to win Boston to a certain extent. The behavior of Boston was the reverse of what it should have been : it was supple and officious, and it put itself into the base attitude of pander to the crime. It should have placed obstruction at every step. Let the attitude of the states be firm. Let us respect the Union to all honest ends. But also respect an older and wider union, the law of Nature and rectitude. Massachusetts is as strong as the Universe, when it does that. We will never intermeddle with your slavery, — but you can in no wise be suffered to bring it to Cape Cod and Berkshire. This law must be made in-operative. It must be abrogated and wiped out of the statute-book ; but whilst it stands there, it must be disobeyed. We must make a small state great, by making every man in it true. It was the praise of Athens, " She could not lead countless armies into the field, but she knew how with a little band to defeat those who could." Every Roman reckoned himself at least a match for a Province. Every Dorian did. Every Englishman in Australia, in South Africa, in India, or in whatever barbarous country their forts and factories have been set up, —

represents London, represents the art, power and law of Europe. Every man educated at the Northern school carries the like advantages into the South. For it is confounding distinctions to speak of the geographic sections of this country as of equal civilization. Every nation and every man bows, in spite of higher mental and moral existence; and the sting of the late disgraces is that this royal position of Massachusetts was foully lost, that the well-known sentiment of her people was not expressed. Let us correct this error. In this one fastness let truth be spoken and right done. Here let there be no confusion in our ideas. Let us not lie, not steal, nor help to steal, and let us not call stealing by any fine name, such as " Union " or " Patriotism." Let us know that not by the public, but by ourselves, our safety must be bought. That is the secret of Southern power, that they rest not on meetings, but on private heats and courages. It is very certain from the perfect guaranties in the constitution, and the high arguments of the defenders of liberty, which the occasion Southern power, that they rest not on meetings, but on private heats and courages.

It is very certain from the perfect guaranties in the constitution, and the high arguments of the defenders of liberty, which the occasion called out, that there is sufficient margin in the statute and the law for the spirit of the Magistrate to show itself, and one, two, three occasions have just now occurred, and past, in either of which, if one man had felt the spirit of Coke or Mansfield or Parsons, and read the law with the eye of freedom, the dishonor of Massachusetts had been prevented, and a limit set to these encroachments forever.

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VIII The Assault Upon Mr. Sumner



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

VIII

THE ASSAULT UPON MR. SUMNER

SPEECH AT A MEETING OF THE CITIZENS IN

THE TOWN HALL, IN CONCORD,

MAY 26, 1856

His erring foe,

Self-assured that he prevails, Looks from his victim lying low, And sees aloft the red right arm Redress the eternal scales.

THE ASSAULT UPON MR. SUMNER

MR. CHAIRMAN : I sympathize heartily with the spirit of the resolutions. The events of the last few years and months and days have taught us the lessons of centuries. I do not see how a barbarous community and a civilized community can constitute one state. I think we must get rid of slavery, or we must get rid of freedom. Life has not parity of value in the free state and in the slave state. In one, it is adorned with education, with skilful labor, with arts, with long prospective interests, with sacred family ties, with honor and justice. In the other, life is a fever ; man is an animal, given to pleasure, frivolous, irritable, spending his days in hunting and practising with deadly weapons to defend himself against his slaves and against his companions brought up in the same idle and dangerous way. Such people live for the moment, they have properly no future, and readily risk on every passion a life which is of small value to themselves or to others. Many years ago, when Mr. Webster was challenged in Washington to a duel by one of these mad-caps, his friends came forward with prompt good sense and said such a thing was not to be thought of ; Mr. Webster's life was the property of his friends and of the whole country, and was not to be risked on the turn of a vagabond's ball. Life and life are incommensurate. The whole state of South Carolina does not now offer one or any number of persons who are to be weighed for a moment in the scale with such a person as the meanest of them all has now struck down. The very conditions of the game must always be, - the worst life staked against the best. It is the best whom they desire to kill. It is only when they cannot answer your reasons, that they wish to knock you down. If, there-fore, Massachusetts could send to the Senate a better man than Mr. Sumner, his death would be only so much the more quick and certain. Now, as men's bodily strength, or skill with knives and guns, is not usually in proportion to their knowledge and mother-wit, but oftener in the inverse ratio, it will only do to send foolish persons to Washington, if you wish them to be safe.

The outrage is the more shocking from the singularly pure character of its victim. Mr. Sumner's position is exceptional in its honor. He had not taken his degrees in the caucus and in hack politics. It is notorious that, in the long time when his election was pending, he refused to take a single step to secure it. He would not so much as go up to the state house to shake hands with this or that person whose good will was reckoned important by his friends. He was elected. It was a homage to character and talent. In Congress, he did not rush into party position. He sat long silent and studious. His friends, I remember, were told that they would find Sumner a man of the world like the rest ; ' 'tis quite impossible to be at Washing-ton and not bend ; he will bend as the rest have done.' Well, he did not

bend. He took his position and kept it. He meekly bore the cold shoulder from some of his New England col-leagues, the hatred of his enemies, the pity of the indifferent, cheered by the love and respect of good men with whom he acted ; and has stood for the North, a little in advance of all the North, and therefore without adequate sup-port. He has never faltered in his maintenance of justice and freedom. He has gone beyond the large expectation of his friends in his in-creasing ability and his manlier tone. I have heard that some of his political friends tax him with indolence or negligence in refusing to make electioneering speeches, or otherwise to bear his part in the labor which party organization requires. I say it to his honor. But more to his honor are the faults which his enemies lay to his charge. I think, sir, if Mr. Sumner had any vices, we should be likely to hear of them. They have fastened their eyes like microscopes for five years on every act, word, manner and movement, to find a flaw,-and with what result ? His opponents accuse him neither of drunkenness nor debauchery, nor job, nor speculation, nor rapacity, nor personal aims of any kind. No ; but with what? Why, beyond this charge, which it is impossible was ever sincerely made, that he broke over the proprieties of debate, I find him accused of publishing his opinion of the Nebraska conspiracy in a letter to the people of the United States, with discourtesy. Then, that he is an abolitionist; as if every sane human being were not an abolitionist, or a believer that all men should be free. And the third crime he stands charged with, is, that his speeches were written before they were spoken ; which, of course, must be true in Sumner's case, as it was true of Webster, of Adams, of Calhoun, of Burke, of Chatham, of Demosthenes ; of every first-rate speaker that ever lived. It is the high compliment he pays to the intelligence of the Senate and of the country. When the same reproach was cast on the first orator of ancient times by some caviller of his day, he said, " I should be ashamed to come with one unconsidered word before such an assembly." Mr. Chairman, when I think of these most small faults as the worst which party hatred could allege, I think I may borrow the language which Bishop Burnet applied to Sir Isaac Newton, and say that Charles Sumner " has the whitest soul I ever knew."

Well, sir, this noble head, so comely and so wise, must be the target for a pair of bullies to beat with clubs. The murderer's brand shall stamp their foreheads wherever they may wan-der in the earth. But I wish, sir, that the high respects of this meeting shall be expressed to Mr. Sumner; that a copy of the resolutions that have been read may be forwarded to him. I wish that he may know the shudder of terror which ran through all this community on the first tidings of this brutal attack. Let him hear that every man of worth in New England loves his virtues ; that every mother thinks of him as the protector of families ; that every friend of freedom thinks him the friend of freedom. And if our arms at this distance cannot defend him from assassins, we confide the defence of a life so precious to all honorable men and true patriots, and to the Almighty Maker of men.'

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IX Speech on Affairs in Kansas

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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

IX
SPEECH
AT THE KANSAS RELIEF MEETING IN CAMBRIDGE
WEDNESDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 10, 1856

AND ye shall succor men;
'T is nobleness to serve;
Help them who cannot help again:
Beware from right to swerve.

SPEECH
ON AFFAIRS IN KANSAS

I REGRET, with all this company, the absence of Mr. Whitman of Kansas, whose narrative was to constitute the interest of this meeting. Mr. Whitman is not here; but knowing, as we all do, why he is not, what duties kept him at home, he is more than present. His vacant chair speaks for him. For quite other reasons, I had been wiser to have stayed at home, unskilled as I am to address a political meeting, but it is impossible for the most recluse to extricate himself from the questions of the times.

There is this peculiarity about the case of Kansas, that all the right is on one side. We hear the screams of hunted wives and children answered by the howl of the butchers. The testimony of the telegraphs from St. Louis and the border confirm the worst details. The printed letters of border ruffians avow the facts. When pressed to look at the cause of the mischief in the Kansas laws, the President falters and declines the discussion; but his supporters in the Senate, Mr. Cass, Mr. Geyer, Mr. Hunter, speak out, and declare the intolerable atrocity of the code. It is a maxim that all party spirit produces the incapacity to receive natural impressions from facts; and our recent political history has abundantly borne out the maxim. But these details that have come from Kansas are so horrible, that the hostile press have but one word in reply, namely, that it is all exaggeration, 't is an Abolition lie. Do the Committee of Investigation say that the outrages have been overstated? Does their dismal catalogue of private tragedies show it? Do the private letters? Is it an exaggeration, that Mr. Hopps of Somerville, Mr. Hoyt of Deerfield, Mr. Jennison of Groton, Mr. Phillips of Berkshire, have been murdered? That Mr. Robinson of Fitchburg has been imprisoned? Rev. Mr. Nute of Springfield seized, and up to this time we have no tidings of his fate?

In these calamities under which they suffer, and the worst which threaten them, the people of Kansas ask for bread, clothes, arms and men, to save them alive, and enable them to stand against these enemies of the human race. They have a right to be helped, for they have helped themselves.

This aid must be sent, and this is not to be doled out as an ordinary charity; but bestowed up to the magnitude of the want, and, as has been elsewhere said, "on the scale of a national action." I think we are to give largely, lavishly, to these men. And we must prepare to do it. We must learn to do with less, live in a smaller tenement, sell our apple-trees, our acres, our pleasant houses. I know people who are making haste to reduce their expenses and pay their debts, not with a view to new accumulations, but in preparation to save and earn for the benefit of the Kansas emigrants.

We must have aid from individuals, -we must also have aid from the state. I know that the last legislature refused that aid. I know , that lawyers hesitate on technical grounds, and wonder what method of relief the legislature will apply. But I submit that, in a case like is, where citizens of Massachusetts, legal voters here, have emigrated to national territory kinder the sanction of every law, and are then set on by highwaymen, driven from their new homes, pillaged, and numbers of them killed and scalped, and the whole world knows that this is no accidental brawl, but a systematic war to the knife, and in defiance of all laws and liberties, - I submit that the governor and legislature should neither slumber nor sleep till they have found out how to send effectual aid and comfort to these poor farmers, or else should resign their seats to those who can. But first let them hang the halls of the state-house with black crape, and order funeral service to be said for the citizens whom they were unable to defend.

We stick at the technical difficulties. I think there never was a people so choked and stultified by forms. We adore the forms of law, instead of making them vehicles of wisdom and justice. I like the primary assembly. I own I have little esteem for governments. I esteem them only good in the moment when they are established. I set the private man first. He only who is able to stand alone is qualified to be a citizen. Next to the private man, I value the primary assembly, met to watch the government and to correct it. That is the theory of the American State, that it exists to execute the will of the citizens, is always responsible to them, and is always to be changed when it does not. First, the private citizen, then the primary assembly, and the government last.

In this country for the last few years the government has been the chief obstruction to the common weal. Who doubts that Kansas would have been very well settled, if the United States had let it alone? The government armed and led the ruffians against the poor farmers. I do not know any story so gloomy as the politics of this country for the last twenty years, centralizing ever more manifestly round one spring, and that a vast crime, and ever more plainly, until it is notorious that all promotion, power and policy are dictated from one source, - illustrating the fatal effects of a false position to demoralize legislation and put the best people always at a disadvantage ; - one crime always present, always to be varnished over, to find fine names for ; and we free statesmen, as accomplices to the guilt, ever in the power of the grand offender.

Language has lost its meaning in the universal cant. Representative Government is really misrepresentative ; Union is a conspiracy against the Northern States which the Northern States are to have the privilege of paying for ; the adding of Cuba and Central America to the slave marts is enlarging the area of Freedom. Manifest Destiny, Democracy, Freedom, fine names for an ugly thing. They call it otto of rose and lavender, -I call it bilge-water. They call it Chivalry and Freedom ; I call it the stealing all the earnings of a poor man and the earnings of his little girl and boy, and the earnings of all that shall come from him, his children's children forever.

But this is Union, and this is Democracy ; and our poor people, led by the nose by these fine words, dance and sing, ring bells and fire can-non, with every new link of the chain which is forged for their limbs by the plotters in the Capitol.

What are the results of law and union ? There is no Union. Can any citizen of Massachusetts travel in honor through Kentucky and Alabama and speak his mind ? Or can any citizen of the Southern country who happens to think kidnapping a had thing, say so ? Let Mr. Underwood of Virginia answer. Is it to be sup-posed that there are no men in Carolina who dissent from the popular sentiment now reigning there ? It must happen, in the variety of human opinions, that there are dissenters. They are silent as the grave. Are there no women in that country, - women, who always carry the conscience of a

people ? Yet we have not heard one discordant whisper.

In the free states, we give a snivelling support to slavery. The judges give cowardly interpretations to the law, in direct opposition to the known foundation of all law, that every immoral statute is void. And here of Kansas, the President says : " Let the complainants go to the courts ; " though he knows that when the poor plundered farmer comes to the court, he finds the ringleader who has robbed him dismounting from his own horse, and unbuckling his knife to sit as his judge.

The President told the Kansas Committee that the whole difficulty grew from " the factious spirit of the Kansas people respecting institutions which they need not have concerned them-selves about." A very remarkable speech from a Democratic President to his fellow citizens, that they are not to concern themselves with institutions which they alone are to create and determine. The President is a lawyer, and should know the statutes of the land. But I borrow the language of an eminent man, used long since, with far less occasion : If that be law, let the ploughshare be run under the foundations of the Capitol ; " - and if that be Government, extirpation is the only cure.

I am glad to see that the terror at disunion and anarchy is disappearing. Massachusetts, in its heroic day, had no government - was an anarchy. Every man stood on his own feet, was his own governor ; and there was no breach of peace from Cape Cod to Mount Hoosac. California, a few years ago, by the testimony of all people at that time in the country, had the best government that ever existed. Pans of gold lay drying outside of every man's tent, in perfect security. The land was measured into little strips of a few feet wide, all side by side. A bit of ground that your hand could cover was worth one or two hundred dollars, on the edge of your strip ; and there was no dispute. Every man throughout the country was armed with knife and revolver, and it was known that instant justice would be administered to each offence, and perfect peace reigned. For the Saxon man, when he is well awake, is not a pirate but a citizen, all made of hooks and eyes, and links himself naturally to his brothers, as bees hook themselves to one another and to their queen in a loyal swarm.

But the hour is coming when the strongest will not be strong enough. A harder task will the new revolution of the nineteenth century be than was the revolution of the eighteenth century. I think the American Revolution bought its glory cheap. If the problem was new, it was simple. If there were few people, they were united, and the enemy three thousand miles off. But now, vast property, gigantic interests, family connections, webs of party, cover the land with a network that immensely multiplies the dangers of war.'

Fellow citizens, in these times full of the fate of the Republic, I think the towns should hold town meetings, and resolve themselves into Committees of Safety, go into permanent sessions, adjourning from week to week, from month to month. I wish we could send the sergeant-at-arms to stop every American who is about to leave the country. Send home every one who is abroad, lest they should find no country to return to. Come home and stay at home, while there is a country to save. When it is lost it will be time enough then for any who are luckless enough to remain alive to gather up their clothes and depart to some land where freedom exists.

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X John Brown--Speech at Boston



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

X

REMARKS

AT A MEETING FOR THE RELIEF OF THE FAMILY OF JOHN BROWN, AT TREMONT TEMPLE, BOSTON
NOVEMBER 18, 1859

JOHN BROWN

"JOHN BROWN in Kansas settled, like a steadfast Yankee farmer,
Brave and godly, with four sons--all stalwart men of might.
There he spoke aloud for Freedom, and the Border strife grew warmer
Till the Rangers fired his dwelling, in his absence, in the night;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Came homeward in the morning to find his house burned down.

Then he grasped his trusty rifle, and boldly fought for Freedom;
Smote from border unto border the fierce invading band: And he and his brave boys vowed - so might
Heaven help and speed 'em -
They would save those grand old prairies from the curse that blights the land;
And Old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
Said, ' Boys, the Lord will aid us!' and he shoved his ram rod down."

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN, John Brown.

JOHN BROWN

MR. CHAIRMAN, AND FELLOW CITIZENS : I share the sympathy and sorrow which have brought us together. Gentlemen who have preceded me have well said that no wall of separation could here exist. This commanding event which has brought us together, eclipses all others which have occurred for a long time in our history, and I am very glad to see that this sudden interest in the hero of Harper's Ferry has provoked an extreme curiosity in all parts of the Republic, in regard to the details of his history. Every anecdote is eagerly sought, and I do not wonder that gentlemen find traits of relation readily between him and themselves. One finds a relation in the church, another in the profession, another in the place of his birth. He was happily a representative of the American Republic. Captain John Brown is a farmer, the fifth in descent from Peter Brown, who came to Plymouth in the Mayflower, in 1620. All the six have been farmers. His grandfather, of Simsbury, in Connecticut, was a captain in the Revolution. His father, largely interested as a raiser of stock, became a contractor to supply the army with beef, in the war of 1812, and our Captain John Brown, then a boy, with his father was present and witnessed the surrender of General Hull. He cherishes a great respect for his father, as a man of strong character, and his respect is probably just. For himself, he is so transparent that all men see him through. He is a man to make friends wherever on earth courage and integrity are esteemed, the rarest of heroes, a pure idealist, with no by-ends of his own. Many of you have seen him, and every one who has heard him speak has been impressed alike by his

simple, artless goodness, joined with his sublime courage. He joins that perfect Puritan faith which brought his fifth ancestor to Plymouth Rock with his grandfather's ardor in the Revolution. He believes in two articles, - two instruments, shall I say ? - the Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence ; and he used this expression in conversation here concerning them, " Better that a whole generation of men, women and children should pass away by a violent death than that one word of either should be violated in this country." There is a Unionist, - there is a strict constructionist for you. He believes in the Union of the States, and he conceives that the only obstruction to the Union is Slavery, and for that reason, as a patriot, he works for its abolition. The governor of Virginia has pronounced his eulogy in a manner that discredits the moderation of our timid parties. His own speeches to the court have interested the nation in him. What magnanimity, and what innocent pleading, as of childhood! You remember his words : " If I had interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or any of their friends, parents, wives or children, it would all have been right. But I believe that to have interfered as I have done, for the despised poor, was not wrong, but right."1

It is easy to see what a favorite he will be with history, which plays such pranks with temporary reputations. Nothing can resist the sympathy which all elevated minds must feel with Brown, and through them the whole civilized world; and if he must suffer, he must drag official gentlemen into an immortality most undesirable, of which they have already some disagreeable forebodings. Indeed, it is the reduction ad absurdum of Slavery, when the governor of Virginia is forced to hang a man whom he declares to be a man of the most integrity, truthfulness and courage he has ever met. Is that the kind of man the gallows is built for ? It were bold to affirm that there is within that broad commonwealth, at this moment, another citizen as worthy to live, and as deserving of all public and private honor, as this poor prisoner.'

But we are here to think of relief for the family of John Brown. To my eyes, that family looks very large and very needy of relief. It comprises his brave fellow sufferers in the Charlestown Jail ; the fugitives still hunted in the mountains of Virginia and Pennsylvania; the sympathizers with him in all the states ; and, I may say, almost every man who loves the Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence, like him, and who sees what a tiger's thirst threatens him in the malignity of public sentiment in the slave states. It seems to me that a common feeling joins the people of Massachusetts with him.

I said John Brown was an idealist. He believed in his ideas to that extent that he existed to put them all into action ; he said 'he did not believe in moral suasion, he believed in putting the thing through.' He saw how deceptive the forms are. We fancy, in Massachusetts, that we are free ; yet it seems the government is quite unreliable. Great wealth, great population, men of talent in the executive, on the bench, - all the forms right, - and yet, life and freedom are not safe. Why ? Because the judges rely on the forms, and do not, like John Brown, use their eyes to see the fact behind the forms. They assume that the United States can protect its witness or its prisoner. And in Massachusetts that is true, but the moment he is carried out of the bounds of Massachusetts, the United States, it is notorious, afford no protection at all ; the government, the judges, are an envenomed party, and give such protection as they give in Utah to honest citizens, or in Kansas ; such protection as they gave to their own Commodore Paulding, when he was simple enough to mistake the formal instructions of his government for their real meaning.' The state judges fear collision between their two allegiances ; but there are worse evils than collision ; namely, the doing substantial injustice. A good man will see that the use of a judge is to secure good government, and where the citizen's weal is imperilled by abuse of the federal power, to use that arm which can secure it, viz., the local government. Had that been done on certain calamitous occasions, we should not have seen the honor of Massachusetts trailed in the dust, stained to all ages, once and again, by the ill-timed formalism of a venerable bench. If

judges cannot find law enough to maintain the sovereignty of the state, and to protect the life and freedom of every inhabitant not a criminal, it is idle to compliment them as learned and venerable. What avails their learning or veneration ? At a pinch, they are no more use than idiots. After the mischance they wring their hands, but they had better never have been born.' A Vermont judge, Hutchinson, who has the Declaration of Independence in his heart ; a Wisconsin judge, who knows that laws are for the protection of citizens against kidnappers, is worth a court-house full of lawyers so idolatrous of forms as to let go the substance. Is any man in Massachusetts so simple as to believe that when a United States Court in Virginia, now, in its pre-sent reign of terror, sends to Connecticut, or New York, or Massachusetts, for a witness, it wants him for a witness ? No ; it wants him for a party ; it wants him for meat to slaughter and eat. And your habeas corpus is, in any way in which it has been, or, I fear, is likely to be used, a nuisance, and not a protection ; for it takes away his right reliance on himself, and the natural assistance of his friends and fellow citizens, by offering him a form which is a piece of paper.

But I am detaining the meeting on matters which others understand better. I hope, then, that, in administering relief to John Brown's family, we shall remember all those whom his fate concerns, all who are in sympathy with him, and not forget to aid him in the best way, by securing freedom and independence in Massachusetts.

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XI John Brown--Speech at Salem



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XI
JOHN BROWN
SPEECH AT SALEM, JANUARY 6, 1860

A MAN there came, whence none could tell,
Bearing a touchstone in his hand,
And tested all things in the land
By its unerring spell.

A thousand transformations rose
From fair to foul, from foul to fair:
The golden crown he did not spare,
Nor scorn the beggar's clothes.

Then angrily the people cried,
The loss outweighs the profit far;
Our goods suffice us as they are:
We will not have them tried.'

And since they could not so avail
To check his unrelenting quest,
They seized him, saying, ' Let him test
How real is our jail!'

But though they slew him with the sword,
And in the fire his touchstone burned,
Its doings could not be o'erturned,
Its undoings restored.

And when, to stop all future harm,
They strewed its ashes to the breeze,
They little guessed each grain of these
Conveyed the perfect charm."
WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

JOHN BROWN

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have been struck with one fact, that the best orators who have added their praise to his fame, -and I need not go out of this house to find the purest eloquence in the country, - have one rival who comes off a little better, and that is JOHN BROWN. Everything that is said of him leaves people a little dissatisfied ; but as soon as they read his own speeches and letters they are heartily contented, -such is the singleness of purpose which justifies him to the head and the heart of all. Taught by this experience, I mean, in the few remarks I have to make, to cling to his history, or let him speak for himself.

John Brown, the founder of liberty in Kansas, was born in Torrington, Litchfield County, Connecticut, in 1800. When he was five years old his father emigrated to Ohio, and the boy was there set to keep sheep and to look after cattle and dress skins ; he went bareheaded and bare-footed, and clothed in buckskin. He said that he loved rough play, could never have rough play enough ; could not see a seedy hat without wishing to pull it off. But for this it needed that the playmates should be equal ; not one in fine clothes and the other in buckskin ; not one his own master, hale and hearty, and the other watched and whipped. But it chanced that in Pennsylvania, where he was sent by his father to collect cattle, he fell in with a boy whom he heartily liked and whom he looked upon as his superior. This boy was a slave ; he saw him beaten with an iron shovel, and otherwise maltreated ; he saw that this boy had nothing better to look forward to in life, whilst he himself was petted and made much of; for he was much considered in the family where he then stayed, from the circumstance that this boy of twelve years had conducted alone a drove of cattle a hundred miles. But the colored boy had no friend, and no future. This worked such indignation in him that he swore an oath of resistance to slavery as long as he lived. And thus his enterprise to go into Virginia and run off five hundred or a thousand slaves was not a piece of spite or revenge, a plot of two years or of twenty years, but the keeping of an oath made to heaven and earth forty-seven years before. Forty-seven years at least, though I incline to accept his own account of the matter at Charlestown, which makes the date a little older, when he said, " This was all settled millions of years before the world was made."

He grew up a religious and manly person, in severe poverty ; a fair specimen of the best stock of New England; having that force of thought and that sense of right which are the warp and woof of greatness. Our farmers were Orthodox Calvinists, mighty in the Scriptures; had learned that life was a preparation, a " probation," to use their word, for a higher world, and was to be spent in loving and serving mankind.¹

Thus was formed a romantic character absolutely without any vulgar trait; living to ideal ends, without any mixture of self-indulgence or compromise, such as lowers the value of benevolent and thoughtful men we know ; abstemious, refusing luxuries, not sourly and reproachfully, but simply as unfit for his habit; quiet and gentle as a child in the house. And, as happens usually to men of romantic character, his fortunes were romantic. Walter Scott would have delighted to draw his picture and trace his adventurous career. A shepherd and herdsman, he learned the manners of animals, and knew the secret signals by which animals communicate.² He made his hard bed on the mountains with them; he learned to drive his flock through thickets all but impassable; he had all the skill of a shepherd by choice of breed and by wise husbandry to obtain the best wool, and that for a course of years. And the anecdotes preserved show a far-seeing skill and conduct which, in spite of adverse accidents, should secure, one year with another, an honest reward, first to the farmer, and after-wards to the dealer. If he kept sheep, it was with a royal mind ; and if he traded in wool, he was a merchant prince, not in the amount of wealth, but in the protection of the interests confided to him.

I am not a little surprised at the easy effrontery with which political gentlemen, in and out of Congress, take it upon them to say that there are not a thousand men in the North who sympathize with John Brown. It would be far safer and nearer the truth to say that all people, in proportion to their sensibility and self-respect, sympathize with him. For it is impossible to see courage, and disinterestedness, and the love that casts out fear, without sympathy. All women are drawn to him by their predominance of sentiment. All gentlemen, of course, are on his side. I do not mean by "gentlemen," people of scented hair and perfumed handkerchiefs, but men of gentle blood and generosity, " fulfilled with all nobleness," who, like the Cid, give the outcast leper a share of their bed ; like the dying Sidney, pass the cup of cold water to the dying soldier who needs it more. For what is the oath of gentle blood and knighthood ? What but to protect the weak and lowly against the

strong oppressor ?

Nothing is more absurd than to complain of this sympathy, or to complain of a party of men united in opposition to slavery. As well complain of gravity, or the ebb of the tide. Who makes the abolitionist ? The slave-holder. The sentiment of mercy is the natural recoil which the laws of the universe provide to protect man-kind from destruction by savage passions. And our blind statesmen go up and down, with committees of vigilance and safety, hunting for the origin of this new heresy. They will need a very vigilant committee indeed to find its birthplace, and a very strong force to root it out. For the arch-abolitionist, older than Brown, and older than the Shenandoah Mountains, is Love, whose other name is Justice, which was before Alfred, before Lycurgus, before slavery, and will be after it.'

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XII Theodore Parker

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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XII
THEODORE PARKER
AN ADDRESS AT THE MEMORIAL MEETING AT THE
MUSIC HALL, BOSTON, JUNE 15, 1860

THEODORE PARKER

"HERE comes Parker, the Orson of parsons, a man
Whom the Church undertook to put under her ban.--

There's a background of God to each hard-working feature,
Every word that he speaks has been fierily furnaced
In the blast of a life that has struggled in earnest:
There he stands, looking more like a ploughman than priest,
If not dreadfully awkward, not graceful at least;

But his periods fall on you, stroke after stroke,
Like the blows of a lumberer felling an oak,
You forget the man wholly, you're thankful to meet
With a preacher who smacks of the field and the street,
And to hear, you're not over-particular whence,
Almost Taylor's profusion, quite Latimer's sense."
- LOWELL, A Fable for Critics.

THEODORE PARKER

AT the death of a good and admirable per-son we meet to console and animate each other by the
recollection of his virtues.

I have the feeling that every man's biography is at his own expense. He furnishes not only the facts but
the report. I mean that all biography is autobiography. It is only what he tells of himself that comes to
be known and believed. In Plutarch's lives of Alexander and Pericles, you have the secret whispers of
their confidence to their lovers and trusty friends. For it was each report of this kind that impressed
those to whom it was told in a manner to secure its being told everywhere to the best, to those who
speak with authority to their own times and therefore to ours. For the political rule is a cosmical rule,
that if a man is not strong in his own district, he is not a good candidate else-where.

He whose voice will not be heard here again could well afford to tell his experiences ; they were all
honorable to him, and were part of the history of the civil and religious liberty of his times. Theodore
Parker was a son of the soil, charged with the energy of New England, strong, eager, inquisitive of
knowledge, of a diligence that never tired, upright, of a haughty independence, yet the gentlest of
companions ; a man of study, fit for a man of the world; with decided opinions and plenty of power to
state them ; rapidly pushing his studies so far as to leave few men qualified to sit as his critics.' He
elected his part of duty, or accepted nobly that assigned him in his rare constitution. Wonderful
acquisition of knowledge, a rapid wit that heard all, and welcomed all that came, by seeing its

bearing. Such was the largeness of his reception of facts and his skill to employ them that it looked as if he were some president of council to whom a score of telegraphs were ever bringing in reports ; and his information would have been excessive, but for the noble use he made of it ever in the interest of humanity. He had a strong understanding, a logical method, a love for facts, a rapid eye for their historic relations, and a skill in stripping them of traditional lustres. He had a sprightly fancy, and often amused himself with throwing his meaning into pretty apologues ; yet we can hardly ascribe to his mind the poetic element, though his scholar-ship had made him a reader and quoter of verses. A little more feeling of the poetic significance of his facts would have disqualified him for some of his severer offices to his generation. The old religions have a charm for most minds which it is a little uncanny to disturb. 'T is sometimes a question, shall we not leave them to decay without rude shocks? I remember that I found some harshness in his treatment both of Greek and of Hebrew antiquity, and sympathized with the pain of many good people in his auditory, whilst I acquitted him, of course, of any wish to be flippant. He came at a time when, to the irresistible march of opinion, the forms still retained by the most advanced sects showed loose and lifeless, and he, with something less of affectionate attachment to the old, or with more vigorous logic, rejected them. 'T is objected to him that he scattered too many illusions. Perhaps more tenderness would have been graceful ; but it is vain to charge him with perverting the opinions of the new generation.

The opinions of men are organic. Simply, those came to him who found themselves expressed by him. And had they not met this en-lightened mind, in which they beheld their own opinions combined with zeal in every cause of love and humanity, they would have suspected their opinions and suppressed them, and so sunk into melancholy or malignity - a feeling of loneliness and hostility to what was reckoned respect-able. 'T is plain to me that he has achieved a historic immortality here ; that he has so woven himself in these few years into the history of Boston, that he can never be left out of your annals. It will not be in the acts of city councils, nor of obsequious mayors ; nor, in the state-house, the proclamations of governors, with their failing virtue - failing them at critical moments - that coming generations will study what really befell ; but in the plain lessons of Theodore Parker in this Music Hall, in Faneuil Hall, or in legislative committee rooms, that the true temper and authentic record of these days will be read. The next generation will care little for the chances of elections that govern governors now, it will care little for fine gentlemen who behaved shabbily ; but it will read very intelligently in his rough story, fortified with exact anecdotes, precise with names and dates, what part was taken by each actor ; who threw himself into the cause of humanity and came to the rescue of civilization at a hard pinch, and who blocked its course.

The vice charged against America is the want of sincerity in leading men. It does not lie at his door. He never kept back the truth for fear to make an enemy. .But, on the other hand, it was complained that he was bitter and harsh, that his zeal burned with too hot a flame. It is so difficult, in evil times, to escape this charge ! for the faithful preacher most of all. It was his merit, like Luther, Knox and Latimer, and John Baptist, to speak tart truth, when that was peremptory and when there were few to say it. But his sympathy for goodness was not less energetic. One fault he had, he overestimated his friends, - I may well say it, - and sometimes vexed them with the importunity of his good opinion, whilst they knew better the ebb which follows unfounded praise. He was capable, it must be said, of the most unmeasured eulogies on those he es-teemed, especially if he had any jealousy that they did not stand with the Boston public as highly as they ought. His commanding merit as a reformer is this, that he insisted beyond all men in pulpits - I cannot think of one rival - that the essence of Christianity is its practical morals ; it is there for use, or it is nothing; and if you combine it with sharp trading, or with ordinary city ambitions to gloze over municipal corruptions, or private intemperance, or successful fraud, or immoral politics, or unjust wars, or the cheating of Indians, or the robbery of frontier nations, or leaving your principles at home to follow on the high seas or in Europe a supple

complaisance to tyrants, - it is a hypocrisy, and the truth is not in you ; and no love of religious music or of dreams of Swedenborg, or praise of John Wesley, or of Jeremy Taylor, can save you from the Satan which you are.

His ministry fell on a political crisis also ; on the years when Southern slavery broke over its old banks, made new and vast pretensions, and wrung from the weakness or treachery of North-ern people fatal concessions in the Fugitive Slave Bill and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Two days, bitter in the memory of Boston, the days of the rendition of Sims and of Burns, made the occasion of his most remark-able discourses. He kept nothing back. In terrible earnest he denounced the public crime, and meted out to every official, high and low, his due portion.' By the incessant power of his statement, he made and held a party. It was his great service to freedom. He took away the reproach of silent consent that would otherwise have lain against the indignant minority, by uttering in the hour and place wherein these outrages were done, the stern protest.

But whilst I praise this frank speaker, I have no wish to accuse the silence of others. There are men of good powers who have so much sympathy that they must be silent when they are not in sympathy. If you don't agree with them, they know they only injure the truth by speaking. Their faculties will not play them true, and they do not wish to squeak and gibber, and so they shut their mouths. I can readily forgive this, only not the other, the false tongue which makes the worse appear the better cause. There were, of course, multitudes to censure and defame this truth-speaker. But the brave know the brave. Fops, whether in hotels or churches, will utter the fop's opinion, and faintly hope for the salvation of his soul; but his manly enemies, who despised the fops, honored him ; and it is well known that his great hospitable heart was the sanctuary to which every soul conscious of an earnest opinion came for sympathy-alike the brave slave-holder and the brave slave-rescuer. These met in the house of this honest man - for every sound heart loves a responsible person, one who does not in generous company say generous things, and in mean company base things, but says one thing, now cheerfully, now indignantly, but always because he must, and because he sees that, whether he speak or refrain from speech, this is said over him ; and history, nature and all souls testify to the same.

Ah, my brave brother ! it seems as if, in a frivolous age, our loss were immense, and your place cannot be supplied. But you will already be consoled in the transfer of your genius, knowing well that the nature of the world will affirm to all men, in all times, that which for twenty-five years you valiantly spoke ; that the winds of Italy murmur the same truth over your grave ; the winds of America over these bereaved streets ; that the sea which bore your mourners home affirms it, the stars in their courses, and the inspirations of youth; whilst the polished and pleasant traitors to human rights, with perverted learning and disgraced graces, rot and are forgotten with their double tongue saying all that is sordid for the corruption of man.

The sudden and singular eminence of Mr. Parker, the importance of his name and influence, are the verdict of his country to his virtues. We have few such men to lose ; amiable and blameless at home, feared abroad as the standard-bearer of liberty, taking all the duties he could grasp, and more, refusing to spare himself, he has gone down in early glory to his grave, to be a living and enlarging power, wherever learning, wit, honest valor and independence are honored.

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XIII American Civilization

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XIII

AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

To the mizzen, the main, and the fore
 Up with it once more! -
 The old tri-color,
 The ribbon of power,
 The white, blue and red which the nations adore!
 It was down at half-mast For a grief- that is past!
 To the emblem of glory no sorrow can last!

AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

USE, labor of each for all, is the health and virtue of all beings. Ich dien, I serve, is a truly royal motto. And it is the mark of nobleness to volunteer the lowest service, the greatest spirit only attaining to humility. Nay, God is God because he is the servant of all. Well, now here comes this conspiracy of slavery, - they call it an institution, I call it a destitution, - this stealing of men and setting them to work, stealing their labor, and the thief sitting idle himself; and for two or three ages it has lasted, and has yielded a certain quantity of rice, cotton and sugar. And, standing on this doleful experience, these people have endeavored to reverse the natural sentiments of man-kind, and to pronounce labor disgraceful, and the well-being of a man to consist in eating the fruit of other men's labor. Labor : a man coins himself into his labor; turns his day, his strength, his thought, his affection into some product which remains as the visible sign of his power ; and to protect that, to secure that to him, to secure his past self to his future self, is the object of all government. There is no interest in any country so imperative as that of labor; it covers all, and constitutions and governments exist for that, -- to protect and insure it to the laborer. All honest men are daily striving to earn their bread by their industry. And who is this who tosses his empty head at this blessing in disguise, the constitution of human nature, and calls labor vile, and insults the faithful workman at his daily toil? I see for such madness no hellebore, - for such calamity no solution but servile war and the Africanization of the country that permits it.

At this moment in America the aspects of political society absorb attention. In every house, from Canada to the Gulf, the children ask the serious father, - " What is the news of the war to-day, and when will there be better times? " The boys have no new clothes, no gifts, no journeys; the girls must go without new bonnets ; boys and girls find their education, this year, less liberal and complete.' All the little hopes that heretofore made the year pleasant are deferred. The state of the country fills us with anxiety and stern duties. We have attempted to hold together two states of civilization: a higher state, where labor and the tenure of land and the right of suffrage are democratical ; and a lower state, in which the old military tenure of prisoners or slaves, and of power and land in a few hands, makes an oligarchy : we have attempted to hold these two states of society under one law. But the rude and early state of society does not work well with the later, nay, works badly, and has poisoned politics, public morals and social intercourse in the Republic, now for many years.

The times put this question: Why cannot the best civilization be extended over the whole country, since the disorder of the less-civilized portion menaces the existence of the country ? Is this secular progress we have described, this evolution of man to the highest powers, only to give him sensibility, and not to bring duties with it? Is he not to make his knowledge practical? to stand and to withstand?

Is not civilization heroic also? Is it not for action? has it not a will? "There are periods," said Niebuhr, "when something much better than happiness and security of life is attainable." We live in a new and exceptionable age. America is another word for Opportunity. Our whole history appears like a last effort of the Divine Providence in behalf of the human race ; and a literal, slavish following of precedents, as by a justice of the peace, is not for those who at this hour lead the destinies of this people. The evil you contend with has taken alarming proportions, and you still content yourself with parrying the blows it aims, but, as if enchanted, abstain from striking at the cause.¹

If the American people hesitate, it is not for want of warning or advices. The telegraph has been swift enough to announce our disasters. The journals have not suppressed the extent of the calamity. Neither was there any want of argument or of experience. If the war brought any surprise to the North, it was not the fault of sentinels on the watch-tower, who had furnished full details of the designs, the muster and the means of the enemy. Neither was anything concealed of the theory or practice of slavery. To what purpose make more big books of these statistics ? There are already mountains of facts, if any one wants them. But people do not want them. They bring their opinion into the world. If they have a comatose tendency in the brain, they are pro-slavery while they live; if of a nervous sanguineous temperament, they are abolitionists. Then interests were never persuaded. Can you convince the shoe interest, or the iron interest, or the cotton interest, by reading passages from Milton or Montesquieu? You wish to satisfy people that slavery is bad economy. Why, the Edinburgh Review pounded on that string, and made out its case, forty years ago. A democratic statesman said to me, long since, that, if he owned the state of Kentucky, he would manumit* all the slaves, and be a gainer by the transaction. Is this new ? No, every-body knows it. As a general economy it is admitted. But there is no one owner of the state, but a good many small owners. One man owns land and slaves ; another owns slaves only. Here is a woman who has no other property, - like a lady in Charleston I knew of, who owned fifteen sweeps and rode in her carriage. It is clearly a vast inconvenience to each of these to make any change, and they are fretful and talkative, and all their friends are ; and those less interested are inert, and, from want of thought, averse to innovation. It is like free trade, certainly the interest of nations, but by no means the interest of certain towns and districts, which tariff feeds fat ; and the eager interest of the few overpowers the apathetic general conviction of the many. Banknotes rob the public, but are such a daily convenience that we silence our scruples and make believe they are gold. So imposts are the cheap and right taxation ; but, by the dislike of people to pay out a direct tax, governments are forced to render life costly by making them pay twice as much, hidden in the price of tea and sugar.

In this national crisis, it is not argument that we want, but that rare courage which dares commit itself to a principle, believing that Nature is its ally, and will create the instruments it re-quires, and more than make good any petty and injurious profit which it may disturb. There neyer was such a combination as this of ours, and the rules to meet it are not set down in any history. We want men of original perception and original action, who can open their eyes wider than to a nationality, namely, to considerations of benefit to the human race, can act in the interest of civilization. Government must not be a parish clerk, a justice of the peace. It has, of necessity, in any crisis of the state, the absolute powers of a dictator. The existing administration is entitled to the utmost candor. It is to be thanked for its angelic virtue, compared with any executive experiences with which we have been familiar. But the times will not allow us to indulge in compliment. I wish I saw in the people that inspiration which, if government would not obey the same, would leave the government behind and create on the moment the means and executors it wanted. Better the war should more dangerously threaten us, - should threaten fracture in what is still whole, and punish us with burned capitals and slaughtered regiments, and so exasperate the people to energy, exasperate our nationality. There are Scriptures written invisibly on men's hearts, whose letters do not come out until they are enraged.

They can be read by war-fires, and by eyes in the last peril.

We cannot but remember that there have been days in American history, when, if the free states had done their duty, slavery had been blocked by an immovable barrier, and our recent calamities forever precluded. The free states yielded, and every compromise was surrender and invited new demands. Here again is a new occasion which heaven offers to sense and virtue. It looks as if we held the fate of the fairest possession of mankind in our hands, to be saved by our firmness or to be lost by hesitation.

The one power that has legs long enough and strong enough to wade across the Potomac offers itself at this hour ; the one strong enough to bring all the civility up to the height of that which is best, prays now at the door of Congress for leave to move. Emancipation is the demand of civilization. That is a principle ; everything else is an intrigue. This is a progressive policy, puts the whole people in healthy, productive, amiable position, puts every man in the South in just and natural relations with every man in the North, laborer with laborer.

I shall not attempt to unfold the details of the project of emancipation. It has been stated with great ability by several of its leading advocates. I will only advert to some leading points of the argument, at the risk of repeating the reasons of others. The war is welcome to the Southerner ; a chivalrous sport to him, like hunting, and suits his semi-civilized condition. On the climbing scale of progress, he is just up to war, and has never appeared to such advantage as in the last twelvemonth. It does not suit us. We are advanced some ages on the war-state, - to trade, art and general cultivation. His laborer works for him at home, so that he loses no labor by the war. All our soldiers are laborers ; so that the South, with its inferior numbers, is almost on a footing in effective war-population with the North. Again, as long as we fight without any affirmative step taken by the government, any word intimating forfeiture in the rebel states of their old privileges under the law, they and we fight on the same side, for slavery. Again, if we conquer the enemy, - what then ? We shall still have to keep him under, and it will cost as much to hold him down as it did to get him down. Then comes the summer, and the fever will drive the soldiers home ; next winter we must begin at the beginning, and conquer him over again. What use then to take a fort, or a privateer, or get possession of an inlet, or to capture a regiment of rebels ?

But one weapon we hold which is sure. Congress can, by edict, as a part of the military defence which it is the duty of Congress to provide, abolish slavery, and pay for such slaves as we ought to pay for. Then the slaves near our armies will come to us ; those in the interior will know in a week what their rights are, and will, where opportunity offers, prepare to take them. Instantly, the armies that now confront you must run home to protect their estates, and must stay there, and your enemies will disappear.

There can be no safety until this step is taken. We fancy that the endless debate, emphasized by the crime and by the cannons of this war, has brought the free states to some conviction that it can never go well with us whilst this mischief of slavery remains in our politics, and that by concert or by might we must put an end to it. But we have too much experience of the futility of an easy reliance on the momentary good dispositions of the public. There does exist, perhaps, a popular will that the Union shall not be broken, - that our trade, and therefore our laws, must have the whole breadth of the continent, and from Canada to the Gulf. But since this is the rooted belief and will of the people, so much the more are they in danger, when impatient of defeats, or impatient of taxes, to go with a rush for some peace ; and what kind of peace shall at that moment be easiest attained, they will make concessions for it, - will give up the slaves, and the whole torment of the past half-century will come back to be endured anew.

Neither do I doubt, if such a composition should take place, that the Southerners will come back quietly and politely, leaving their haughty dictation. It will be an era of good feelings. There will be a lull after so loud a

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storm ; and, no doubt, there will be discreet men from that section who will earnestly strive to inaugurate more moderate and fair administration of the government, and the North will for a time have its full share and more, in place and counsel. But this will not last ;- not for want of sincere good will in sensible Southerners, but because Slavery will again speak through them its harsh necessity. It cannot live but by injustice, and it will be unjust and violent to the end of the world.'

The power of Emancipation is this, that it alters the atomic social constitution of the Southern people. Now, their interest is in keeping out white labor; then, when they must pay wages, their interest will be to let it in, to get the best labor, and, if they fear their blacks, to invite Irish, German and American laborers. Thus, whilst Slavery makes and keeps disunion, Emancipation removes the whole objection to union. Emancipation at one stroke elevates the poor-white of the South, and identifies his interest with that of the Northern laborer.

Now, in the name of all that is simple and generous, why should not this great right be done ? Why should not America be capable of a second stroke for the well-being of the human race, as eighty or ninety years ago she was for the first, - of an affirmative step in the interests of human civility, urged on her, too, not by any romance of sentiment, but by her own extreme perils ? It is very certain that the statesman who shall break through the cobwebs of doubt, fear and petty cavil that lie in the way, will be greeted by the unanimous thanks of mankind. Men reconcile themselves very fast to a bold and good measure when once it is taken, though they condemned it in advance. A week before the two captive commissioners were surrendered to England, every one thought it could not be done : it would divide the North. It was done, and in two days all agreed it was the right action.' And this action, which costs so little (the parties injured by it being such a handful that they can very easily be indemnified), rids the world, at one stroke, of this degrading nuisance, the cause of war and ruin to nations. This measure at once puts all parties right. This is borrowing, as I said, the omnipotence of a principle. What is so foolish as the terror lest the blacks should be made furious by freedom and wages ? It is denying these that is the outrage, and makes the danger from the blacks. But justice satisfies everybody, -white man, red man, yellow man and black man. All like wages, and the appetite grows by feeding.

But this measure, to be effectual, must come speedily. The weapon is slipping out of our hands. " Time," say the Indian Scriptures, " drinketh up the essence of every great and noble action which ought to be performed, and which is delayed in the execution." '

I hope it is not a fatal objection to this policy that it is simple and beneficent thoroughly, which is the tribute of a moral action. An unprecedented material prosperity has not tended to make us Stoics or Christians. But the laws by which the universe is organized reappear at every point, and will rule it. The end of all political struggle is to establish morality as the basis of all legislation. It is not free institutions, it is not a republic, it is not a democracy, that is the end, - no, but only the means. Morality is the object of government.² We want a state of things in which crime shall not pay. This is the consolation on which we rest in the darkness of the future and the afflictions of to-day, that the government of the world is moral, and does forever destroy what is not. It is the maxim of natural philosophers that the natural forces wear out in time all obstacles, and take place : and it is the

maxim of history that victory always falls at last where it ought to fall ; or, there is perpetual march and progress to ideas. But in either case, no link of the chain can drop out. Nature works through her appointed elements ; and ideas must work through the brains and the arms of good and brave men, or they are no better than dreams.

Since the above pages were written, President Lincoln has proposed to Congress that the government shall cooperate with any state that shall enact a gradual abolishment of slavery. In the recent series of national successes, this message is the best. It marks the happiest day in the political year. The American Executive ranges itself for the first time on the side of freedom. If Congress has been backward, the President has advanced. This state-paper is the more interesting that it appears to be the President's individual act, done under a strong sense of duty. He speaks his own thought in his own style. All thanks and honor to the Head of the State ! The message has been received throughout the country with praise, and, we doubt not, with more pleasure than has been spoken. If Congress accords with the President, it is not yet too late to begin the emancipation ; but we think it will always be too late to make it gradual. All experience agrees that it should be immediate.¹ More and better than the President has spoken shall, perhaps, the effect of this message be, - but, we are sure, not more or better than he hoped in his heart, when, thoughtful of all the complexities of his position, he penned these cautious words.

* manumit: to set free

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XIV The Emancipation Proclamation



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XIV THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED IN BOSTON IN SEPTEMBER, 1862

TO-DAY unbind the captive,
So only are ye unbound;
Lift up a people from the dust,
Trump of their rescue, sound!

Pay ransom to the owner
And fill the bag to the brim.
Who is the owner? The slave is owner,
And ever was. Pay him.

O North! give him beauty for rags,
And honor, O South! for his shame;
Nevada! coin thy golden crags
With freedom's image and name.

Up! and the dusky race
That sat in darkness long,-
Be swift their feet as antelopes,
And as behemoth strong.

Come, East and West and North,
By races, as snow-flakes,
And carry my purpose forth,
Which neither halts nor shakes.

My will fulfilled shall be,
For in daylight or in dark,
My thunderbolt has eyes to see
His way home to the mark.

THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

IN so many arid forms which states encrust themselves with, once in a century, if so often, a poetic act and record occur. These are the jets of thought into affairs, when, roused by danger or inspired by genius, the political leaders of the day break the else insurmountable routine of class and local legislation, and take a step forward in the direction of catholic and universal interests. Every step in the history of political liberty is a sally of the human mind into the untried Future, and has the interest of genius, and is fruitful in heroic anecdotes. Liberty is a slow fruit. It comes, like religion, for short

periods, and in rare conditions, as if awaiting a culture of the race which shall make it organic and permanent. Such moments of expansion in modern history were the Confession of Augsburg, the plantation of America, the English Commonwealth of 1648, the Declaration of American Independence in 1776, the British emancipation of slaves in the West Indies, the passage of the Reform Bill, the repeal of the Corn-Laws, the Magnetic Ocean Telegraph, though yet imperfect, the passage of the Homestead Bill in the last Congress, and now, eminently, President Lincoln's Proclamation on the twenty-second of September. These are acts of great scope, working on a long future and on permanent interests, and honoring alike those who initiate and those who receive them. These measures provoke no noisy joy, but are received into a sympathy so deep as to apprise us that mankind are greater and better than we know.¹ At such times it appears as if a new public were created to greet the new event. It is as when an orator, having ended the compliments and pleasantries with which he conciliated attention, and having run over the superficial fitness and commodities of the measure he urges, suddenly, lending himself to some happy inspiration, announces with vibrating voice the grand human principles involved ; - the bravos and wits who greeted him loudly thus far are surprised and overawed ; a new audience is found in the heart of the assembly, - an audience hitherto passive and unconcerned, now at last so searched and kindled that they come forward, every one a representative of mankind, standing for all nationalities.

The extreme moderation with which the President advanced to his design, - his long-avowed expectant policy, as if he chose to be strictly the executive of the best public sentiment of the country, waiting only till it should be unmistakably pronounced, -so fair a mind that none ever listened so patiently to such extreme varieties of opinion,-so reticent that his decision has taken all parties by surprise, whilst yet it is just the sequel of his prior acts, - the firm tone in which he announces it, without inflation or surplusage, - all these have be-spoken such favor to the act that, great as the popularity of the President has been, we are beginning to think that we have underestimated the capacity and virtue which the Divine Providence has made an instrument of benefit so vast. He has been permitted to do more for America than any other American man. He is well entitled to the most indulgent construction. Forget all that we thought shortcomings, every mistake, every delay. In the extreme embarrassments of his part, call these endurance, wisdom, magnanimity ; illuminated, as they now are, by this dazzling success.

When we consider the immense opposition that has been neutralized or converted by the progress of the war (for it is not long since the President anticipated the resignation of a large number of officers in the army, and the secession of three states, on the promulgation of this policy), - when we see how the great stake which foreign nations hold in our affairs has recently brought every European power as a client into this court, and it became every day more apparent what gigantic and what remote interests were to be affected by the decision of the President, - one can hardly say the deliberation was too long. Against all timorous counsels he had the courage to seize the moment ; and such was his position, and such the felicity attending the action, that he has replaced government in the good graces of mankind. " Better is virtue in the sovereign than plenty in the season," say the Chinese. 'T is wonderful what power is, and how ill it is used, and how its ill use makes life mean, and the sunshine dark. Life in America had lost much of its attraction in the later years. The virtues of a good magistrate undo a world of mischief, and, because Nature works with rectitude, seem vastly more potent than the acts of bad governors, which are ever tempered by the good nature in the people, and the incessant resistance which fraud and violence encounter. The acts of good governors work a geometrical ratio, as one midsummer day seems to repair the damage of a year of war.

A day which most of us dared not hope to see, an event worth the dreadful war, worth its costs and uncertainties, seems now to be close before us. October, November, December will have passed over

beating hearts and plotting brains : then the hour will strike, and all men of African descent who have faculty enough to find their way to our lines are assured of the protection of American law.

It is by no means necessary that this measure should be suddenly marked by any signal results on the negroes or on the rebel masters. The force of the act is that it commits the country to this justice, - that it compels the innumerable officers, civil, military, naval, of the Republic to range themselves on the line of this equity. It draws the fashion to this side. It is not a measure that admits of being taken back. Done, it cannot be undone by a new administration. For slavery overpowers the disgust of the moral sentiment only through immemorial usage. It cannot be introduced as an improvement of the nineteenth century. This act makes that the lives of our heroes have not been sacrificed in vain. It makes a victory of our defeats. Our hurts are healed ; the health of the nation is repaired. With a victory like this, we can stand many disasters. It does not promise the redemption of the black race ; that lies not with us : but it relieves it of our opposition. The President by this act has paroled all the slaves in America; they will no more fight against us : and it relieves our race once for all of its crime and false position. The first condition of success is secured in putting ourselves right. We have recovered ourselves from our false position, and planted ourselves on a law of Nature : -

" If that fail,
The pillared firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble."

The government has assured itself of the best constituency in the world : every spark of intellect, every virtuous feeling, every religious heart, every man of honor, every poet, every philosopher, the generosity of the cities, the health of the country, the strong arms of the mechanic, the endurance of farmers, the passionate con-science of women, the sympathy of distant nations, - all rally to its support.

Of course, we are assuming the firmness of the policy thus declared. It must not be a paper proclamation. We confide that Mr. Lincoln is in earnest, and as he has been slow in making up his mind, has resisted the importunacy of parties and of events to the latest moment, he will be as absolute in his adhesion. Not only will he repeat and follow up his stroke, but the nation will add its irresistible strength. If the ruler has duties, so has the citizen. In times like these, when the nation is imperilled, what man can, without shame, receive good news from day to day without giving good news of himself? What right has any one to read in the journals tidings of victories, if he has not bought them by his own valor, treasure, personal sacrifice, or by service as good in his own department? With this blot removed from our national honor, this heavy load lifted off the national heart, we shall not fear henceforward to show our faces among mankind. We shall cease to be hypocrites and pretenders, but what we have styled our free institutions will be such.'

In the light of this event the public distress begins to be removed. What if the brokers' quotations show our stocks discredited, and the gold dollar costs one hundred and twenty-seven cents? These tables are fallacious. Every acre in the free states gained substantial value on the twenty-second of September. The cause of disunion and war has been reached and begun to be removed. Every man's house-lot and garden are relieved of the malaria which the purest winds and strongest sunshine could not penetrate and purge. The territory of the Union shines to-day with a lustre which every European emigrant can discern from far; a sign of inmost security and permanence. Is it feared that taxes will check immigration ? That depends on what the taxes are spent for. If they go to fill up this yawning Dismal Swamp, which engulfed armies and populations, and created plague, and neutralized hitherto all the vast capabilities of this continent, - then this taxation, which makes the land wholesome and

habitable, and will draw all men unto it, is the best investment in which property-holder ever lodged his earnings.

Whilst we have pointed out the opportuneness of the Proclamation, it remains to be said that the President had no choice. He might look wistfully for what variety of courses lay open to him ; every line but one was closed up with fire. This one, too, bristled with danger, but through it was the sole safety. The measure he has adopted was imperative. It is wonderful to see the unseasonable senility of what is called the Peace Party, through all its masks, blinding their eyes to the main feature of the war, namely, its inevitableness. The war existed long before the cannonade of Sumter, and could not be postponed. It might have begun otherwise or elsewhere, but war was in the minds and bones of the combat-ants, it was written on the iron leaf, and you might as easily dodge gravitation. If we had consented to a peaceable secession of the rebels, the divided sentiment of the border states made peaceable secession impossible, the insatiable temper of the South made it impossible, and the slaves on the border, wherever the border might be, were an incessant fuel to rekindle the fire. Give the Confederacy New Orleans, Charleston, and Richmond, and they would have demanded St. Louis and Baltimore. Give them these, and they would have insisted on Washington. Give them Washington, and they would have assumed the army and navy, and, through these, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. It looks as if the battle-field would have been at least as large in that event as it is now. The war was formidable, but could not be avoided. The war was and is an immense mischief, but brought with it the immense benefit of drawing a line and rallying the free states to fix it impassably, - pre-venting the whole force of Southern influence throughout the North from distracting every city with endless confusion, detaching that force and reducing it to handfuls, and, in the progress of hostilities, disinfecting us of our habitual proclivity, through the affection of trade and the traditions of the Democratic party, to follow Southern leading.'

These necessities which have dictated the conduct of the federal government are overlooked especially by our foreign critics. The popular statement of the opponents of the war abroad is the impossibility of our success. " If you could add," say they, " to your strength the whole army of England, of France and of Austria, you could not coerce eight millions of people to come under this government against their will." This is an odd thing for an Englishman, a Frenchman or an Austrian to say, who remembers Europe of the last seventy years, - the condition of Italy, until 1859, - of Poland, since 1793, - of France, of French Algiers, -of British Ireland, and British India. But granting the truth, rightly read, of the historical aphorism, that " the people always conquer," it is to be noted that, in the Southern States, the tenure of land and the local laws, with slavery, give the social system not a democratic but an aristocratic complexion ; and those states have shown every year a more hostile and aggressive temper, until the instinct of self-preservation forced us into the war. And the aim of the war on our part is indicated by the aim of the President's Proclamation, namely, to break up the false combination of Southern society, to destroy the piratic feature in it which makes it our enemy only as it is the enemy of the human race, and so allow its reconstruction on a just and healthful basis. Then new affinities will act, the old repulsion will cease, and, the cause of war being removed, Nature and trade may be trusted to establish a lasting peace.

We think we cannot overstate the wisdom and benefit of this act of the government. The malignant cry of the Secession press within the free states, and the recent action of the Con-federate Congress, are decisive as to its efficiency and correctness of aim. Not less so is the silent joy which has greeted it in all generous hearts, and the new hope it has breathed into the world. It was well to delay the steamers at the wharves until this edict could be put on board. It will be an insurance to the ship as it goes plunging through the sea with glad tidings to all people. Happy are the young, who find the pestilence cleansed out of the earth, leaving open to them an honest career. Happy the old, who see

Nature purified before they depart. Do not let the dying die : hold them back to this world, until you have charged their ear and heart with this message to other spiritual societies, announcing the melioration of our planet :--

" Uncertainties now crown themselves assured, And Peace proclaims olives of endless age." '

Meantime that ill-fated, much-injured race which the Proclamation respects will lose some-what of the dejection sculptured for ages in their bronzed countenance, uttered in the wailing of their plaintive music, - a race naturally benevolent, docile, industrious, and whose very miseries sprang from their great talent for usefulness, which, in a more moral age, will not only defend their independence, but will give them a rank among nations.2

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XV Abraham Lincoln

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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XV

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

REMARKS AT THE FUNERAL SERVICES HELD IN CONCORD, APRIL 19, 1865

" NATURE, they say, doth dote,
And cannot make a man
Save on some worn-out plan,
Repeating us by rote:
For him her Old-World moulds aside she threw,
And, choosing sweet clay from the breast
Of the unexhausted West,
'With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.
How beautiful to see
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,
Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;
One whose meek flock the people joyed to be,
Not lured by any cheat of birth,
But by his clear-grained human worth,
And brave old wisdom of sincerity!
They knew that outward grace is dust;
They could not choose but trust
In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering skill,
And supple-tempered will
That bent, like perfect steel, to spring again and thrust.

Nothing of Europe here,
Or, then, of Europe fronting mornward still,
Ere any names of Serf and Peer
Could Nature's equal scheme deface; . .
Here was a type of the true elder race,
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face."
LOWELL, Commemoration Ode.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WE meet under the gloom of a calamity which darkens down over the minds of good men in all civil society, as the fearful tidings travel over sea, over land, from country to country, like the shadow of an uncalculated eclipse over the planet. Old as history is, and manifold as are its tragedies, I doubt if any death has caused so much pain to mankind as this has caused, or will cause, on its announcement ; and this, not so much because nations are by modern arts brought so closely together, as because of the mysterious hopes and fears which, in the present day, are connected with the name and institutions of America.

In this country, on Saturday, every one was struck dumb, and saw at first only deep below deep, as he meditated on the ghastly blow. And perhaps, at this hour, when the coffin which contains the dust of the President sets forward on its long march through mourning states, on its way to his home in Illinois, we might well be silent, and suffer the awful voices of the time to thunder to us. Yes, but that first despair was brief: the man was not so to be mourned. He was the most active and hopeful of men; and his work had not perished: but acclamations of praise for the task he had accomplished burst out into a song of triumph, which even tears for his death cannot keep down.

The President stood before us as a man of the people. He was thoroughly American, had never crossed the sea, had never been spoiled by English insularity or French dissipation ; a quite native, aboriginal man, as an acorn from the oak ; no aping of foreigners, no frivolous accomplishments, Kentuckian born, working on a farm, a flatboatman, a captain in the Black Hawk War, a country lawyer, a representative in the rural legislature of Illinois ;- on such modest foundations the broad structure of his fame was laid. How slowly, and yet by happily prepared steps, he came to his place. All of us remember - it is only a history of five or six years - the surprise and the disappointment of the country at his first nomination by the convention at Chicago. Mr. Seward, then in the culmination of his good fame, was the favorite of the Eastern States. And when the new and comparatively unknown name of Lincoln was announced (notwithstanding the report of the acclamations of that convention), we heard the result coldly and sadly. It seemed too rash, on a purely local reputation, to build so grave a trust in such anxious times ; and men naturally talked of the chances in politics as in-calculable. But it turned out not to be chance. The profound good opinion which the people of Illinois and of the West had conceived of him, and which they had imparted to their col-leagues, that they also might justify themselves to their constituents at home, was not rash, though they did not begin to know the riches of his worth.'

A plain man of the people, an extraordinary fortune attended him. He offered no shining qualities at the first encounter ; he did not offend by superiority. He had a face and manner which disarmed suspicion, which inspired confidence, which confirmed good will. He was a man without vices. He had a strong sense of duty, which it was very easy for him to obey. Then, he had what farmers call a long head ; was excellent in working out the sum for him-self; in arguing his case and convincing you fairly and firmly. Then, it turned out that he was a great worker ; had prodigious faculty of performance ; worked easily. A good worker is so rare ; everybody has some disabling quality. In a host of young men that start together and promise so many brilliant leaders for the next age, each fails on trial ; one by bad health, one by conceit, or by love of pleasure, or lethargy, or an ugly temper, - each has some disqualifying fault that throws him out of the career. But this man was sound to the core, cheerful, persistent, all right for labor, and liked nothing so well.

Then, he had a vast good nature, which made him tolerant and accessible to all ; fair-minded, leaning to the claim of the petitioner ; affable, and not sensible to the affliction which the innumerable visits paid to him when President would have brought to any one else.' And how this good nature became a noble humanity, in many a tragic case which the events of the war brought to him, every one will remember; and with what increasing tenderness he dealt when a whole race was thrown on his compassion. The poor negro said of him, on an impressive occasion, " Massa Linkum am eberywhere." Then his broad good humor, running easily into jocular talk, in which he delighted and in which he excelled, was a rich gift to this wise man. It enabled him to keep his secret; to meet every kind of man and every rank in society ; to take off the edge of the severest decisions ; to mask his own purpose and sound his companion ; and to catch with true instinct the temper of every company he addressed. And, more than all, it is to a man of severe labor, in anxious and exhausting crises, the natural restorative, good as sleep, and is the protection of the overdriven brain against rancor and in-sanity.

He is the author of a multitude of good sayings, so disguised as pleasantries that it is certain they had no reputation at first but as jests ; and only later, by the very acceptance and adoption they find in the mouths of millions, turn out to be the wisdom of the hour. I am sure if this man had ruled in a period of less facility of printing, he would have become mythological in a very few years, like Æsop or Pilpay, or one of the Seven Wise Masters, by his fables and proverbs. But the weight and penetration of many passages in his letters, messages and speeches, hidden now by the very closeness of their application to the moment, are destined hereafter to wide fame. What pregnant definitions ; what unerring common sense ; what fore-sight ; and, on great occasion, what lofty, and more than national, what humane tone ! His brief speech at Gettysburg will not easily be surpassed by words on any recorded occasion. This, and one other American speech, that of John Brown to the court that tried him, and a part of Kossuth's speech at Birmingham, can only be compared with each other, and with no fourth.

His occupying the chair of state was a triumph of the good sense of mankind, and of the public conscience. This middle-class country had got a middle-class president, at last. Yes, in manners and sympathies, but not in powers, for his powers were superior. This man grew according to the need. His mind mastered the problem of the day ; and as the problem grew, so did his comprehension of it. Rarely was man so fitted to the event. In the midst of fears and jealousies, in the Babel of counsels and parties, this man wrought incessantly with all his might and all his honesty, laboring to find what the people wanted, and how to obtain that. It cannot be said there is any exaggeration of his worth. If ever a man was fairly tested, he was. There was no lack of resistance, nor of slander, nor of ridicule. The times have allowed no state secrets ; the nation has been in such ferment, such multitudes had to be trusted, that no secret could be kept. Every door was ajar, and we know all that be-fell.

Then, what an occasion was the whirlwind of the war. Here was place for no holiday magistrate, no fair-weather sailor ; the new pilot was hurried to the helm in a tornado. In four years, - four years of battle-days, - his endurance, his fertility of resources, his magnanimity, were sorely tried and never found wanting. There, by his courage, his justice, his even temper, his fertile counsel, his humanity, he stood a heroic figure in the centre of a heroic epoch. He is the true history of the American people in his time. Step by step he walked before them ; slow with their slowness, quickening his march by theirs, the true representative of this continent ; an entirely public man ; father of his country, the pulse of twenty millions throbbing in his heart, the thought of their minds articulated by his tongue.

Adam Smith remarks that the axe, which in Houbraken's portraits of British kings and worthies is engraved under those who have suffered at the block, adds a certain lofty charm to the picture. And who does not see, even in this tragedy so recent, how fast the terror and ruin of the massacre are already burning into glory around the victim ? Far happier this fate than to have lived to be wished away ; to have watched the decay of his own faculties ; to have seen - perhaps even he - the proverbial ingratitude of statesmen ; to have seen mean men preferred. Had he not lived long enough to keep the greatest promise that ever man made to his fellow men, - the practical abolition of slavery ? He had seen Tennessee, Missouri and Maryland emancipate their slaves. He had seen Savannah, Charleston and Richmond surrendered ; had seen the main army of the rebellion lay down its arms. He had conquered the public opinion of Canada, England and France.¹ Only Washington can compare with him in fortune.

And what if it should turn out, in the unfolding of the web, that he had reached the term ; that this heroic deliverer could no longer serve us ; that the rebellion had touched its natural conclusion, and what remained to be done required new and uncommitted hands, - a new spirit born out of the ashes

of the war ; and that Heaven, wishing to show the world a completed benefactor, shall make him serve his country even more by his death than by his life ? Nations, like kings, are not good by facility and complaisance. " The kindness of kings consists in justice and strength." Easy good nature has been the dangerous foible of the Republic, and it was necessary that its enemies should outrage it, and drive us to unwonted firmness, to secure the salvation of this country in the next ages.

The ancients believed in a serene and beautiful Genius which ruled in the affairs of nations; which, with a slow but stern justice, carried for-ward the fortunes of certain chosen houses, weeding out single offenders or offending families, and securing at last the firm prosperity of the favorites of Heaven. It was too narrow a view of the Eternal Nemesis. There is a serene Providence which rules the fate of nations, which makes little account of time, little of one generation or race, makes no account of disasters, conquers alike by what is called defeat or by what is called victory, thrusts aside enemy and obstruction, crushes everything immoral as in-human, and obtains the ultimate triumph of the best race by the sacrifice of everything which resists the moral laws of the world.' It makes its own instruments, creates the man for the time, trains him in poverty, inspires his genius, and arms him for his task. It has given every race its own talent, and ordains that only that race which combines perfectly with the virtues of all shall endure.'

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XVI Harvard Commemoration Speech



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

HARVARD COMMEMORATION SPEECH

JULY 21, 1865

" ' Old classmate, say
Do you remember our Commencement Day ?
Were we such boys as these at twenty ? ' Nay,
God called them to a nobler task than ours,
And gave them holier thoughts and manlier powers, -
This is the day of fruits and not of flowers!
These boys ' we talk about like ancient sages
Are the same men we read of in old pages -
The bronze recast of dead heroic ages!
We grudge them not, our dearest, bravest, best, -
Let but the quarrel's issue stand contest:
'T is Earth's old slave-God battling for his crown
And Freedom fighting with her visor down."
HOLMES.

MANY loved Truth, and lavished life's best oil
Amid the dust of books to find her,
Content at last, for guerdon of their toil,
With the cast mantle she hath left behind her.
Many in sad faith sought for her,
Many with crossed hands sighed for her;
But these, our brothers, fought for her,
At life's dear peril wrought for her,
So loved her that they died for her,
Tasting the raptured fleetness
Of her divine completeness:
Their higher instinct knew
Those love her best who to themselves are true,
And what they dare to dream of, dare to do;
They followed her and found her
Where all may hope to find,
Not in the ashes of the burnt-out mind,
But beautiful, with danger's sweetness round her.
Where faith made whole with deed
Breathes its awakening breath
Into the lifeless creed,
They saw her plumed and mailed,
With sweet, stern face unveiled,
And all-repaying eyes, look proud on them in death." LOWELL, Commemoration Ode.

HARVARD COMMEMORATION SPEECH

MR. CHAIRMAN, AND GENTLEMEN : With whatever opinion we come here, I think it is not in man to see, without a feeling of pride and pleasure, a tried soldier, the armed defender of the right. I think that in these last years all opinions have been affected by the magnificent and stupendous spectacle which Divine Providence has offered us of the energies that slept in the children of this country, - that slept and have awakened. I see thankfully those that are here, but dim eyes in vain explore for some who are not.

The old Greek Heraclitus said, " War is the Father of all things." He said it, no doubt, as science, but we of this day can repeat it as political and social truth. War passes the power of all chemical solvents, breaking up the old adhesions, and allowing the atoms of society to take a new order. It is not the Government, but the War, that has appointed the good generals, sifted out the pedants, put in the new and vigorous blood. The War has lifted many other people besides Grant and Sherman into their true places. Even Divine Providence, we may say, always seems to work after a certain military necessity. Every nation punishes the General who is not victorious. It is a rule in games of chance that the cards beat all the players, and revolutions disconcert and outwit all the insurgents.

The revolutions carry their own points, some-times to the ruin of those who set them on foot. The proof that war also is within the highest right, is a marked benefactor in the hands of the Divine Providence, is its morale. The war gave back integrity to this erring and immoral nation. It charged with power, peaceful, amiable men, to whose life war and discord were abhorrent. What an infusion of character went out from this and other colleges ! What an infusion of character down to the ranks ! The experience has been uniform that it is the gentle soul that makes the firm hero after all. It is easy to recall the mood in which our young men, snatched from every peaceful pursuit, went to the war. Many of them had never handled a gun. They said, " It is not in me to resist. I go because I must. It is a duty which I shall never forgive myself if I decline. I do not know that I can make a soldier. I may be very clumsy. Perhaps I shall be timid ; but you can rely on me. Only one thing is certain, I can well die, but I cannot afford to misbehave."

In fact the infusion of culture and tender humanity from these scholars and idealists who went to the war in their own despite - God knows they had no fury for killing their old friends and countrymen - had its signal and lasting effect. It was found that enthusiasm was a more potent ally than science and munitions of war without it. " It is a principle of war," said Napoleon, " that when you can use the thunderbolt. you must prefer it to the can-non." Enthusiasm was the thunderbolt. Here in this little Massachusetts, in smaller Rhode Island, in this little nest of New England re-publics it flamed out when the guilty gun was aimed at Sumter.

Mr. Chairman, standing here in Harvard College, the parent of all the colleges ; in Massachusetts, the parent of all the North ; when I consider her influence on the country as a principal planter of the Western States, and now, by her teachers, preachers, journalists and books, as well as by traffic and production, the diffuser of religious, literary and political opinion ; -and when I see how irresistible the convictions of Massachusetts are in these swarming populations, - I think the little state bigger than I knew. When her blood is up, she has a fist big enough to knock down an empire. And her blood was roused. Scholars changed the black coat for the blue. A single company in the Forty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment contained thirty-five sons of Harvard. You all know as well as I the story of these dedicated men, who knew well on what duty they went, - whose fathers and mothers said of each slaughtered son, " We gave him up when he enlisted." One mother said, when her son was offered the command of the first negro regiment, " If he accepts it, I shall be as proud as if I had heard that he

was shot." 1 These men, thus ten-der, thus high-bred, thus peaceable, were always in the front and always employed. They might say, with their forefathers the old Norse Vikings, " We sung the mass of lances from morning until evening." And in how many cases it chanced, when the hero had fallen, they who came by night to his funeral, on the morrow returned to the war-path to show his slayers the way to death !

Ah ! young brothers, all honor and gratitude to you, - you, manly defenders, Liberty's and Humanity's bodyguard ! We shall not again disparage America, now that we have seen what men it will bear. We see - we thank you for it - a new era, worth to mankind all the treasure and all the lives it has cost ; yes, worth to the world the lives of all this generation of American men, if they had been demanded.1

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XVII Dedication of the Soldiers' Monument in Concord



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XVII

ADDRESS

AT THE DEDICATION OF THE SOLDIERS' MONUMENT
IN CONCORD, APRIL 19, 1867

„ THEY have shown what men may do,
They have proved how men may die, -
Count, who can, the fields they have pressed,
Each face to the solemn sky ! "
BROWNELL.

"THINK you these felt no charms
In their gray homesteads and embowered farms ?
In household faces waiting at the door
Their evening step should lighten up no more ?
In fields their boyish feet had known ?
In trees their fathers' hands had set,
And which with them had grown,
Widening each year their leafy coronet ?
Felt they no pang of passionate regret
For those unsolid goods that seem so much our own ?
These things are dear to every man that lives,
And life prized more for what it lends than gives.
Yea, many a tie, through iteration sweet,
Strove to detain their fatal feet;
And yet the enduring half they chose,
Whose choice decides a man life's slave or king,
The invisible things of God before the seen and known: Therefore their memory inspiration blows
With echoes gathering on from zone to zone;
For manhood is the one immortal thing
Beneath Time's changeful sky,
And, where it lightened once, from age to age,
Men come to learn, in grateful pilgrimage,
That length of days is knowing when to die."
LOWELL, Concord Ode.

ADDRESS

DEDICATION OF SOLDIERS' MONUMENT IN CONCORD, APRIL 19, 1867

FELLOW CITIZENS: The day is in Concord doubly our calendar day, as being the anniversary of the invasion of the town by the British troops in 1775, and of the departure of the company of volunteers for Washington, in 186 r. We are all pretty well aware that the facts which make to us the interest of

this day are in a great degree personal and local here; that every other town and city has its own heroes and memorial days, and that we can hardly expect a wide sympathy for the names and anecdotes which we delight to record. We are glad and proud that we have no mono-poly of merit. We are thankful that other towns and cities are as rich ; that the heroes of old and of recent date, who made and kept America free and united, were not rare or solitary growths, but sporadic over vast tracts of the Republic. Yet, as it is a piece of nature and the common sense that the throbbing chord that holds us to our kindred, our friends and our town, is not to be denied or resisted, - no mat-ter how frivolous or unphilosophical its pulses, - we shall cling affectionately to our houses, our river and pastures, and believe that our visitors will pardon us if we take the privilege of talking freely about our nearest neighbors as in a family party ; - well assured, meantime, that the virtues we are met to honor were directed on aims which command the sympathy of ever% loyal American citizen, were exerted for the protection of our common country, and aided its triumph.

The town has thought fit to signify its honor for a few of its sons by raising an obelisk in the square. It is a simple pile enough, -a few slabs of granite, dug just below the surface of the soil, and laid upon the top of it; but as we have learned that the upheaved mountain, from which these discs or flakes were broken, was once a glowing mass at white heat, slowly crystallized, then uplifted by the central fires of the globe : so the roots of the events it appropriately marks are in the heart of the universe. I shall say of this obelisk, planted here in our quiet plains, what Richter says of the volcano in the fair landscape of Naples: " Vesuvius stands in this poem of Nature, and exalts everything, as war does the age.

The art of the architect and the sense of the town have made these dumb stones speak ; have, if I may borrow the old language of the church, converted these elements from a secular to a sacred and spiritual use; have made them look to the past and the future ; have given them a meaning for the imagination and the heart. The sense of the town, the eloquent inscriptions the shaft now bears, the memories of these martyrs, the noble names which yet have gathered only their first fame, whatever good grows to the country out of the war, the largest results, the future power and genius of the land, will go on clothing this shaft with daily beauty and spiritual life. 'T is certain that a plain stone like this, standing on such memories, having no' reference to utilities, but only to the grand instincts of the civil and moral man, mixes with surrounding nature, - by day with the changing seasons, by night the stars roll over it gladly, -becomes a sentiment, a poet, a prophet, an orator, to every townsman and passenger, an altar where the noble youth shall in all time come to make his secret vows.'

The old Monument, a short half-mile from this house, stands to signalize the first Revolution, where the people resisted offensive usurpations, offensive taxes of the British Parliament, claiming that there should be no tax without representation. Instructed by events, after the quarrel began, the Americans took higher ground, and stood for political independence. But in the necessities of the hour, they over-looked the moral law, and winked at a practical exception to the Bill of Rights they had drawn up. They winked at the exception, believing it insignificant. But the moral law, the nature of things, did not wink at it, but kept its eye wide open. It turned out that this one violation was a subtle poison, which in eighty years corrupted the whole overgrown body politic, and brought the alternative of extirpation of the poison or ruin to the Republic.'

This new Monument is built to mark the arrival of the nation at the new principle, - say, rather, at its new acknowledgment, for the principle is as old as Heaven, - that only that state can live, in which injury to the least member is recognized as damage to the whole.

Reform must begin at home. The aim of the hour was to reconstruct the South ; but first the North had

to be reconstructed. Its own theory and practice of liberty had got sadly out of gear, and must be corrected. It was done on the instant. A thunder-storm at sea some-times reverses the magnets in the ship, and south is north. The storm of war works the like miracle on men. Every Democrat who went South came back a Republican, like the govern-ors who, in Buchanan's time, went to Kansas, and instantly took the free-state colors. War, says the poet, is

" the arduous strife,
To which the triumph of all good is given." '

Every principle is a war-note. When the rights of man are recited under any old government, every one of them is a declaration of war. War civilizes, rearranges the population, distributing by ideas, - the innovators on one side, the antiquaries on the other. It opens the eyes wider. Once we were patriots up to the town-bounds, or the state-line. But when you re-place the love of family or clan by a principle, as freedom, instantly that fire runs over the state-line into New Hampshire, Vermont, New York and Ohio, into the prairie and beyond, leaps the mountains, bridges river and lake, burns as hotly in Kansas and California as in Boston, and no chemist can one soil and the other. It lifts every population to an equal power and merit.

As long as we debate in council, both sides may form their private guess what the event may be, or which is the strongest. But the moment you cry " Every man to his tent, O Israel ! " the delusions of hope and fear are at an end ; - the strength is now to be tested by the eternal facts. There will be no doubt more. The world is equal to itself. The secret architecture of things begins to disclose itself; the fact that all things were made on a basis of right ; that justice is really desired by all intelligent beings ; that opposition to it is against the nature of things ; and that, whatever may happen in this hour or that, the years and the centuries are always pulling down the wrong and building up the right.

The war made the Divine Providence credible to many who did not believe the good Heaven quite honest. Every man was an abolitionist by conviction, but did not believe that his neighbor was. The opinions of masses of men, which the tactics of primary caucuses and the proverbial timidity of trade had concealed, the war discovered ; and it was found, contrary to all popular belief, that the country was at heart abolitionist, and for the Union was ready to die.

As cities of men are the first effects of civilization, and also instantly causes of more civilization, so armies, which are only wandering cities, generate a vast heat, and lift the spirit of the soldiers who compose them to the boiling point. The armies mustered in the North were as much missionaries to the mind of the country as they were carriers of material force, and had the vast advantage of carrying whither they marched a higher civilization. Of course, there are noble men everywhere, and there are such in the South; and the noble know the noble, wherever they meet; and we have all heard passages of generous and exceptional behavior exhibited by individuals there to our officers and men, during the war. But the common people, rich or poor, were the narrowest and most conceited of mankind, as arrogant as the negroes on the Gambia River ; and, by the way, it looks as if the editors of the Southern press were in all times selected from this class. The invasion of Northern farmers, mechanics, engineers, tradesmen, lawyers and students did more than forty years of peace had done to educate the South.' " This will be a slow business," writes our Concord captain home, " for we have to stop and civilize the people as we go along."

It is an interesting part of the history, the manner in which this incongruous militia were made soldiers. That was done again on the Kansas plan. Our farmers went to Kansas as peaceable, God-fearing men as the members of our school committee here. But when the Border raids were let loose

on their villages, these people, who turned pale at home if called to dress a cut finger, on witnessing the butchery done by the Missouri riders on women and babes, were so beside themselves with rage, that they became on the instant the bravest soldiers and the most determined avengers.¹ And the first events of the war of the Rebellion gave the like training to the new recruits.

All sorts of men went to the war, - the roughs, men who liked harsh play and violence, men for whom pleasure was not strong enough, but who wanted pain, and found sphere at last for their superabundant energy ; then the ad-venturous type of New Englander, with his appetite for novelty and travel ; the village politician, who could now verify his newspaper knowledge, see the South, and amass what a stock of adventures to retail hereafter at the fireside, or to the well-known companions on the Mill-dam ; young men, also, of excellent education and polished manners, delicately brought up; manly farmers, skilful mechanics, young tradesmen, men hitherto of narrow opportunities of knowing the world, but well taught in the grammar-schools. But perhaps in every one of these classes were idealists, men who went from a religious duty. I have a note of a conversation that occurred in our first company, the morning before the battle of Bull Run. At a halt in the march, a few of our boys were sitting on a rail fence talking together whether it was right to sacrifice themselves. One of them said, he had been thinking a good deal about it, last night, and he thought one was never too young to die for a principle.' One of our later volunteers, on the day when he left home, in reply to my question, How can you be spared from your farm, now that your father is so ill ? said : " I go because I shall always be sorry if I did not go when the country called me. I can go as well as another." One wrote to his father these words : " You may think it strange that I, who have always naturally rather shrunk from danger, should wish to enter the army ; but there is a higher Power that tunes the hearts of men, and enables them to see their duty, and gives them courage to face the dangers with which those duties are attended." And the captain writes home of another of his men, " B comes from a sense of duty and love of country, and these are the soldiers you can depend upon."

None of us can have forgotten how sharp a test to try our peaceful people with, was the first call for troops. I doubt not many of our soldiers could repeat the confession of a youth whom I knew in the beginning of the war, who enlisted in New York, went to the field, and died early. Before his departure he confided to his sister that he was naturally a coward, but was determined that no one should ever find it out ; that he had long trained himself by forcing himself, on the suspicion of any near danger, to go directly up to it, cost him what struggles it might. Yet it is from this temperament of sensibility that great heroes have been formed.

Our first company was led by an officer who had grown up in this village from a boy.² The older among us can well remember him at school, at play and at work, all the way up, the most amiable, sensible, unpretending of men ; fair, blond, the rose lived long in his cheek ;grave, but social, and one of the last men in this town you would have picked out for the rough dealing of war, - not a trace of fierceness, much less of recklessness, or of the devouring thirst for excitement ; tender as a woman in his care for a cough or a chilblain in his men ; had troches and arnica in his pocket for them. The army officers were welcome to their jest on him as too kind for a captain, and, later, as the colonel who got off his horse when he saw one of his men limp on the march, and told him to ride. But he knew that his men had found out, first that he was captain, then that he was colonel, and neither dared nor wished to disobey him. He was a man without conceit, who never fancied himself a philosopher or a saint ; the most modest and amiable of men, engaged in common duties, but equal always to the occasion ; and the war showed him still equal, however stern and terrible the occasion grew, - disclosed in him a strong good sense, great fertility of resource, the helping hand, and then the moral qualities of a commander, -a patience not to be tired out, a serious devotion to the cause of the country that never swerved, a hope that never failed. He was a Puritan in the army, with traits that remind one of John

Brown, - an integrity incorruptible, and an ability that always rose to the need.

You will remember that these colonels, captains and lieutenants, and the privates too, are domestic men, just wrenched away from their families and their business by this rally of all the manhood in the land. They have notes to pay at home ; have farms, shops, factories, affairs of every kind to think of and write home about. Consider what sacrifice and havoc in business arrangements this war-blast made. They have to think carefully of every last re-source at home on which their wives or mothers may fall back ; upon the little account in the savings hank, the grass that can be sold, the old cow, or the heifer. These necessities make the topics of the ten thousand letters with which the mail-bags came loaded day by day. These letters play a great part in the war. The writing of letters made the Sunday in every camp : - meantime they are without the means of writing. After the first marches there is no letter-paper, there are no envelopes, no postage-stamps, for these were wetted into a solid mass in the rains and mud. Some of these letters are written on the back of old bills, some on brown paper, or strips of newspaper ; written by firelight, making the short night shorter ; written on the knee, in the mud, with pencil, six words at a time ; or in the saddle, and have to stop because the horse will not stand still. But the words are proud and tender, - " Tell mother I will not disgrace her ;" " tell her not to worry about me, for I know she would not have had me stay at home if she could as well as not." The letters of the captain are the dearest treasures of this town. Always devoted, sometimes anxious, sometimes full of joy at the deparment of his comrades, they contain the sincere praise of men whom I now see in this assembly. If Marshal Montluc's1 Memoirs are the Bible of soldiers, as Henry IV. of France said, Colonel Prescott might furnish the Book of Epistles.

He writes, " You don't know how one gets attached to a company by living with them and sleeping with them all the time. I know every man by heart. I know every man's weak spot, - who is shaky, and who is true blue." He never remits his care of the men, aiming to hold them to their good habits and to keep them cheerful. For the first point, he keeps up a constant acquaintance with them ; urges their correspondence with their friends ; writes news of them home, urging his own correspondent to visit their families and keep them informed about the men ; encourages a temperance society which is formed in the camp. " I have not had a man drunk, or affected by liquor, since we came here." At one time he finds his company unfortunate in having fallen between two companies of quite another class, - " t is profanity all the time ; yet instead of a bad influence on our men, I think it works the other way, - it disgusts them."

One day he writes, " I expect to have a time, this forenoon, with the officer from West Point who drills us. He is very profane, and I will not stand it. If he does not stop it, I shall march my men right away when he is drilling them. There is a fine for officers swearing in the army, and I have too many young men that are not used to such talk. I told the colonel this morning I should do it, and shall, - don't care what the consequence is. This lieutenant seems to think that these men, who never saw a gun, can drill as well as he, who has been at West Point four years." At night he adds : " I told that officer from West Point, this morning, that he could not swear at my company as he did yesterday; told him I would not stand it anyway. I told him I had a good many young men in my company whose mothers asked me to look after them, and I should do so, and not allow them to hear such language, especially from an officer, whose duty it was to set them a better example. Told him I did not swear myself and would not allow him to. He looked at me as much as to say, Do you know whom you are talking to? and I looked at him as much as to say, Fes, I do. He looked rather ashamed, but went through the drill without an oath." So much for the care of their morals. His next point is to keep them cheerful. 'T is better than medicine. He has games of baseball, and pitching quoits, and euchre, whilst part of the military discipline is sham fights.

The best men heartily second him, and invent excellent means of their own. When, afterwards, five of these men were prisoners in the Parish Prison in New Orleans, they set themselves to use the time to the wisest advantage, - formed a debating-club, wrote a daily or weekly news-paper, called it " Stars and Stripes." It advertises, " prayer-meeting at 7 o'clock, in cell No. 8, second floor," and their own printed record is a proud and affecting narrative.

Whilst the regiment was encamped at Camp Andrew, near Alexandria, in June, 1861, marching orders came. Colonel Lawrence sent for eight wagons, but only three came. On these they loaded all the canvas of the tents, but took no tent-poles.

" It looked very much like a severe thunder-storm," writes the captain, " and I knew the men would all have to sleep out of doors, unless we carried them. So I took six poles, and went to the colonel, and told him I had got the poles for two tents, which would cover twenty-four men, and unless he ordered me not to carry them, I should do so. He said he had no objection, only thought they would be too much for me. We only had about twelve men [the rest of the company being, perhaps, on picket or other duty], and some of them have their heavy knapsacks and guns to carry, so could not carry any poles. We started and marched two miles without stop-ping to rest, not having had anything to eat, and being very hot and dry." At this time Captain Prescott was daily threatened with sickness, and suffered the more from this heat. " I told Lieu-tenant Bowers, this morning, that I could afford to be sick from bringing the tent-poles, for it saved the whole regiment from sleeping out-doors ; for they would not have thought of it, if I had not taken mine. The major had tried to discourage me ; - said, perhaps, if I carried them over, some other company would get them ; ' - I told him, perhaps he did not think I was smart." He had the satisfaction to see the whole regiment enjoying the protection of these tents.'

In the disastrous battle of Bull Run this company behaved well, and the regimental officers believed, what is now the general conviction of the country, that the misfortunes of the day were not so much owing to the fault of the troops as to the insufficiency of the combinations by the general officers. It happened, also, that the Fifth Massachusetts was almost unofficered. The colonel was, early in the day, disabled by a casualty ; the lieutenant-colonel, the major and the adjutant were already transferred to new regiments, and their places were not yet filled. The three months of the enlistment expired a few days after the battle.

In the fall of 1861, the old artillery company of this town was reorganized, and Captain Richard Barrett received a commission in March, 1862, from the state, as its commander. This company, chiefly recruited here, was later embodied in the Forty-seventh Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers, enlisted as nine months' men, and sent to New Orleans, where they were employed in guard duty during their term of service. Captain Humphrey H. Buttrick, lieu-tenant in this regiment, as he had been already lieutenant in Captain Prescott's company in 1861, went out again in August, 1864, a captain in the Fifty-ninth Massachusetts, and saw hard service in the Ninth Corps, under General Burnside. The regiment being formed of veterans, and in fields requiring great activity and exposure, suffered extraordinary losses ; Captain But-trick and one other officer being the only officers in it who were neither killed, wounded nor captured.' In August, 1862, on the new requisition for troops, when it was becoming difficult to meet the draft, - mainly through the personal example and influence of Mr. Sylvester Lovejoy, twelve men, including himself, were enlisted for three years, and, being soon after enrolled in the Fortieth Massachusetts, went to the war; and a very good account has been heard, not only of the regiment, but of the talents and virtues of these men.

After the return of the three months' company to Concord, in 1861, Captain Prescott raised a new

company of volunteers, and Captain Bowers another. Each of these companies included recruits from this town, and they formed part of the Thirty-second Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers. Enlisting for three years, and remaining to the end of the war, these troops saw every variety of hard service which the war offered, and, though suffering at first some disadvantage from change of commanders, and from severe losses, they grew at last, under the command of Colonel Prescott, to an excellent reputation, attested by the names of the thirty battles they were authorized to inscribe on their flag, and by the important position usually assigned them in the field.

I have found many notes of their rough experience in the march and in the field. In McClellan's retreat in the Peninsula, in July, 1862, "it is all our men can do to draw their feet out of the mud. We marched one mile through mud, without exaggeration, one foot deep, - a good deal of the way over my boots, and with short rations ; on one day nothing but liver, blackberries, and pennyroyal tea."-" At Fredericksburg we lay eleven hours in one spot without moving, except to rise and fire." The next note is, " cracker for a day and a half, - but all right." Another day, " had not left the ranks for thirty hours, and the nights were broken by frequent alarms. How would Concord people," he asks, " like to pass the night on the battle-field, and hear the dying cry for help, and not be able to go to them ? " But the regiment did good service at Harrison's Landing, and at Antietam, under Colonel Parker ; and at Fredericksburg, in December, Lieutenant-Colonel Prescott loudly expressed his satisfaction at his comrades, now and then particularizing names : " Bowers, Shepard and Lauriat are as brave as lions." '

At the battle of Gettysburg, in July, 1863, the brigade of which the Thirty-second Regiment formed a part, was in line of battle seventy-two hours, and suffered severely. Colonel Prescott's regiment went in with two hundred and ten men, nineteen officers. On the second of July they had to cross the famous wheat-field, under fire from the rebels in front and on both flanks. Seventy men were killed or wounded out of seven companies. Here Francis Buttrick, whose manly beauty all of us remember,² and Sergeant Appleton, an excellent soldier, were fatally wounded. The Colonel was hit by three bullets. " I feel," he writes, " I have much to be thankful for that my life is spared, although I would willingly die to have the regiment do as well as they have done. Our colors had several holes made, and were badly torn. One bullet hit the staff which the bearer had in his hand. The color-bearer is brave as a lion ; he will go anywhere you say, and no questions asked ; his name is Marshall Davis." The Colonel took evident pleasure in the fact that he could account for all his men. There were so many killed, so many wounded, - but no missing. For that word " missing " was apt to mean skulking. Another incident : " A friend of Lieutenant Barrow complains that we did not treat his body with respect, inasmuch as we did not send it home. I think we were very fortunate to save it at all, for in ten minutes after he was killed the rebels occupied the ground, and we had to carry him and all our wounded nearly two miles in blankets. There was no place nearer than Baltimore where we could have got a coffin, and I suppose it was eighty miles there. We laid him in two double blankets, and then sent off a long distance and got boards off a barn to make the best coffin we could, and gave him burial."

After Gettysburg, Colonel Prescott remarks that our regiment is highly complimented. When Colonel Gurney, of the Ninth, came to him the next day to tell him that " folks are just beginning to appreciate the Thirty-second Regiment : it always was a good regiment, and people are just beginning to find it out ; " Colonel Prescott notes in his journal, - " Pity they have not found it out before it was all gone. We have a hundred and seventy-seven guns this morning."

Let me add an extract from the official report of the brigade commander: " Word was sent by General Barnes, that, when we retired, we should fall back under cover of the woods. This order was communicated to Colonel Prescott, whose regiment was then under the hottest fire. Understanding it to be a peremptory order to retire then, he replied, ` I don't want to retire ; I am not ready to retire ;

I can hold this place ; ' and he made good his assertion. Being informed that he misunderstood the order, which was only to inform him how to retire when it became necessary, he was satisfied, and he and his command held their ground manfully." It was said that Colonel Prescott's reply, when reported, pleased the Acting-Brigadier-General Sweitzer mightily. After Gettysburg, the Thirty-second Regiment saw hard service at Rappahannock Station ; and at Baltimore, in Virginia, where they were drawn up in battle order for ten days successively : crossing the Rapidan, and suffering from such extreme cold, a few days later, at Mine Run, that the men were compelled to break rank and run in circles to keep them-selves from being frozen. On the third of December, they went into winter quarters.

I must not follow the multiplied details that make the hard work of the next year. But the campaign in the Wilderness surpassed all their worst experience hitherto of the soldier's life. On the third of May, they crossed the Rapidan for the fifth time. On the twelfth, at Laurel Hill, the regiment had twenty-one killed and seventy-five wounded, including five officers. " The regiment has been in the front and centre since the battle begun, eight and a half days ago, and is now building breastworks on the Fredericksburg road. This has been the hardest fight the world ever knew. I think the loss of our army will be forty thousand. Every day, for the last eight days, there has been a terrible battle the whole length of the line. One day they drove us ; but it has been regular bull-dog fighting." On the twenty-first, they had been, for seventeen days and nights, under arms without rest. On the twenty-third, they crossed the North Anna, and achieved a great success. On the thirtieth, we learn, " Our regiment has never been in the second line since we crossed the Rapidan, on the third." On the night of the thirtieth, - " The hardest day we ever had. We have been in the first line twenty-six days, and fighting every day but two ; whilst your news-papers talk of the inactivity of the Army of the Potomac. If those writers could be here and fight all day, and sleep in the trenches, and be called up several times in the night by picket-firing, they would not call it inactive." June fourth is marked in the diary as " An awful day;-two hundred men lost to the command;" and not until the fifth of June comes at last a respite for a short space, during which the men drew shoes and socks, and the officers were able to send to the wagons and procure a change of clothes, for the first time in five weeks.

But from these incessant labors there was now to be rest for one head, - the honored and beloved commander of the regiment. On the sixteenth of June, they crossed the James River, and marched to within three miles of Petersburg. Early in the morning of the eighteenth they went to the front, formed line of battle, and were ordered to take the Norfolk and Petersburg Rail-road from the rebels. In this charge, Colonel Georgeo. L. Prescott was mortally wounded. After driving the enemy from the railroad, crossing it, and climbing the farther bank to continue the charge, he was struck, in front of his command, by a musket-ball which entered his breast near the heart. He was carried off the field to the division hospital, and died on the following morning. On his death-bed, he received the needless assurances of his general that " he had done more than all his duty," - needless to a conscience so faithful and unspotted. One of his townsmen and comrades, a sergeant in his regiment, writing to his own family, uses these words : " He was one of the few men who fight for principle. He did not fight for glory, honor, nor money, but because he thought it his duty. These are not my feelings only, but of the whole regiment."

On the first of January, 1865, the Thirty-second Regiment made itself comfortable in log huts, a mile south of our rear line of works before Petersburg. On the fourth of February, sudden orders came to move next morning at daylight. At Dabney's Mills, in a sharp fight, they lost seventy-four in killed, wounded and missing. Here Major Shepard was taken prisoner. The lines were held until the tenth, with more than usual suffering from snow and hail and intense cold, added to the annoyance of the artillery fire. On the first of April, the regiment connected with Sheridan's cavalry, near the Five Forks, and took an important part in that battle which opened Petersburg and Richmond, and forced the

surrender of Lee. On the ninth, they marched in support of the cavalry, and were advancing in a grand charge, when the white flag of General Lee appeared. The brigade of which the Thirty-second Regiment formed part was detailed to receive the formal surrender of the rebel arms. The homeward march began on the thirteenth, and the regiment was mustered out in the field, at Washington, on the twenty-eighth of June, and arrived in Boston on the first of July.

Fellow citizens: The obelisk records only the names of the dead. There is something partial in this distribution of honor. Those who went through those dreadful fields and returned not deserve much more than all the honor we can pay. But those also who went through the same fields, and returned alive, put just as much at hazard as those who died, and, in other countries, would wear distinctive badges of honor as long as they lived. I hope the disuse of such medals or badges in this country only signifies that every-body knows these men, and carries their deeds in such lively remembrance that they require no badge or reminder. I am sure I need not be-speak your gratitude to these fellow citizens and neighbors of ours. I hope they will be content with the laurels of one war.

But let me, in behalf of this assembly, speak directly to you, our defenders, and say, that it is easy to see that if danger should ever threaten the homes which you guard, the knowledge of your presence will be a wall of fire for their protection. Brave men ! you will hardly be called to see again fields as terrible as those you have already trampled with your victories.

There are people who can hardly read the names on yonder bronze tablet, the mist so gathers in their eyes. Three of the names are of sons of one family.' A gloom gathers on this assembly, composed as it is of kindred men and women, for, in many houses, the dearest and noblest is gone from their hearth-stone. Yet it is tinged with light from heaven. A duty so severe has been discharged, and with such immense results of good, lifting private sacrifice to the sublime, that, though the cannon volleys have a sound of funeral echoes, they can yet hear through them the benedictions of their country and mankind.

APPENDIX

IN the above Address I have been compelled to suppress more details of personal interest than I have used. But I do not like to omit the testimony to the character of the Commander of the Thirty-second Massachusetts Regiment, given in the following letter by one of his soldiers : -
NEAR PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA,
June 20, 1864.

DEAR FATHER :

With feelings of deep regret, I inform you that Colonel Prescott, our brave and lamented leader, is no more. He was shot through the body, near the heart, on the eighteenth day of June, and died the following morning. On the morning of the eighteenth, our division was not in line. Reveille was at an early hour, and before long we were moving to the front. Soon we passed the ground where the Ninth Corps drove the enemy from their fortified lines, and came upon and formed our line in rear of Crawford's Division. In front of us, and one mile distant, the Rebels' lines of works could be seen. Between us and them, and in a deep gully, was the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad. Soon the order came for us to take the railroad from the enemy, whose advance then held it. Four regiments of our brigade were to head the charge ; so the 32d Massachusetts, 62d, 91st and 155th Pennsylvania regiments, under command of Colonel Gregory, moved forward in good order, the enemy keeping up a steady fire all the time All went well till we reached the road. The Rebels left when they saw us advance, and, when we reached the road, they were running away. But here our troubles began. The

banks, on each side of the road, were about thirty feet high, and, being stiff clay, were nearly perpendicular. We got down well enough, because we got started, and were rolled to the bottom, a confused pile of Yanks. Now to climb the other side! It was impossible to get up by climbing, for the side of it was like the side of a house. By dint of getting on each other's shoulders and making holes for our feet with bayonets, a few of us got up ; reaching our guns down to the others, we all finally got over. Meanwhile, a storm of bullets was rained upon us. Through it all, Colonel Prescott was cool and collected, encouraging the men to do their best. After we were almost all across, he moved out in front of the line, and called the men out to him, saying, " Come on, men ; form our line here." The color-bearer stepped towards him, when a bullet struck the Colonel, passed through him, and wounded the color-bearer, Sergeant Giles of Company G. Calmly the Colonel turned, and said, " I am wounded; some one help me off." A sergeant of Company B, and one of the 21st Pennsylvania, helped him off. This man told me, last night, all that the Colonel said, while going off. He was afraid we would be driven hack, and wanted these men to stick by him. He said, " I die for my country." He seemed to be conscious that death was near to him, and said the wound was near his heart ; wanted the sergeant of Company B to write to his family, and tell them all about him. He will write to Mrs. Prescott, probably ; but if they do not hear from some one an account of his death, I wish you would show this to Mrs. Prescott. He died in the division hospital, night before last, and his remains will probably be sent to Concord. We lament his loss in the regiment very much. He was like a father to us, - always counselling us to be firm in the path of duty, and setting the example himself. I think a more moral man, or one more likely to enter the kingdom of heaven, cannot be found in the Army of the Potomac. No man ever heard him swear, or saw him use liquor, since we were in the service, I wish there was some way for the regiment to pay some tribute to his memory. But the folks at home must do this for the present. The Thirty-second Regiment has lost its leader, and calls on the people of Concord to console the afflicted family of the brave departed, by showing their esteem for him in some manner. He was one of the few men who fight for principle, - pure principle. He did not fight for glory, honor nor money but because he thought it his duty. These are not my feelings only, but of the whole regiment. I want you to show this to every one, so they can see what we thought of the Colonel, and how he died in front of his regiment. God bless and comfort his poor family. Perhaps people think soldiers have no feeling, but it is not so. We feel deep anxiety for the families of all our dear comrades.

CHARLES BARTLETT,
Sergeant Company G, 32d Mass. Vols.'

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XVIII Editors' Address

RWE.org - The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson - Volume XI - Miscellanies (1884)

Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XVIII

EDITORS' ADDRESS

MASSACHUSETTS QUARTERLY REVIEW, DECEMBER, 1847

THE old men studied magic in the flowers,
And human fortunes in astronomy,
And an omnipotence in chemistry,
Preferring things to names, for these were men,
Were unitarians of the united world,
And, wheresoever their clear eve-beams fell,
They caught the footsteps of the Same. Our eyes
Are armed, but we are strangers to the stars,
And strangers to the mystic beast and bird,
And strangers to the plant and to the mine.
The injured elements say, ' Not in us ; '
And night and day, ocean and continent,
Fire, plant and mineral say, ' Not in us ; '
And haughtily return us stare for stare.
For we invade them impiously for gain;
We devastate them unreligiously,
And coldly ask their pottage, not their love.
Therefore they shove us from them, yield to us
Only what to our griping toil is due;
But the sweet affluence of love and song,
The rich results of the divine consents
Of man and earth, of world beloved and loved,
The nectar and ambrosia are withheld.

EDITORS' ADDRESS

THE American people are fast opening their own destiny. The material basis is of such extent that no folly of man can quite subvert it ; for the territory is a considerable fraction of the planet, and the population neither loath nor inexpert to use their advantages. Add, that this energetic race derive an unprecedented material power from the new arts, from the expansions effected by public schools, cheap post-age and a cheap press, from the telescope, the telegraph, the railroad, steamship, steam-ferry, steam-mill ; from domestic architecture, chemical agriculture, from ventilation, from ice, ether, caoutchouc, and innumerable inventions and manufactures.

A scholar who has been reading of the fabulous magnificence of Assyria and Persia, of Rome and Constantinople, leaves his library and takes his seat in a railroad-car, where he is importuned by newsboys with journals still wet from Liverpool and Havre, with telegraphic despatches not yet fifty minutes old from Buffalo and Cincinnati. At the screams of the steam-whistle, the train quits city and suburbs, darts away into the interior, drops every man at his estate as it whirls along, and shows our traveller what tens of thousands of powerful and weaponed men, science-armed and society-armed,

sit at large in this ample region, obscure from their numbers and the extent of the domain. He reflects on the power which each of these plain republicans can employ ; how far these chains of intercourse and travel reach, interlock and ramify ; what levers, what pumps, what exhaustive analyses are applied to Nature for the benefit of masses of men. Then he exclaims, What a negro-fine royalty is that of Jamschid and Solomon ! What a substantial sovereignty does my townsman possess ! A man who has a hundred dollars to dispose of -a hundred dollars over his bread-is rich beyond the dreams of the Cæsars.

Keep our eyes as long as we can on this picture, we cannot stave off the ulterior question, - the famous question of Cineas to Pyrrhus,¹-the WHERE TO of all this power and population, these surveys and inventions, this taxing and tabulating, mill-privilege, roads, and mines. The aspect this country presents is a certain maniacal activity, an immense apparatus of cunning machinery which turns out, at last, some Nuremberg toys. Has it generated, as great interests do, any intellectual power ? Where are the works of the imagination - the surest test of a national genius ? At least as far as the purpose and genius of America is yet reported in any book, it is a sterility and no genius.

One would say there is nothing colossal in the country but its geography and its material activities ; that the moral and intellectual effects are not on the same scale with the trade and production. There is no speech heard but that of auctioneers, newsboys, and the caucus. Where is the great breath of the New World, the voice of aboriginal nations opening new eras with hymns of lofty cheer ? Our hooks and fine arts are imitations ; there is a fatal in-curiosity and disinclination in our educated men to new studies and the interrogation of Nature. We have taste, critical talent, good professors, good commentators, but a lack of male energy. What more serious calamity can befall a people than a constitutional dulness and limitation ? The moral influence of the intellect is wanting. We hearken in vain for any profound voice speaking to the American heart, cheering timid good men, animating the youth, consoling the defeated, and intelligently announcing duties which clothe life with joy, and endear the face of land and sea to men.' It is a poor consideration that the country wit is precocious, and, as we say, practical ; that political interests on so broad a scale as ours are administered by little men with some saucy village talent, by deft partisans, good cipherers ; strict economists, quite empty of all superstition.

Conceding these unfavorable appearances, it would yet be a poor pedantry to read the fates of this country from these narrow data. On the contrary, we are persuaded that moral and material values are always commensurate. Every material organization exists to a moral end, which makes the reason of its existence. Here are no books, but who can see the continent with its inland and surrounding waters, its temperate climates, its west-wind breathing vigor through all the year, its confluence of races so favorable to the highest energy, and the infinite glut of their production, without putting new queries to Destiny as to the purpose for which this muster of nations and this sudden creation of enormous values is made ?

This is equally the view of science and of patriotism. We hesitate to employ a word so much abused as patriotism, whose true sense is almost the reverse of its popular sense. We have no sympathy with that boyish egotism, hoarse with cheering for one side, for one state, for one town : the right patriotism consists in the delight which springs from contributing our peculiar and legitimate advantages to the benefit of humanity. Every foot of soil has its proper quality ; the grape on two sides of the same fence has new flavors ; and so every acre on the globe, every family of men, every point of climate, has its distinguishing virtues. Certainly then this country does not lie here in the sun causeless ; and though it may not be easy to define its influence, men feel already its emancipating quality in the careless self-reliance of the manners, in the freedom of thought, in the direct roads by which

grievances are reached and redressed, and even in the reckless and sinister politics, not less than in purer expressions. Bad as it is, this freedom leads onward and upward, - to a Columbia of thought and art, which is the last and endless end of Columbus's adventure.

Lovers of our country, but not always approvers of the public counsels, we should certainly be glad to give good advice in politics. We have not been able to escape our national and endemic habit, and to be liberated from interest in the elections and in public affairs. Nor have we cared to disfranchise ourselves. We are more solicitous than others to make our politics clear and healthful, as we believe politics to be nowise accidental or exceptional, but subject to the same laws with trees, earths and acids. We see that reckless and destructive fury which characterizes the lower classes of American society, and which is pampered by hundreds of profligate presses. The young intriguers who drive in bar-rooms and town-meetings the trade of politics, sagacious only to seize the victorious side, have put the country into the position of an overgrown bully, and Massachusetts finds no heart or head to give weight and efficacy to her contrary judgment: In hours when it seemed only to need one just word from a man of honor to have vindicated the rights of millions, and to have given a true direction to the first steps of a nation, we have seen the best understandings of New England, the trusted leaders of her counsels, constituting a snivelling and despised opposition, clapped on the hack by comfortable capitalists from all sections, and persuaded to say, We are too old to stand for what is called a New England sentiment any longer. Rely on us for commercial representatives, but for questions of ethics, - who knows what markets may be opened? We are not well, we are not in our seats, when justice and humanity are to be spoken for.

We have a bad war, many victories, each of which converts the country into an immense chancery ; and a very insincere political opposition.' The country needs to be extricated from its delirium at once. Public affairs are chained in the same law with private ; the retributions of armed states are not less sure and signal than those which come to private felons. The facility of majorities is no protection from the natural sequence of their own acts. Men reason badly, but Nature and Destiny are logical.'

But, whilst we should think our pains well bestowed if we could cure the infatuation of states-men, and should be sincerely pleased if we could give a direction to the Federal politics, we are far from believing politics the primal interest of men. On the contrary, we hold that the laws and governors cannot possess a commanding interest for any but vacant or fanatical people; for the reason that this is simply a formal and superficial interest ; and men of a solid genius are only interested in substantial things.

The State, like the individual, should rest on an ideal basis. Not only man but Nature is injured by the imputation that man exists only to be fattened with bread, but he lives in such connection with Thought and Fact that his bread is surely involved as one element thereof, but is not its end and aim. So the insight which commands the laws and conditions of the true polity precludes forever all interest in the squabbles of parties. As soon as men have tasted the enjoyment of learning, friendship and virtue, for which the State exists, the prizes of office appear polluted, and their followers outcasts.

A journal that would meet the real wants of this time must have a courage and power sufficient to solve the problems which the great groping society around us, stupid with perplexity, is dumbly exploring. Let it now show its astuteness by dodging each difficult question and arguing diffusely every point on which men are long ago unanimous. Can it front this matter of Socialism, to which the names of Owen and Fourier have attached, and dispose of that question? Will it cope with the allied questions of Government, Nonresistance, and all that belongs under that category ? Will it measure itself with the chapter on Slavery, in some sort the special enigma of the time, as it has provoked against it a sort

of inspiration and enthusiasm singular in modern history ? There are literary and philosophical reputations to settle. The name of Swedenborg has in this very time acquired new honors, and the current year has witnessed the appearance, in their first English translation, of his manuscripts. Here is an unsettled account in the book of Fame ; a nebula to dim eyes, but which great telescopes may yet resolve into a magnificent system. Here is the standing problem of Natural Science, and the merits of her great interpreters to be determined ; the encyclopædical Humboldt, and the intrepid generalizations collected by the author of the Vestiges of Creation. Here is the balance to be adjusted between the exact French school of Cuvier, and the genial catholic theorists, Geoffroy St.-Hilaire, Goethe, Davy and Agassiz. Will it venture into the thin and difficult air of that school where the secrets of structure are discussed under the topics of mesmerism and the twilights of demonology ?

What will easily seem to many a far higher question than any other is that which respects the embodying of the Conscience of the period. Is the age we live in unfriendly to the highest powers ; to that blending of the affections with the poetic faculty which has distinguished the Religious Ages ? We have a better opinion of the economy of Nature than to fear that those varying phases which humanity presents ever leave out any of the grand springs of human action. Mankind for the moment seem to be in search of a religion. The Jewish cultus is declining ; the Divine, or, as some will say, the truly Human, hovers, now seen, now unseen, before us. This period of peace, this hour when the jangle of contending churches is hushing or hushed, will seem only the more propitious. to those who believe that man need not fear the want of religion, because they know his religious constitution, - that he must rest on the moral and religious sentiments, as the motion of bodies rests on geometry. In the rapid decay of what was called religion, timid and unthinking people fancy a decay of the hope of man. But the moral and religious sentiments meet us everywhere, alike in markets as in churches. A God starts up behind cotton bales also. The conscience of man is regenerated as is the atmosphere, so that society cannot be debauched. The health which we call Virtue is an equipoise which easily redresses itself, and resembles those rocking stones which a child's finger can move, and a weight of many hundred tons can-not overthrow.

With these convictions, a few friends of good letters have thought fit to associate themselves for the conduct of a new journal. We have obeyed the custom and convenience of the time in adopting this form of a Review, as a mould into which all metal most easily runs. But the form shall not be suffered to be an impediment. The name might convey the impression of a book of criticism, and that nothing is to be found here which was not written expressly for the Review ; but good readers know that inspired pages are not written to fill a space, but for inevitable utterance; and to such our journal is freely and solicitously open, even though everything else be excluded. We entreat the aid of every lover of truth and right, and let these principles entreat for us. We rely on the talents and industry of good men known to us, but much more on the magnetism of truth, which is multiplying and educating advocates for itself and friends for us. We rely on the truth for and against ourselves.

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XIX Address to Kossuth

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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XIX
ADDRESS TO KOSSUTH
AT CONCORD, MAY 11, 1852

God said, I am tired of kings,
I suffer them no more;
Up to my ear the morning brings
The outrage of the poor.

My angel, - his name is Freedom, -
Choose him to be your king;
He shall cut pathways east and west,
And fend you with his wing.

ADDRESS TO KOSSUTH

SIR, - The fatigue of your many public visits, in such unbroken succession as may compare with the toils of a campaign, forbid us to detain you long. The people of this town share with their countrymen the admiration of valor and perseverance ; they, like their compatriots, have been hungry to see the man whose extraordinary eloquence is seconded by the splendor and the solidity of his actions. But, as it is the privilege of the people of this town to keep a hallowed mound which has a place in the story of the country ; as Concord is one of the monuments of freedom ; we knew before-hand that you could not go by us ; you could not take all your steps in the pilgrimage of American liberty, until you had seen with your eyes the ruins of the bridge where a handful of brave farmers opened our Revolution. Therefore, we sat and waited for you.

And now, Sir, we are heartily glad to see you, at last, in these fields. We set no more value than you do on cheers and huzzas. But we think that the graves of our heroes around us throb to-day to a footstep that sounded like their own:-

"The mighty tread
Brings from the dust the sound of liberty."

Sir, we have watched with attention your progress through the land, and the varying feeling with which you have been received, and the unvarying tone and countenance which you have maintained. We wish to discriminate in our regard. We wish to reserve our honor for actions of the noblest strain. We please our-selves that in you we meet one whose temper was long since tried in the fire, and made equal to all events ; a man so truly in love with the greatest future, that he cannot be diverted to any less.

It is our republican doctrine, too, that the wide variety of opinions is an advantage. I believe I may say of the people of this country at large, that their sympathy is more worth, because it stands the test of party. It is not a blind wave ; it is a living soul contending with living souls. It is, in every expression, antagonized. No opinion will pass but must stand the tug of war. As you see, the love you win is worth something; for it has been argued through ; its foundation searched ; it has proved sound and whole; it may be avowed ; it will last, and it will draw all opinion to itself.

We have seen, with great pleasure, that there is nothing accidental in your attitude. We have seen that you are organically in that cause you plead. The man of Freedom, you are also the man of Fate. You do not elect, but you are elected by God and your genius to the task. We do not, therefore, affect to thank you. We only see in you the angel of freedom, crossing sea and land ; crossing parties, nationalities, private interests and self-esteemes ; dividing populations where you go, and drawing to your part only the good. We are afraid that you are growing popular, Sir ; you may be called to the dangers of prosperity. But, hitherto, you have had in all centuries and in all parties only the men of heart. I do not know but you will have the million yet. Then, may your strength be equal to your day. But remember, Sir, that everything great and excellent in the world is in minorities.'

Far be from us, Sir, any tone of patronage ; we ought rather to ask yours. We know the austere condition of liberty - that it must be reconquered over and over again ; yea, day by day ; that it is a state of war ; that it is always slipping from those who boast it to those who fight for it : and you, the foremost soldier of freedom in this age, - it is for us to crave your judgment ; who are we that we should dictate to you? You have won your own. We only affirm it. This country of workingmen greets in you a worker. This republic greets in you a republican. We only say, ` Well done, good and faithful.' - You have earned your own nobility at home. We admit you ad eundem (as they say at College). We admit you to the same degree, without new trial. We suspend all rules before so paramount a merit. You may well sit a doctor in the college of liberty. You have achieved your right to interpret our Washington. And I speak the sense not only of every generous American, but the law of mind, when I say that it is not those who live idly in the city called after his name, but those who, all over the world, think and act like him, who can claim to explain the sentiment of Washington.

Sir, whatever obstruction from selfishness, indifference, or from property (which always sympathizes with possession) you may encounter, we congratulate you that you have known how to convert calamities into powers, exile into a campaign, present defeat into lasting victory. For this new crusade which you preach to willing and to unwilling ears in America is a seed of armed men. You have got your story told in every palace and log hut and prairie camp, throughout this continent. And, as the shores of Europe and America approach every month, and their politics will one day mingle, when the crisis arrives it will find us all instructed beforehand in the rights and wrongs of Hungary, and parties already to her freedom.

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XX Woman

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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XX

WOMAN

A LECTURE READ BEFORE THE WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION, BOSTON, SEPTEMBER 20, 1855

The politics are base,
The letters do not cheer,
And 't is far in the deeps of history,
The voice that speaketh clear.

Yet there in the parlor sits
Some figure in noble guise,--
Our Angel in a stranger's form'
Or Woman's pleading eyes.

"Lo, when the Lord made North and South,
And sun and moon ordained he,
Forth bringing each by word of mouth
In order of its dignity,
Did man from the crude clay express
By sequence, and, all else decreed,
He formed the woman; nor might less
Than Sabbath such a work succeed."
COVENTRY PATMORE.

WOMAN

AMONG those movements which seem to be, now and then, endemic in the public mind, -perhaps we should say, sporadic,-rather than the single inspiration of one mind, is that which has urged on society the benefits of action having for its object a benefit to the position of Woman. And none is more seriously interesting to every healthful and thoughtful mind.

In that race which is now predominant over all the other races of men, it was a cherished belief that women had an oracular nature. They are more delicate than men, - delicate as iodine to light, -and thus more impressionable. They are the best index of the coming hour. I share this belief. I think their words are to be weighed ; but it is their inconsiderate word, --according to the rule, ` take their first advice, not the second : ' as Coleridge was wont to apply to a lady for her judgment in questions of taste, and accept it; but when she added -"I think so, because -" " Pardon me, madam," he said, " leave me to find out the reasons for myself." In this sense, as more delicate mercuries of the imponderable and immaterial influences, what they say and think is the shadow of coming events. Their very dolls are indicative. Among our Norse ancestors, Frigga was worshipped as the goddess of women. " Weirdes all," said the Edda, " Frigga knoweth, though she telleth them never." That is to say, all wisdoms Woman knows ; though she takes them for granted, and does not explain them as discoveries, like the understanding of man. Men remark figure : women always catch the expression. They inspire by a look, and pass with us not so much by what they say or do, as by their presence. They learn so fast and

convey the result so fast as to outrun the logic of their slow brother and make his acquisitions poor.' 'T is their mood and tone that is important. Does their mind misgive them, or are they firm and cheerful? 'T is a true report that things are going ill or well. And any remarkable opinion or movement shared by woman will be the first sign of revolution.

Plato said, Women are the same as men in faculty, only less in degree. But the general voice of mankind has agreed that they have their own strength ; that women are strong by sentiment ; that the same mental height which their husbands attain by toil, they attain by sympathy with their husbands. Man is the will, and Woman the sentiment. In this ship of humanity, Will is the rudder, and Sentiment the sail : when Woman affects to steer, the rudder is only a masked sail. When women engage in any art or trade, it is usually as a resource, not as a primary object. The life of the affections is primary to them, so that there is usually no employment or career which they will not with their own applause and that of society quit for a suitable marriage. And they give entirely to their affections, set their whole fortune on the die, lose themselves eagerly in the glory of their husbands and children. Man stands astonished at a magnanimity he cannot pretend to. Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, one of the heroines of the English Commonwealth, who wrote the life of her husband, the Governor of Notting-ham, says, " If he esteemed her at a higher rate than she in herself could have deserved, he was the author of that virtue he doted on, while she only reflected his own glories upon him. All that she was, was him, while he was hers, and all that she is now, at best, but his pale shade." As for Plato's opinion, it is true that, up to re-cent times, in no art or science, nor in painting, poetry or music, have they produced a master-piece. Till the new education and larger opportunities of very modern times, this position, with the fewest possible exceptions, has always been true. Sappho, to be sure, in the Olympic Games, gained the crown over Pindar. But, in general, no mastery in either of the fine arts - which should, one would say, be the arts of women - has yet been obtained by them, equal to the mastery of men in the same. The part they play in education, in the care of the young and the tuition of older children, is their organic office in the world. So much sympathy as they have makes them inestimable as the mediators between those who have knowledge and those who want it : besides, their fine organization, their taste and love of details, makes the know-ledge they give better in their hands.

But there is an art which is better than painting, poetry, music, or architecture, - better than botany, geology, or any science ; namely, Conversation. Wise, cultivated, genial conversation is the last flower of civilization and the best result which life has to offer us, - a cup for gods, which has no repentance. Conversation is our account of ourselves. All we have, all we can, all we know, is brought into play, and as the reproduction, in finer form, of all our havings.

Women are, by this and their social influence, the civilizers of mankind. What is civilization ? I answer, the power of good women. It was Burns's remark when he first came to Edinburgh that between the men of rustic life and the polite world he observed little difference ; that in the former, though unpolished by fashion and unenlightened by science, he had found much observation and much intelligence ; but a refined and accomplished woman was a being almost new to him, and of which he had formed a very inadequate idea. " I like women," said a clear-headed man of the world ; " they are so finished." They finish society, manners, language. Form and ceremony are their realm. They embellish trifles. All these ceremonies that hedge our life around are not to be despised, and when we have become habituated to them, cannot be dispensed with. No woman can despise them with impunity. Their genius de-lights in ceremonies, in forms, in decorating life with manners, with properties, order and grace. They are, in their nature, more relative ; the circumstance must always be fit ; out of place they lose half their weight, out of place they are disfranchised. Position, Wren said, is essential to the perfecting of beauty ; - a fine building is lost in a dark lane ; a statue should stand in the air ; much more true is it of woman.

We commonly say that easy circumstances seem somehow necessary to the finish of the female character : but then it is to be remembered that they create these with all their might. They are always making that civilization which they require ; that state of art, of decoration, that ornamental life in which they best appear.

The spiritual force of man is as much shown in taste, in his fancy and imagination, - attaching deep meanings to things and to arbitrary inventions of no real value, - as in his perception of truth. He is as much raised above the beast by this creative faculty as by any other. The horse and ox use no delays ; they run to the river when thirsty, to the corn when hungry, and say no thanks, but fight down whatever opposes their appetite. But man invents and adorns all he does with delays and degrees, paints it all over with forms, to please himself better ; he invented majesty and the etiquette of courts and drawing-rooms ; architecture, curtains, dress, all luxuries and adornments, and the elegance of privacy, to increase the joys of society. He invented marriage ; and surrounded by religion, by comeliness, by all manner of dignities and renunciations, the union of the sexes.

And how should we better measure the gulf between the best intercourse of men in old Athens, in London, or in our American capitals, - between this and the hedgehog existence of diggers of worms, and the eaters of clay and offal, - than by signaling just this department of taste or comeliness ? Herein woman is the prime genius and ordainer. There is no grace that is taught by the dancing-master, no style adopted into the etiquette of courts, but was first the whim and the mere action of some brilliant woman, who charmed beholders by this new expression, and made it remembered and copied. And I think they should magnify their ritual of manners.' Society, conversation, decorum, flowers, dances, colors, forms, are their homes and attendants. They should be found in fit surroundings - with fair approaches, with agree-able architecture, and with all advantages which the means of man collect:

" The far-fetched diamond finds its home
Flashing and smouldering in her hair.
For her the seas their pearls reveal,
Art and strange lands her pomp supply

With purple, chrome and cochineal,
Ochre and lapis lazuli.
The worm its golden woof presents.
Whatever runs, flies, dives or delves
All doff for her their ornaments,
Which suit her better than themselves."

There is no gift of Nature without some draw-back. So, to women, this exquisite structure could not exist without its own penalty. More vulnerable, more infirm, more mortal than men, they could not be such excellent artists in this element of fancy if they did not lend and give themselves to it. They are poets who believe their own poetry. They emit from their pores a colored atmosphere, one would say, wave upon wave of rosy light, in which they walk evermore, and see all objects through this warm-tinted mist that envelops them.

But the starry crown of woman is in the power of her affection and sentiment, and the infinite enlargements to which they lead. Beautiful is the passion of love, painter and adorer of youth and early life : but who suspects, in its blushes and tremors, what tragedies, hero-isms and immortalities are beyond it? The passion, with all its grace and poetry, is profane to that which follows it. All these

affections are only introductory to that which is beyond, and to that which is sublime. We men have no right to say it, but the omnipotence of Eve is in humility. The instincts of mankind have drawn the Virgin Mother -

" Created beings all in lowliness
Surpassing, as in height above them all."

This is the Divine Person whom Dante and Milton saw in vision. This is the victory of Griselda, her supreme humility. And it is when love has reached this height that all our pretty rhetoric begins to have meaning. When we see that, it adds to the soul a new soul, it is honey in the mouth, music in the ear and balsam in the heart.

Far have I clambered in my mind,
But nought so great as Love I find.
What is thy tent, where dost thou dwell ?
My mansion is humility,
Heaven's vastest capability.'
The further it doth downward tend,
The higher up it doth ascend."2

The first thing men think of, when they love, is to exhibit their usefulness and advantages to the object of their affection. Women make light of these, asking only love. They wish it to be an exchange of nobleness.

There is much in their nature, much in their social position which gives them a certain power of divination. And women know, at first sight, the characters of those with whom they converse. There is much that tends to give them a religious height which men do not attain. Their sequestration from affairs and from the injury to the moral sense which affairs often inflict, aids this. And in every remarkable religious development in the world, women have taken a leading part. It is very curious that in the East, where Woman occupies, nationally, a lower sphere, where the laws resist the education and emancipation of women, -in the Mohammedan faith, Woman yet occupies the same leading position, as a prophetess, that she has among the ancient Greeks, or among the Hebrews, or among the Saxons. This power, this religious character, is everywhere to be remarked in them.'

The action of society is progressive. In barbarous society the position of women is always low - in the Eastern nations lower than in the West. "When a daughter is born," says the Shiking, the old Sacred Book of China, " she sleeps on the ground, she is clothed with a wrap-per, she plays with a tile ; she is incapable of evil or of good." And something like that position, in all low society, is the position of woman ; because, as before remarked, she is herself its civilizer. With the advancements of society, the position and influence of woman bring her strength or her faults into light. In modern times, three or four conspicuous instrumentalities may be marked. After the deification of Woman in the Catholic Church, in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, - when her religious nature gave her, of course, new importance, -the Quakers have the honor of having first established, in their discipline, the equality in the sexes. It is even more perfect in the later sect of the Shakers, where no business is broached or counselled without the intervention of one elder and one elderess.

A second epoch for Woman was in France, - entirely civil ; the change of sentiment from a rude to a polite character, in the age of Louis XIV., - commonly dated from the building of the Hotel de Rambouillet.1 I think another important step was made by the doctrine of Swedenborg, a sublime

genius who gave a scientific exposition of the part played severally by man and woman in the world, and showed the difference of sex to run through nature and through thought. Of all Christian sects this is at this moment the most vital and aggressive.

Another step was the effect of the action of the age in the antagonism to Slavery. It was easy to enlist Woman in this ; it was impossible not to enlist her. But that Cause turned out to be a great scholar. He was a terrible meta-physician. He was a jurist, a poet, a divine. Was never a University of Oxford or Göttingen that made such students. It took a man from the plough and made him acute, eloquent, and wise, to the silencing of the doctors. There was nothing it did not pry into, no right it did not explore, no wrong it did not expose. And it has, among its other effects, given Woman a feeling of public duty and an added self-respect.

One truth leads in another by the hand ; one right is an accession of strength to take more. And the times are marked by the new attitude of Woman ; urging, by argument and by association, her rights of all kinds, - in short, to one half of the world ; - as the right to education, to avenues of employment, to equal rights of property, to equal rights in marriage, to the exercise of the professions and of suffrage.

Of course, this conspicuousness had its inconveniences. But it is cheap wit that has been spent on this subject ; from Aristophanes, in whose comedies I confess my dulness to find good joke, to Rabelais, in whom it is monstrous exaggeration of temperament, and not borne out by anything in nature, - down to English Comedy, and, in our day, to Tennyson,' and the American newspapers. In all, the body of the joke is one, namely, to charge women with temperament ; to describe them as victims of temperament; and is identical with Mahomet's opinion that women have not a sufficient moral or intellectual force to control the perturbations of their physical structure. These were all drawings of morbid anatomy, and such satire as might be written on the tenants of a hospital or on an asylum for idiots. Of course it would be easy for women to retaliate in kind, by painting men from the dogs and gorillas that have worn our shape. That they have not, is an eulogy on their taste and self-respect. The good easy world took the joke which it liked. There is always the want of thought ; there is always credulity. There are plenty of people who believe women to be incapable of anything but to cook, incapable of interest in affairs. There are plenty of people who believe that the world is governed by men of dark complexions, that affairs are only directed by such, and do not see the use of contemplative men, or how ignoble would be the world that wanted them. And so without the affection of women.

But for the general charge : no doubt it is well founded. They are victims of the finer temperament. They have tears, and gayeties, and faintings, and glooms and devotion to trifles. Nature's end, of maternity for twenty years, was of so supreme importance that it was to be secured at all events, even to the sacrifice of the highest beauty. They are more personal. Men taunt them that, whatever they do, say, read or write, they are thinking of themselves and their set. Men are not to the same degree temperamental, for there are multitudes of men who live to objects quite out of them, as to politics, to trade, to letters or an art, unhindered by any influence of constitution.

The answer that lies, silent or spoken, in the minds of well-meaning persons, to the new claims, is this : that though their mathematical justice is not to be denied, yet the best women do not wish these things ; they are asked for by people who intellectually seek them, but who have not the support or sympathy of the truest women; and that, if the laws and customs were modified in the manner proposed, it would embarrass and pain gentle and lovely persons with duties which they would find irksome and distasteful. Very likely. Providence is always surprising us with new and unlikely

instruments. But perhaps it is because these people have been deprived of education, fine companions, opportunities, such as they wished, - because they feel the same rudeness and disadvantage which offends you, - that they have been stung to say, 'It is too late for us to be polished and fashioned into beauty, but, at least, we will see that the whole race of women shall not suffer as we have suffered.'

They have an unquestionable right to their own property. And if a woman demand votes, offices and political equality with men, as among the Shakers an Elder and Elderess are of equal power, - and among the Quakers, - it must not be refused. It is very cheap wit that finds it so droll that a woman should vote. Educate and refine society to the highest point, - bring together a cultivated society of both sexes, in a drawing-room, and consult and decide by voices on a question of taste or on a question of right, and is there any absurdity or any practical difficulty in obtaining their authentic opinions? If not, then there need be none in a hundred companies, if you educate them and accustom them to judge. And, for the effect of it, I can say, for one, that all my points would sooner be carried in the State if women voted. On the questions that are important, -whether the government shall be in one person, or whether representative, or whether democratic; whether men shall be holden in bondage, or shall be roasted alive and eaten, as in Typee, or shall be hunted with bloodhounds, as in this country; whether men shall be hanged for stealing, or hanged at all; whether the unlimited sale of cheap liquors shall be allowed; - they would give, I suppose, as intelligent a vote as the voters of Boston or New York.

We may ask, to be sure, - Why need you vote? If new power is here, of a character which solves old tough questions, which puts me and all the rest in the wrong, tries and condemns our religion, customs, laws, and opens new careers to our young receptive men and women, you can well leave voting to the old dead people. Those whom you teach, and those whom you half teach, will fast enough make themselves considered and strong with their new insight, and votes will follow from all the dull.

The objection to their voting is the same as is urged, in the lobbies of legislatures, against clergymen who take an active part in politics; - that if they are good clergymen they are unacquainted with the expedencies of politics, and if they become good politicians they are worse clergymen. So of women, that they can-not enter this arena without being contaminated and unsexed.

Here are two or three objections: first, a want of practical wisdom; second, a too purely ideal view; and, third, danger of contamination. For their want of intimate knowledge of affairs, I do not think this ought to disqualify them from voting at any town-meeting which I ever attended. I could heartily wish the objection were sound. But if any man will take the trouble to see how our people vote, - how many gentlemen are willing to take on themselves the trouble of thinking and determining for you, and, standing at the door of the polls, give every innocent citizen his ticket as he comes in, informing him that this is the vote of his party; and how the innocent citizen, without further demur, goes and drops it in the ballot-box, - I cannot but think he will agree that most women might vote as wisely.

For the other point, of their not knowing the world, and aiming at abstract right without allowance for circumstances, - that is not a disqualification, but a qualification. Human society is made up of partialities. Each citizen has an interest and a view of his own, which, if followed out to the extreme, would leave no room for any other citizen. One man is timid and another rash; one would change nothing, and the other is pleased with nothing; one wishes schools, another armies, one gunboats, another public gardens. Bring all these biases together and something is done in favor of them all.

Every one is a half vote, but the next elector behind him brings the other or corresponding half in his hand : a reasonable result is had. Now there is no lack, I am sure, of the expediency, or of the interests of trade or of imperative class interests being neglected. There is no lack of votes representing the physical wants ; and if in your city the uneducated emigrant vote numbers thousands, representing a brutal ignorance and mere animal wants, it is to be corrected by an educated and religious vote, representing the wants and desires of honest and refined persons. If the wants, the passions, the vices, are allowed a full vote through the hands of a half-brutal intemperate population, I think it but fair that the virtues, the aspirations should be allowed a full vote, as an offset, through the purest part of the people.

As for the unsexing and contamination, - that only accuses our existing politics, shows how barbarous we are, - that our policies are so crooked, made up of things not to be spoken, to be understood only by wink and nudge ; this man to be coaxed, that man to be bought, and that other to be duped. It is easy to see that there is contamination enough, but it rots the men now, and fills the air with stench. Come out of that : it is like a dance-cellar. The fairest names in this country in literature, in law, have gone into Congress and come out dishonored. And when I read the list of men of intellect, of refined pursuits, giants in law, or eminent scholars, or of social distinction, leading men of wealth and enterprise in the commercial community, and see what they have voted for and suffered to be voted for, I think no community was ever so politely and elegantly betrayed.

I do not think it yet appears that women wish this equal share in public affairs. But it is they and not we that are to determine it. Let the laws be purged of every barbarous remainder, every barbarous impediment to women. Let the public donations for education be equally shared by them, let them enter a school as freely as a church, let them have and hold and give their property as men do theirs ; - and in a few years it will easily appear whether they wish a voice in making the laws that are to govern them. If you do refuse them a vote, you will also refuse to tax them, - according to our Teutonic principle, No representation, no tax.

All events of history are to be regarded as growths and offshoots of the expanding mind of the race, and this appearance of new opinions, their currency and force in many minds, is itself the wonderful fact. For whatever is popular is important, shows the spontaneous sense of the hour. The aspiration of this century will be the code of the next. It holds of high and distant causes, of the same influences that make the sun and moon. When new opinions appear, they will be entertained and respected, by every fair mind, according to their reasonableness, and not according to their convenience, or their fitness to shock our customs. But let us deal with them greatly ; let them make their way by the upper road, and not by the way of manufacturing public opinion, which lapses continually into expediency, and makes charlatans. All that is spontaneous is irresistible, and forever it is individual force that interests. I need not repeat to you - your own solitude will suggest it - that a masculine woman is not strong, but a lady is. The loneliest thought, the purest prayer, is rushing to be the history of a thousand years.

Let us have the true woman, the adorer, the hospitable, the religious heart, and no lawyer need be called in to write stipulations, the cunning clauses of provision, the strong investitures; - for woman moulds the lawgiver and writes the law. But I ought to say, I think it impossible to separate the interests and education of the sexes. Improve and refine the men, and you do the same by the women, whether you will or no. Every woman being the wife or the daughter of a man, - wife, daughter, sister, mother, of a man, she can never be very far from his ear, never not of his counsel, if she has really some-thing to urge that is good in itself and agreeable to nature. Slavery it is that makes slavery ; freedom, freedom. The slavery of women happened when the men were slaves of kings. The

melioration of manners brought their melioration of course. It could not be otherwise, and hence the new desire of better laws. For there are always a certain number of passionately loving fathers, brothers, husbands and sons who put their might into the endeavor to make a daughter, a wife, or a mother happy in the way that suits best. Woman should find in man her guardian. Silently she looks for that, and when she finds that. he is not, as she instantly does, she betakes her to her own defences, and does the best she can. But when he is her guardian, fulfilled with all nobleness, knows and accepts his duties as her brother, all goes well for both.

The new movement is only a tide shared by the spirits of man and woman; and you may proceed in the faith that whatever the woman's heart is prompted to desire, the man's mind is simultaneously prompted to accomplish.'

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XXI Consecration of Sleepy Hollow Cemetary



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XXI ADDRESS

TO THE INHABITANTS OF CONCORD AT THE
CONSECRATION OF SLEEPY HOLLOW
SEPTEMBER 29, 1855

SLEEPY HOLLOW

"No abbey's gloom, nor dark cathedral stoops,
No winding torches paint the midnight air;
Here the green pines delight, the aspen droops
Along the modest pathways, and those fair
Pale asters of the season spread their plumes
Around this field, fit garden for our tombs.

And shalt thou pause to hear some funeral-bell
Slow stealing o'er the heart in this calm place,
Not with a throb of pain, a feverish knell,
But in its kind and supplicating grace,
It says, Go, pilgrim, on thy march, be more
Friend to the friendless than thou vast before;

Learn from the loved one's rest serenity;
To-morrow that soft bell for thee shall sound,
And thou repose beneath the whispering tree,
One tribute more to this submissive ground; -
Prison thy soul from malice, bar out pride,
Nor these pale flowers nor this still field deride:

Rather to those ascents of being turn
Where a ne'er-setting sun illumines the year
Eternal, and the incessant watch-fires burn
Of unspent holiness and goodness clear, -
Forget man's littleness, deserve the best,
God's mercy in thy thought and life confest."
WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING.

ADDRESS

TO THE INHABITANTS OF CONCORD AT THE
CONSECRATION OF SLEEPY HOLLOW
SEPTEMBER 29, 1855

CITIZENS AND FRIENDS: The committee to whom was confided the charge of carrying out the wishes of the town in opening the cemetery, having proceeded so far as to enclose the ground, and cut the necessary roads, and having laid off as many lots as are likely to be wanted at present, have thought it

fit to call the inhabitants together, to show you the ground, now that the new avenues make its advantages appear ; and to put it at your disposition.

They have thought that the taking possession of this field ought to be marked by a public meeting and religious rites : and they have re-quested me to say a few words which the serious and tender occasion inspires.

And this concourse of friendly company assures me that they have rightly interpreted your wishes. [Here followed, in the address, about three pages of matter which Mr. Emerson used later in his essay on Immortality, which may be found in the volume Letters and Social aims, beginning on page 324, " The credence of men," etc., and ending on pages 326-27 with the sentence, " Meantime the true disciples saw, through the letters, the doctrine of eternity which dissolved the poor corpse and nature also, and gave grandeur to the passing hour."]

In these times we see the defects of our old theology ; its inferiority to our habit of thoughts. Men go up and down ; Science is popularized ; the irresistible democracy - shall I call it ? - of chemistry, of vegetation, which recomposes for new life every decomposing particle, - the race never dying, the individual never spared, - have impressed on the mind of the age the futility of these old arts of preserving. We give our earth to earth. We will not jealously guard a few atoms under immense marbles, selfishly and impossibly sequestering it from the vast circulations of Nature, but, at the same time, fully admitting the divine hope and love which belong to our nature, wishing to make one spot tender to our children, who shall come hither in the next century to read the dates of these lives.

Our people accepting this lesson from science, yet touched by the tenderness which Christianity breathes, have found a mean in the consecration of gardens. A simultaneous movement has, in a hundred cities and towns in this country, selected some convenient piece of undulating ground with pleasant woods and waters ; every family chooses its own clump of trees ; and we lay the corpse in these leafy colonnades.

A grove of trees, - what benefit or ornament is so fair and great ? they make the landscape ; they keep the earth habitable ; their roots run down, like cattle, to the water-courses ; their heads expand to feed the atmosphere. The life of a tree is a hundred and a thousand years ; its decays ornamental ; its repairs self-made : they grow when we sleep, they grew when we were unborn. Man is a moth among these longevities. He plants for the next millennium. Shadows haunt them ; all that ever lived about them cling to them. You can almost see behind these pines the Indian with bow and arrow lurking yet exploring the traces of the old trail.

Modern taste has shown that there is no ornament, no architecture alone, so sumptuous as well disposed woods and waters, where art has been employed only to remove superfluities, and bring out the natural advantages. In cultivated grounds one sees the picturesque and opulent effect of the familiar shrubs, barberry, lilac, privet and thorns, when they are disposed in masses, and in large spaces. What work of man will compare with the plantation of a park ? It dignifies life. It is a seat for friendship, counsel, taste and religion. I do not wonder that they are the chosen badge and point of pride of European nobility. But how much more are they needed by us, anxious, overdriven Americans, to stanch and appease that fury of temperament which our climate bestows !

This tract fortunately lies adjoining to the Agricultural Society's ground, to the New Burial Ground, to the Court House and the Town House, making together a large block of public ground, permanent property of the town and county, - all the ornaments of either adding so much value to all.

I suppose all of us will readily admit the value of parks and cultivated grounds to the pleasure and education of the people, but I have heard it said here that we would gladly spend for a park for the living, but not for a cemetery ; a garden for the living, a home of thought and friendship. Certainly the living need it more than the dead ; indeed, to speak precisely, it is given to the dead for the reaction of benefit on the living. But if the direct regard to the living be thought expedient, that is also in your power. This ground is happily so divided by Nature as to admit of this relation between the Past and the Present. In the valley where we stand will be the Monuments. On the other side of the ridge, towards the town, a portion of the land is in full view of the cheer of the village and is out of sight of the Monuments ; it admits of being reserved for secular purposes ; for games, - not such as the Greeks honored the dead with, but for games of education ; the distribution of school prizes ; the meeting of teachers ; patriotic eloquence, the utterance of the principles of national liberty to private, social, literary or religious fraternities. Here we may establish that most agreeable of all museums, and agreeable to the temper of our times, - an arboretum, - wherein may be planted, by the taste of every citizen, one tree, with its name recorded in a book ; every tree that is native to Massachusetts, or will grow in it ; so that every child may be shown growing, side by side, the eleven oaks of Massachusetts ; and the twenty willows ; the beech, which we have allowed to die out of the eastern counties ; and here the vast firs of California and Oregon.

This spot for twenty years has borne the name of Sleepy Hollow. Its seclusion from the village in its immediate neighborhood had made it to all the inhabitants an easy retreat on a Sabbath day, or a summer twilight, and it was inevitably chosen by them when the design of a new cemetery was broached, if it did not suggest the design, as the fit place for their final repose. In all the multitudes of woodlands and hillsides, which within a few years have been laid out with a similar design, I have not known one so fitly named. S l e e p y Hollow. I n this quiet valley, as in the palm of Nature's hand, we shall sleep well when we have finished our day. What is the Earth itself but a surface scooped into nooks and caves of slumber - according to the Eastern fable, a bridge full of holes, into one or other of which all the passengers sink to silence ? Nay, when I think of the mystery of life, its round of illusions, our ignorance of its beginning or its end, the speed of the changes of that glittering dream we call existence, - I think sometimes that the vault of the sky arching there upward, under which our busy being is whirled, is only a Sleepy Hollow, with path of Suns, instead of foot-paths ; and Milky Ways, for truck-roads.

The ground has the peaceful character that belongs to this town ; - no lofty crags, no glittering cataracts ; - but I hold that every part of Nature is handsome when not deformed by bad Art. Bleak sea-rocks and sea-downs and blasted heaths have their own beauty ; and though we make much ado in our praises of Italy or Andes, Nature makes not so much difference. The morning, the moonlight, the spring day, are magical painters, and can glorify a meadow or a rock. But we must look forward also, and make our-selves a thousand years old ; and when these acorns, that are falling at our feet, are oaks over-shadowing our children in a remote century, this mute green bank will be full of history: the good, the wise and great will have left their names and virtues on the trees ; heroes, poets, beauties, sanctities, benefactors, will have made the air timeable and articulate.

And hither shall repair, to this modest spot of God's earth, every sweet and friendly influence ; the beautiful night and beautiful day will come in turn to sit upon the grass. Our use will not displace the old tenants. The well-beloved birds will not sing one song the less, the high-holding woodpecker, the meadow-lark, the oriole, robin, purple finch, bluebird, thrush and red-eyed warbler, the heron, the bittern will find out the hospitality and protection from the gun of this asylum, and will seek the waters of the meadow ; and in the grass, and by the pond, the locust, the cricket and the hyla, shall shrilly play.

We shall bring hither the body of the dead, but how shall we catch the escaped soul ? Here will burn for us, as the oath of God, the sublime belief. I have heard that death takes us away from ill things, not from good. I have heard that when we pronounce the name of man, we pronounce the belief of immortality. All great natures delight in stability ; all great men find eternity affirmed in the promise of their faculties. Why is the fable of the Wandering Jew agreeable to men, but because they want more time and land to execute their thoughts in? Life is not long enough for art, nor long enough for friendship. The evidence from intellect is as valid as the evidence from love. The being that can share a thought and feeling so sublime as confidence in truth is no mushroom. Our dissatisfaction with any other solution is the blazing evidence of immortality.

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XXII Robert Burns



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XXII

ROBERT BURNS

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE BURNS CENTENARY, BOSTON JANUARY 25, 1859

"His was the music to whose tone
The common pulse of man keeps time
In cot or castle's mirth or moan,
In cold or sunny clime.

Praise to the bard! his words are driven,
Like Rower-seeds by the far winds sown,
Where'er, beneath the sky of heaven,
The birds of tame have flown."

HALLECK.

ROBERT BURNS

MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN: I do not know by what untoward accident it has chanced, and I forbear to inquire, that, in this accomplished circle, it should fall to me, the worst Scotsman of all, to receive your commands, and at the latest hour too, to respond to the sentiment just offered, and which indeed makes the occasion. But I am told there is no appeal, and I must trust to the inspirations of the theme to make a fitness which does not otherwise exist. Yet, Sir, I heartily feel the singular claims of the occasion. At the first announcement, from I know not whence, that the 25th of January was the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, a sudden consent warmed the great English race, in all its kingdoms, colonies and states, all over the world, to keep the festival. We are here to hold our parliament with love and poesy, as men were wont to do in the Middle Ages. Those famous parliaments might or might not have had more stateliness and better singers than we, - though that is yet to be known, - but they could not have better reason. I can only explain this singular unanimity in a race which rarely acts together, but rather after their watch-word, Each for himself, - by the fact that Robert Burns, the poet of the middle class, re-presents in the mind of men to-day that great uprising of the middle class against the armed and privileged minorities, that uprising which worked politically in the American and French Revolutions, and which, not in governments so much as in education and social order, has changed the face of the world.

In order for this destiny, his birth, breeding and fortunes were low. His organic sentiment was absolute independence, and resting as it should on a life of labor. No man existed who could look down on him. They that looked into his eyes saw that they might look down the sky as easily.' His muse and teaching was common sense, joyful, aggressive, irresistible. Not Latimer, nor Luther struck more telling blows against false theology than did this brave singer. The Confession of Augsburg, the Declaration of Independence, the French Rights of Man, and the Marseillaise, are not more weighty documents in the history of freedom than the songs of Burns. His satire has lost none of its edge. His musical arrows yet sing through the air. He is so substantially a reformer that I find his grand plain sense in close chain with the greatest masters, - Rabelais, Shakspeare in comedy, Cervantes, Butler, and Burns. If I should add another name, I find it only in a living country-man of Burns.'

He is an exceptional genius. The people who care nothing for literature and poetry care for Burns. It was indifferent - they thought who saw him - whether he wrote verse or not : he could have done anything else as well. Yet how true a poet is he ! And the poet, too, of poor men, of gray hodden and the guernsey coat and the blouse. He has given voice to all the experiences of common life ; he has endeared the farmhouse and cottage, patches and poverty, beans and barley ; ale, the poor man's wine ; hardship ; the fear of debt ; the dear society of weans and wife, of brothers and sisters, proud of each other, knowing so few and finding amends for want and obscurity in books and thoughts.' What a love of Nature, and, shall I say it ? of middle-class Nature. Not like Goethe, in the stars, or like Byron, in the ocean, or Moore, in the luxurious East, but in the homely landscape which the poor see around them, - bleak leagues of pasture and stubble, ice and sleet and rain and snow-choked brooks ; birds, hares, field-mice, thistles and heather, which he daily knew. How many " Bonny Doons " and " John Anderson my jo's " and " Auld lang synes " all around the earth have his verses been applied to ! And his love-songs still woo and melt the youths and maids ; the farm-work, the country holiday, the fishing-cobble are still his debtors to-day.

And as he was thus the poet of the poor, anxious, cheerful, working humanity, so had he the language of low life. He grew up in a rural district, speaking a patois unintelligible to all but natives, and he has made the Lowland Scotch a Doric dialect of fame. It is the only example in history of a language made classic by the genius of a single man. But more than this. He had that secret of genius to draw from the bottom of society the strength of its speech, and astonish the ears of the polite with these artless words, better than art, and filtered of all offence through his beauty. It seemed odious to Luther that the devil should have all the best tunes ; he would bring them into the churches ; and Burns knew how to take from fairs and gypsies, black-smiths and drovers, the speech of the market and street, and clothe it with melody. But I am detaining you too long. The memory of Burns, - I am afraid heaven and earth have taken too good care of it to leave us anything to say. The west winds are murmuring it. Open the windows behind you, and hearken for the incoming tide, what the waves say of it. The doves perching always on the eaves of the Stone Chapel opposite, may know something about it. Every name in broad Scotland keeps his fame bright. The memory of Burns, - every man's, every boy's and girl's head carries snatches of his songs, and they say them by heart, and, what is strangest of all, never learned them from a book, but from mouth to mouth. The wind whispers them, the birds whistle them, the corn, barley, and bulrushes hoarsely rustle them, nay, the music-boxes at Geneva are framed and toothed to play them ; the hand-organs of the Savoyards in all cities repeat them, and the chimes of bells ring them in the spires. They are the property and the solace of mankind.'

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XXIII Shakespeare

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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XXIII

REMARKS

AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE THREE HUNDREDTH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF SHAKSPEARE
BY THE SATURDAY CLUB AT THE
REVERE HOUSE, BOSTON, 1864

ENGLAND'S genius filled all measure
Of heart and soul, of strength and pleasure,
Gave to mind its emperor
And life was lager than before;
And centuries brood, nor can attain
The sense and bound of Shakspeare's brain:
The men who lived with him became
Poets, for the air was fame.

SHAKSPEARE

TIS not our fault if we have not made this evening's circle still richer than it is. We seriously endeavored, besides our brothers and our seniors, on whom the ordinary lead of literary and social action falls-and falls because of their ability - to draw out of their retirements a few rarer lovers of the muse-" seld-seen flamens "-whom this day seemed to elect and challenge. And it is to us a painful disappointment that Bryant and Whittier as guests, and our own Hawthorne, - with the best will to come,-should have found it impossible at last; and again, that a well-known and honored compatriot, who first in Boston wrote elegant verse, and on Shakspeare, and whose American devotion through forty or fifty years to the affairs of a bank, has not been able to bury the fires of his genius, - Mr. Charles Sprague, - pleads the infirmities of age as an absolute bar to his presence with us.

We regret also the absence of our members Sumner and Motley.

We can hardly think of an occasion where so little need be said. We are all content to let Shakspeare speak for himself. His fame is settled on the foundations of the moral and intellectual world. Wherever there are men, and in the degree in which they are civil - have power of mind, sensibility to beauty, music, the secrets of passion, and the liquid expression of thought, he has risen to his place as the first poet of the world.

Genius is the consoler of our mortal condition, and Shakspeare taught us that the little world of the heart is vaster, deeper and richer than the spaces of astronomy. What shocks of surprise and sympathetic power, this battery, which he is, imparts to every fine mind that is born ! We say to the young child in the cradle,
Happy, and defended against Fate ! for here is Nature, and here is Shakspeare, waiting for you!

'T is our metre of culture. He is a cultivated man -who can tell us something new of Shakspeare. All criticism is only a making of rules out of his beauties. He is as superior to his countrymen, as to all other countrymen. He fulfilled the famous prophecy of Socrates, that the poet most excellent in

tragedy would be most excellent in comedy, and more than fulfilled it by making tragedy also a victorious melody which healed its own wounds. In short, Shakspeare is the one resource of our life on which no gloom gathers ; the fountain of joy which honors him who tastes it; day without night; pleasure without repentance ; the genius which, in unpoetic ages, keeps poetry in honor and, in sterile periods, keeps up the credit of the human mind.

His genius has reacted on himself. Men were so astonished and occupied by his poems that they have not been able to see his face and condition, or say, who was his father and his brethren ; or what life he led ; and at the short distance of three hundred years he is mythical, like Orpheus and Homer, and we have already seen the most fantastic theories plausibly urged, as that Raleigh and Bacon were the authors of the plays.

Yet we pause expectant before the genius of Shakspeare-as if his biography were not yet written ; until the problem of the whole English race is solved.

I see, among the lovers of this catholic genius, here present, a few, whose deeper know-ledge invites me to hazard an article of my literary creed ; that Shakspeare, by his transcendant reach of thought, so unites the extremes, that, whilst he has kept the theatre now for three centuries, and, like a street-bible, furnishes sayings to the market, courts of law, the senate, and common discourse, - he is vet to all wise men the companion of the closet. The student finds the solitariest place not solitary enough to read him ; and so searching is his penetration, and such the charm of his speech, that he still agitates the heart in age as in youth, and will, until it ceases to beat.

Young men of a contemplative turn carry his sonnets in the pocket. With that book, the shade of any tree, a room in any inn, becomes a chapel or oratory in which to sit out their happiest hours. Later they find riper and manlier lessons in the plays.

And secondly, he is the most robust and potent thinker that ever was. I find that it was not history, courts and affairs that gave him lessons, but he that gave grandeur and prestige to them. There never was a writer who, seeming to draw every hint from outward history, the life of cities and courts, owed them so little. You shall never find in this world the barons or kings he depicted. 'T is fine for Englishmen to say, they only know history by Shakspeare. The palaces they compass earth and sea to enter, the magnificence and personages of royal and imperial abodes, are shabby imitations and caricatures of his, - clumsy pupils of his instruction. There are no Warwicks, no Talbots, no Bolingbrokes, no Cardinals, no Harry Fifth, in real Europe, like his. The loyalty and royalty he drew were all his own. The real Elizabeths, Jameses and Louises were painted sticks before this magician.

The unaffected joy of the comedy, - he lives in a gale, - contrasted with the grandeur of the tragedy, where he stoops to no contrivance, no pulpiting, but flies an eagle at the heart of the problem ; where his speech is a Delphi, - the great Nemesis that he is and utters. What a great heart of equity is he! How good and sound and inviolable his innocency, that is never to seek, and never wrong, but speaks the pure sense of humanity on each occasion. He dwarfs all writers without a solitary exception. No egotism. The egotism of men is immense. It concealed Shakspeare for a century. His mind has a superiority such that the universities should read lectures on him, and conquer the unconquerable if they can.

There are periods fruitful of great men ; others, barren ; or, as the world is always equal to itself, periods when the heat is latent, - others when it is given out.

They are like the great wine years, - the vintage of 1847, is it ? or 1835 ?-which are not only noted in

the carte of the table d'hôte, but which, it is said, are always followed by new vivacity in the politics of Europe. His birth marked a great wine year when wonderful grapes ripened in the vintage of God, when Shakspeare and Galileo were born within a few months of each other, and Cervantes was his exact contemporary, and, in short space before and after, Montaigne, Bacon, Spenser, Raleigh and Jonson. Yet Shakspeare, not by any inferiority of theirs, but simply by his colossal proportions, dwarfs the geniuses of Elizabeth as easily as the wits of Anne, or the poor slipshod troubadours of King Rene.

In our ordinary experience of men there are some men so born to live well that, in whatever company they fall, - high or low, -they fit well, and lead it ! but, being advanced to a higher class, they are just as much in their element as before, and easily command : and being again preferred to selecter companions, find no obstacle to ruling these as they did their earlier mates ; I suppose because they have more humanity than talent, whilst they have quite as much of the last as any of the company. It would strike you as comic, if I should give my own customary examples of this elasticity, though striking enough to me. I could name in this very company - or not going far out of it -very good types, but in order to be parliamentary, Franklin, Burns and Walter Scott are examples of the rule ; and king of men, by this grace of God also, is Shakspeare.

The Pilgrims came to Plymouth in 1620. The plays of Shakspeare were not published until three years later. Had they been published earlier, our forefathers, or the most poetical among them, might have stayed at home to read them.

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XXIV Humboldt

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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XXIV

HUMBOLDT

AN ABSTRACT OF MR. EMERSON'S REMARKS MADE

AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT, SEPTEMBER 14, 1869

"If a life prolonged to an advanced period bring with it several inconveniences to the individual, there is a compensation in the delight of being able to compare older states of knowledge with that which now exists, and to see great advances in knowledge develop themselves under our eyes in departments which had long slept in inactivity."

HUMBOLDT, Letter to Ritter.

HUMBOLDT was one of those wonders of the world, like Aristotle, like Julius Cæsar, like the Admirable Crichton, who appear from time to time, as if to show us the possibilities of the human mind, the force and the range of the faculties, - a universal man, not only possessed of great particular talents, but they were symmetrical, his parts were well put together. As we know, a man's natural powers are often a sort of committee that slowly, one at a time, give their attention and action ; but Humboldt's were all united, one electric chain, so that a university, a whole French Academy, travelled in his shoes. With great propriety, he named his sketch of the results of science Cosmos. There is no other such survey or surveyor. The wonderful Humboldt, with his solid centre and expanded wings, marches like an army, gathering all things as he goes. How he reaches from science to science, from law to law, folding away moons and asteroids and solar systems in the clauses and parentheses of his encyclopædic paragraphs ! There is no book like it ; none indicating such a battalion of powers. You could not put him on any sea or shore but his instant recollection of every other sea or shore illuminated this.

He was properly a man of the world ; you could not lose him ; you could not detain him ; you could not disappoint him, for at any point on land or sea he found the objects of his re-searches. When he was stopped in Spain and could not get away, he turned round and interpreted their mountain system, explaining the past history of the continent of Europe. He belonged to that wonderful German nation, the foremost scholars in all history, who surpass all others in industry, space and endurance. A German reads a literature whilst we are reading a book. One of their writers warns his country-men that it is not the Battle of Leipsic, but the Leipsic Fair Catalogue, which raises them above the French. I remember Cuvier tells us of fossil elephants ; that Germany has furnished the greatest number ; - not because there are more elephants in Germany, - oh no; but because in that empire there is no canton without some well-informed person capable of making re-searches and publishing interesting results. I know that we have been accustomed to think they were too good scholars, that because they reflect, they never resolve, that " in a crisis no plan-maker was to be found in the empire ; " but we have lived to see now, for the second time in the history of Prussia, a statesman of the first class, with a clear head and an inflexible will.

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XXV Walter Scott



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XXV

WALTER SCOTT

REMARKS AT THE CELEBRATION BY THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH,
AUGUST 15, 1871

Scott, the delight of generous boys.

As far as Sir Walter Scott aspired to be known for a fine gentleman, so far our sympathies leave him. . . . Our concern is only with the residue, where the man Scott was warmed with a divine ray that clad with beauty every sheet of water, every bald hill in the country he looked upon, and so reanimated the well-nigh obsolete feudal history and illustrated every hidden corner of a barren and disagreeable territory.

Lecture, " Being and Seeing," 1838.

WALTER SCOTT

THE memory of Sir Walter Scott is dear to this Society, of which he was for ten years an honorary member. If only as an eminent antiquary who has shed light on the history of Europe and of the English race, he had high claims to our regard. But to the rare tribute of a centennial anniversary of his birth-day, which we gladly join with Scotland, and indeed with Europe, to keep, he is not less entitled - perhaps he alone among literary men of this century is entitled - by the exceptional debt which all English-speaking men have gladly owed to his character and genius. I think no modern writer has inspired his readers with such affection to his own personality. I can well remember as far back as when *The Lord of the Isles* was first republished in Boston, in 1815, - my own and my school-fellows' joy in the book. *Marmion* and *The Lay* had gone before, but we were then learning to spell. In the face of the later novels, we still claim that his poetry is the delight of boys. But this means that when we reopen these old books we all consent to be boys again. We tread over our youthful grounds with joy. Critics have found them to be only rhymed prose. But I believe that many of those who read them in youth, when, later, they come to dismiss finally their school-days' library, will make some fond exception for Scott as for Byron.

It is easy to see the origin of his poems. His own ear had been charmed by old ballads crooned by Scottish dames at firesides, and written down from their lips by antiquaries ; and finding them now outgrown and dishonored by the new culture, he attempted to dignify and adapt them to the times in which he lived. Just so much thought, so much picturesque detail in dialogue or description as the old ballad required, so much suppression of details and leaping to the event, he would keep and use, but without any ambition to write a high poem after a classic model. He made no pretension to the lofty style of Spenser, or Milton, or Wordsworth. Compared with their purified songs, purified of all ephemeral color or material, his were *vers de société*. But he had the skill proper to *vers de société*, - skill to fit his verse to his topic, and not to write solemn pentameters alike on a hero or a spaniel. His good sense probably elected the ballad to make his audience larger. He apprehended in advance the immense enlargement of the reading public, which almost dates from the era of his books, - which his books and Byron's inaugurated ; and which, though until then unheard of, has become familiar to the

present time.

If the success of his poems, however large, was partial, that of his novels was complete. The tone of strength in *Waverley* at once announced the master, and was more than justified by the superior genius of the following romances, up to the *Bride of Lammermoor*, which almost goes back to Æschylus for a counterpart as a painting of Fate, - leaving on every reader the impression of the highest and purest tragedy.'

His power on the public mind rests on the singular union of two influences. By nature, by his reading and taste an aristocrat, in a time and country which easily gave him that bias, he had the virtues and graces of that class, and by his eminent humanity and his love of labor escaped its harm. He saw in the English Church the symbol and seal of all social order ; in the historical aristocracy the benefits to the state which Burke claimed for it; and in his own reading and research such store of legend and renown as won his imagination to their cause. Not less his eminent humanity delighted in the sense and virtue and wit of the common people. In his own household and neighbors he found characters and pets of humble class, with whom he established the best relation, - small farmers and tradesmen, shepherds, fishermen, gypsies, peasant-girls, crones, - and came with these into real ties of mutual help and good will. From these originals he drew so genially his *Jeanie Deans*, his *Dinmonts* and *Edie Ochiltrees*, *Caleb Balderstones* and *Fairservices*, *Cud-die Headriggs*, *Dominies*, *Meg Merrilies*, and *Jenny Rintherouts*, full of life and reality ; making these, too, the pivots on which the plots of his stories turn ; and meantime without one word of brag of this discernment, - nay, this extreme sympathy reaching down to every beggar and beggar's dog, and horse and cow. In the number and variety of his characters he approaches Shakspeare. Other painters in verse or prose have thrown into literature a few type-figures ; as Cervantes, De Foe, Richardson, Goldsmith, Sterne and Fielding ; but Scott portrayed with equal strength and success every figure in his crowded company.

His strong good sense saved him from the faults and foibles incident to poets, - from nervous egotism, sham modesty or jealousy. He played ever a manly part.¹ With such a fortune and such a genius, we should look to see what heavy toll the Fates took of him, as of Rousseau or Voltaire, of Swift or Byron. But no : he had no insanity, or vice, or blemish. He was a thoroughly upright, wise and great-hearted man, equal to whatever event or fortune should try him. Disasters only drove him to immense exertion. What an ornament and safeguard is humor ! Far better than wit for a poet and writer. It is a genius itself, and so defends from the insanities.

Under what rare conjunction of stars was this man born, that, wherever he lived, he found superior men, passed all his life in the best company, and still found himself the best of the best ! He was apprenticed at Edinburgh to a Writer to the Signet, and became a Writer to the Signet, and found himself in his youth and manhood and age in the society of Mackintosh, Horner, Jeff-rev, Playfair, Dugald Stewart, Sydney Smith, Leslie, Sir William Hamilton, Wilson, Hogg, De Quincey, - to name only some of his literary neighbors, and, as soon as he died, all this brilliant circle was broken up.

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XXVI Speech at Banquet in Honor of Chinese Embassy



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XXVI

SPEECH

AT BANQUET IN HONOR OF THE CHINESE EMBASSY

BOSTON, 1860

NATURE creates in the East the uncontrollable yearning to escape from limitation into the vast and boundless, to use a freedom of fancy which plays with all works of Nature, great or minute, galaxy or grain of dust, as toys and words of the mind; inculcates a beatitude to be found in escape from all organization and all personality, and makes ecstasy an institution.

SPEECH

AT THE BANQUET IN HONOR OF

THE CHINESE EMBASSY

MR. MAYOR : I suppose we are all of one opinion on this remarkable occasion of meeting the embassy sent from the oldest Empire in the world to the youngest Republic. All share the surprise and pleasure when the venerable Oriental dynasty- hitherto a roman-tic legend to most of us - suddenly steps into the fellowship of nations. This auspicious event, considered in connection with the late innovations in Japan, marks a new era, and is an irresistible result of the science which has given us the power of steam and the electric telegraph. It is the more welcome for the surprise. We had said of China, as the old prophet said of Egypt, " Her strength is to sit still." Her people had such elemental conservatism that by some wonderful force of race and national manners, the wars and revolutions that occur in her annals have proved but momentary swells or surges on the pacific ocean of her history, leaving no trace. But in its immovability this race has claims. China is old, not in time only, but in wisdom, which is gray hair to a nation, or, rather, truly seen, is eternal youth. As we know, China had the magnet centuries before Europe ; and block-printing or stereotype, and lithography, and gunpowder, and vaccination, and canals ; had anticipated Linnæus's nomenclature of plants ; had codes, journals, clubs, hackney coaches, and, thirty centuries before New York, had the custom of New Year's calls of comity and reconciliation. I need not mention its useful arts, - its pottery indispensable to the world, the luxury of silks, and its tea, the cordial of nations. But I must remember that she has respectable remains of astronomic science, and historic records of forgotten time, that have supplied important gaps in the ancient history of the western nations. Then she has philosophers who cannot be spared. Confucius has not yet gathered all his fame. When Socrates heard that the oracle declared that he was the wisest of men, he said, it must mean that other men held that they were wise, but that he knew that he knew nothing. Confucius had already affirmed this of himself: and what we call the GOLDEN RULE of Jesus, Confucius had uttered in the same terms five hundred years before. His morals, though addressed to a state of society unlike ours, we read with profit to-day. His rare perception appears in his GOLDEN MEAN, his doctrine of Reciprocity, his unerring insight, - putting always the blame of our misfortunes on ourselves ; as when to the governor who complained of thieves, he said, " If you, sir, were not covetous, though you should re-ward them for it, they would not steal." His ideal of greatness predicts Marcus Antoninus. At the same time, he abstained from paradox, and met the ingrained prudence of his nation by saving always, " Bend one cubit to straighten eight."

China interests us at this moment in a point of politics. I am sure that gentlemen around me bear in mind the bill which the Hon. Mr. Jenckes of Rhode Island has twice attempted to carry through Congress, requiring that candidates for public offices shall first pass examinations on their literary qualifications for the same. Well, China has preceded us, as well as England and France, in this essential correction of a reckless usage ; and the like high esteem of education appears in China in social life, to whose distinctions it is made an indispensable passport.

It is gratifying to know that the advantages of the new intercourse between the two countries are daily manifest on the Pacific coast. The immigrants from Asia come in crowds. Their power of continuous labor, their versatility in adapting themselves to new conditions, their stoical economy, are unlooked-for virtues. They send back to their friends, in China, money, new products of art, new tools, machinery, new foods, etc., and are thus establishing a commerce without limit. I cannot help adding, after what I have heard to-night, that I have read in the journals a statement from an English source, that Sir Frederic Bruce attributed to Mr. Burlingame the merit of the happy reform in the relations of foreign governments to China. I am quite sure that I heard from Mr. Burlingame in New York, in his last visit to America, that the whole merit of it belonged to Sir Frederic Bruce. It appears that the ambassadors were emulous in their magnanimity. It is certainly the best guaranty for the interests of China and of humanity.

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XXVIII Speech at Second Annual Meeting of Free



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XXVIII SPEECH

AT THE SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FREE
RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION, AT TREMONT TEMPLE
FRIDAY, MAY 28, 1869

THOU metest him by centuries,
And lo! he passes like the breeze;
Thou seek'st in globe and galaxy,
He hides in pure transparency;
Thou ask'st in fountains and in fires,
He is the essence that inquires.

SPEECH

AT SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
FREE RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION

FRIENDS : I wish I could deserve anything of the kind expression of my friend, the President, and the kind good will which the audience signifies, but it is not in my power to-day to meet the natural demands of the occasion, and, quite against my design and my will, I shall have to request the attention of the audience to a few written remarks, instead of the more extensive statement which I had hoped to offer them.

I think we have disputed long enough. I think we might now relinquish our theological controversies to communities more idle and ignorant than we. I am glad that a more realistic church is coming to be the tendency of society, and that we are likely one day to forget our obstinate polemics in the ambition to excel each other in good works. I have no wish to proselyte any reluctant mind, nor, I think, have I any curiosity or impulse to intrude on those whose ways of thinking differ from mine. But as my friend, your presiding officer, has asked me to take at least some small part in this day's conversation, I am ready to give, as often before, the first simple foundation of my belief, that the Author of Nature has not left himself without a witness in any sane mind : that the moral sentiment speaks to every man the law after which the Universe was made ; that we find parity, identity of design, through Nature, and benefit to be the uniform aim : that there is a force always at work to make the best better and the worst good.1 We have had not long since presented us by Max Müller a valuable paragraph from St. Augustine, not at all extraordinary in itself, but only as coming from that eminent Father in the Church, and at that age, in which St. Augustine writes : " That which is now called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and never did not exist from the planting of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, at which time the true religion which ;already existed began to be called Christianity." I believe that not only Christianity is as old as the Creation, -not only every sentiment and precept of Christianity can be paralleled in other religious writings, -but more, that a man of religious susceptibility, and one at the same time conversant with many men, - say a much? travelled man, - can find the same idea in numberless conversations. The religious find religion wherever they associate. When I find in people narrow religion, I find also in them narrow reading. Nothing really is so self-publishing, so divulgatory, as thought. It cannot be confined or hid. It is easily

carried ; it takes no room ; the knowledge of Europe looks out into Persia and India, and to the very Kaffirs. Every pro-verb, every fine text, every pregnant jest, travels across the line ; and you will find it at Cape Town, or among the Tartars. We are all believers in natural religion; we all agree that the health and integrity of man is self-respect, selfsubsistency, a regard to natural conscience. All education is to accustom him to trust himself, discriminate between his higher and lower thoughts, exert the timid faculties until they are robust, and thus train him to self-help, until he ceases to be an underling, a tool, and becomes a benefactor. I think wise men wish their religion to be all of this kind, teaching the agent to go alone, not to hang on the world as a pensioner, a permitted person, but an adult, self-searching soul, brave to assist or resist a world : only humble and docile before the source of the wisdom he has discovered within him.

As it is, every believer holds a different creed ; that is, all the churches are churches of one member. All our sects have refined the point of difference between them. The point of difference that still remains between churches, or between classes, is in the addition to the moral code, that is, to natural religion, of somewhat positive and historical. I think that to be, as Mr. Abbot has stated it in his form, the one difference remaining. I object, of course, to the claim of miraculous dispensation, - certainly not to the doctrine of Christianity.' This claim impairs, to my mind, the soundness of him who makes it, and indisposes us to his communion. This comes the wrong way ; it comes from without, not within. This positive, historical, authoritative scheme is not consistent with our experience or our expectations. It is something not in Nature : it is contrary to that law of Nature which all wise men recognize ; namely, never to require a larger cause than is necessary to the effect. George Fox, the Quaker, said that, though he read of Christ and God, he knew them only from the like spirit in his own soul. We want all the aids to' our moral training. We cannot spare the vision nor the virtue of the saints; but let it be by pure sympathy, not with any personal or official claim. If you are childish, and exhibit your saint as a worker of wonders, a thaumaturgist, I am repelled. That claim takes his teachings out of logic and out of nature, and permits official and arbitrary senses to be grafted on the teachings. It is the praise of our New Testament that its teachings go to the honor and benefit of humanity, - that no better lesson has been taught or incarnated. Let it stand, beautiful and wholesome, with whatever is most like it in the teaching and practice of men ; but do not attempt to elevate it out of humanity, by saving, ` This was not a man,' for then you confound it with the fables of every popular religion, and my distrust of the story makes me distrust the doctrine as soon as it differs from my own belief.

Whoever thinks a story gains by the prodigious, by adding something out of nature, robs it more than he adds. It is no longer an example, a model ; no longer a heart-stirring hero, but an exhibition, a wonder, an anomaly, removed out of the range of influence with thoughtful men. I submit that in sound frame of mind, we read or remember the religious sayings and oracles of other men, whether Jew or Indian, or Greek or Persian, only for friendship, only for joy in the social identity which they open to us, and that these words would have no weight with us if we had not the same conviction already. I find something stingy in the unwilling and disparaging admission of these foreign opinions - opinions from all parts of the world - by our churchmen, as if only to enhance by their dimness the superior light of Christianity. Meantime, observe, you cannot bring me too good a word, too dazzling a hope, too penetrating an insight from the Jews. I hail every one with delight, as showing the riches of my brother, my fellow soul, who could thus think and thus greatly feel. Zealots eagerly fasten their eyes on the differences between their creed and yours, but the charm of the study is in finding the agreements, the identities, in all the religions of men.'

I am glad to hear each sect complain that they do not now hold the opinions they are charged with. The earth moves, and the mind opens. I am glad to believe society contains a class of humble souls who enjoy the luxury of a religion that does not degrade ; who think it the highest worship to expect of Heaven the most and the best; who do not wonder that there was a Christ, but that there were not a thousand ; who have conceived an infinite hope for mankind; who believe that the history of Jesus is the history of every man, written large.'

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XXIX Address at Opening of Concord Free Public Library



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Written by Ralph Waldo Emerson

XXIX

ADDRESS

AT THE OPENING OF THE CONCORD FREE
PUBLIC LIBRARY

THE bishop of Cavaillon, Petrarch's friend, in a playful experiment locked up the poet's library, intending to exclude him from it for three days, but the poet's misery caused him to restore the key on the first evening. . . And I verily believe I should have become insane," says Petrarch, " if my mind had longer been deprived of its necessary nourishment."

THE people of Massachusetts prize the simple political arrangement of towns, each independent in its local government, electing its own officers, assessing its taxes, caring for its schools, its charities, its highways. That town is attractive to its native citizens and to immigrants which has a healthy site, good land, good roads, good sidewalks, a good hotel ; still more, if it have an adequate town hall, good churches, good preachers, good schools, and if it avail itself of the Act of the Legislature authorizing towns to tax themselves for the establishment of a public library. Happier, if it contain citizens who cannot wait for the slow growth of the population to make these advantages adequate to the desires of the people, but make costly gifts to education, civility and culture, as in the act we are met to witness and acknowledge today.

I think we cannot easily overestimate the benefit conferred. In the details of this munificence, we may all anticipate a sudden and lasting prosperity to this ancient town, in the benefit of a noble library, which adds by the beauty of the building, and its skilful arrangement, a quite new attraction, - making readers of those who are not readers, - making scholars of those who only read newspapers or novels until now; and whilst it secures a new and needed culture to our citizens, offering a strong attraction to strangers who are seeking a country home to sit down here. And I am not sure that when Boston learns the good deed of Mr. Munroe, it will not be a little envious, nor rest until it has annexed Concord to the city. Our founder has found the many admirable examples which have lately honored the country, of benefactors who have not waited to bequeath colleges and hospitals, but have themselves built them, reminding us of Sir Isaac Newton's saying, " that they who give nothing before their death, never in fact give at all."

I think it is not easy to exaggerate the utility of the beneficence which takes this form. If you consider what has befallen you when reading a poem, or a history, or a tragedy, or a novel, even, that deeply interested you, - how you forgot the time of day, the persons sitting in the room, and the engagements for the evening, you will easily admit the wonderful property of books to make all towns equal: that Concord Library makes Concord as good as Rome, Paris or Lon-don, for the hour; - has the best of each of those cities in itself. Robinson Crusoe, could he have had a shelf of our books, could almost have done without his man Friday, or even the arriving ship.

Every faculty casts itself into an art, and memory into the art of writing, that is, the book. The sedge Papyrus, which gave its name to our word paper, is of more importance to history than cotton, or silver, or gold. Its first use for writing is between three and four thousand years old, and though it

hardly grows now in Egypt, where I lately looked for it in vain, I always remember with satisfaction that I saw that venerable plant in 1833, growing wild at Syracuse, in Sicily, near the fountain of Arethusa.

The chairman of Mr. Munroe's trustees has told you how old is the foundation of our village library, and we think we can trace in our modest records a correspondent effect of culture amidst our citizens. A deep religious sentiment is, in all times, an inspirer of the intellect, and that was not wanting here. The town was settled by a pious company of non-conformists from England, and the printed books of their pastor and leader, Rev. Peter Bulkeley, sometime fellow of Saint John's College in Cambridge, England, testify the ardent sentiment which they shared. "There is no people," said he to his little flock of exiles, "but will strive to excel in something. What can we excel in if not in holiness? If we look to number, we are the fewest; if to strength, we are the weakest; if to wealth and riches, we are the poorest of all the people of God through the whole world. We cannot excel, nor so much as equal other people in these things, and if we come short in grace and holiness too, we are the most despicable people under heaven. Strive we therefore herein to excel, and suffer not this crown to be taken away from us." 1

The religious bias of our founders had its usual effect to secure an education to read their Bible and hymn-book, and thence the step was easy for active minds to an acquaintance with history and with poetry. Peter Bulkeley sent his son John to the first class that graduated at Harvard College in 1642, and two sons to later classes. Major Simon Willard's son Samuel graduated at Harvard in 1659, and was for six years, from 1701 to 1707, vice-president of the college; and his son Joseph was president of the college from 1781 to 1804; and Concord counted fourteen graduates of Harvard in its first century, and its representation there increased with its gross population.'

I possess the manuscript journal of a lady, native of this town (and descended from three of its clergymen), who removed into Maine, where she possessed a farm and a modest income. She was much addicted to journeying and not less to reading, and whenever she arrived in a town where was a good minister who had a library, she would persuade him to receive her as a boarder, and would stay until she had looked over all his volumes which were to her taste. On a very cold day, she writes in her diary, "Life truly resembles a river - ever the same - never the same; and perhaps a greater variety of internal emotions would be felt by remaining with books in one place than pursuing the waves which are ever the same. Is the melancholy bird of night, covered with the dark foliage of the willow and cypress, less gratified than the gay lark amid the flowers and suns? I think that you never enjoy so much as in solitude with a book that meets the feelings," and in reference to her favorite authors, she adds, "The delight in others' superiority is my best gift from, God."

Lemuel Shattuck, by his history of the town, has made all of us grateful to his memory as a careful student and chronicler; but events so important have occurred in the forty years since that book was published, that it now needs a second volume.

Henry Thoreau we all remember as a man of genius, and of marked character, known to our farmers as the most skilful of surveyors, and indeed better acquainted with their forests and meadows and trees than themselves, but more widely known as the writer of some of the best books which have been written in this country, and which, I am persuaded, have not yet gathered half their fame. He, too, was an excellent reader. No man would have rejoiced more than he in the event of this day. In a private letter to a lady, he writes, "Do you read any noble verses? For my part, they have been the only things I remembered, - or that which occasioned them, - when all things else were blurred and defaced.² All things have put on mourning but they: for the elegy itself is some victorious melody in

you, escaping from the wreck. It is a relief to read some true books wherein all are equally dead, equally alive. think the best parts of Shakspeare would only be enhanced by the most thrilling and affecting events. I have found it so: and all the more, that they are not intended for consolation."

Nathaniel Hawthorne's residence in the Manse gave new interest to that house whose windows overlooked the retreat of the British soldiers in 1775, and his careful studies of Concord life and history are known wherever the English language is spoken.'

I know the word literature has in many ears a hollow sound. It is thought to be the harm-less entertainment of a few fanciful persons, and not at all to be the interest of the multitude. To these objections, which proceed on the cheap notion that nothing but what grinds corn, roasts mutton and weaves cotton, is anything worth, I have little to say. There are utilitarians who prefer that Jesus should have wrought as a carpenter, and Saint Paul as a tent-maker. But literature is the record of the best thoughts. Every attainment and discipline which increases a man's acquaintance with the invisible world lifts his being. Everything that gives him a new perception of beauty multiplies his pure enjoyments. A river of thought is always running out of the invisible world into the mind of man. Shall not they who received the largest streams spread abroad the healing waters?

It was the symbolical custom of the ancient Mexican priests, after the annual extinction of the household fires of their land, to procure in the temple fire from the sun, and thence distribute it as a sacred gift to every hearth in the nation. It is a just type of the service rendered to mankind by wise men. Homer and Plato and Pindar and Shakspeare serve many more than have heard their names. Thought is the most volatile of all things. It cannot be contained in any cup, though you shut the lid never so tight. Once brought into the world, it runs over the vessel which received it into all minds that love it. The very language we speak thinks for us by the subtle distinctions which already are marked for us by its words, and every one of these is the contribution of the wit of one and another sagacious man in all the centuries of time.

Consider that it is our own state of mind at any time that makes our estimate of life and the world. If you sprain your foot, you will presently come to think that Nature has sprained hers. Everything begins to look so slow and inaccessible. And when you sprain your mind, by gloomy reflection on your failures and vexations, you come to have a bad opinion of life. Think how indigent Nature must appear to the blind, the deaf, and the idiot. Now if you can kindle the imagination by a new thought, by heroic histories, by uplifting poetry, instantly you expand, - are cheered, inspired, and become wise, and even prophetic. Music works this miracle for those who have a good ear; what omniscience has music ! so absolutely impersonal, and yet every sufferer feels his secret sorrow reached. Yet to a scholar the book is as good or better. There is no hour of vexation which on a little reflection will not find diversion and relief in the library. His companions are few : at the moment, he has none : but, year by year, these silent friends supply their place. Many times the reading of a book has made the fortune of the man, - has decided his way of life. It makes friends. 'T is a tie between men to have been delighted with the same book. Every one of us is always in search of his friend, and when unexpectedly he finds a stranger enjoying the rare poet or thinker who is dear to his own solitude, - it is like finding a brother. Dr. Johnson hearing that Adam Smith, whom he had once met, relished rhyme, said, " If I had known that, I should have hugged him."

We expect a great man to be a good reader, or in proportion to the spontaneous power should be the assimilating power. There is a wonderful agreement among eminent men of all varieties of character and condition in their estimate of books. Julius Cesar, when ship-wrecked, and forced to swim for life, did not gather his gold, but took his Commentaries between his teeth and swam for the shore. Even

the wild and warlike Arab Mahomet said, " Men are either learned or learning : the rest are block-heads." The great Duke of Marlborough could not encamp without his Shakspeare. The Duchess d'Abrantes, wife of Marshal Junot, tells us that Bonaparte, in hastening out of France to join his army in Germany, tossed his journals and hooks out of his travelling carriage as fast as he had read them, and strewed the highway with pamphlets. Napoleon's reading could not be large, but his criticism is sometimes admirable, as reported by Las Casas ; and Napoleon was an excellent writer. Montesquieu, one of the greatest minds that France has produced, writes : " The love of study is in us almost the only eternal passion. All the others quit us in proportion as this miserable machine which gives them to us approaches its ruin. Study has been for me the sovereign remedy against the disgusts of life, never having had a chagrin which an hour of reading has not put to flight." Hear the testimony of Seldon, the oracle of the English House of Commons in Cromwell's time. " Patience is the chiefest fruit of study. A man, that strives to make himself a different thing from other men by much reading gains this chiefest good, that in all fortunes he hath some-thing to entertain and comfort himself withal."

I have found several humble men and women who gave as affectionate, if not as judicious testimony to their readings. One curious witness was that of a Shaker who, when showing me the houses of the Brotherhood, and a very modest bookshelf, said there was Milton's Paradise Lost, and some other books in the house, and added " that he knew where they were, but he took up a sound cross in not reading them."

In 1618 (8th March) John Kepler came upon the discovery of the law connecting the mean distances of the planets with the periods of their revolution about the sun, that the squares of the times vary as the cubes of the distances. And he writes, " It is now eighteen months since I got the first glimpse of light, -three months since the dawn, - very few days since the unveiled sun, most admiral le to gaze on, burst out upon me. Nothing holds me. I will indulge in my sacred fury. I will triumph over mankind by the honest confession that I have stolen the golden vases of the Egyptians ` to build up a tabernacle for my God far away from the confines of Egypt. If you forgive me, I rejoice ; if you are angry, I can bear it: the die is cast ; the book is written ; to be read either now or by posterity. I care not which. It may well wait a century for a reader, since God has waited six thousand years for an observer like myself."

In books I have the history or the energy of the past. Angels they are to us of entertainment, sympathy and provocation. With them many of us spend the most of our life, - these silent guides, - these tractable prophets, historians, and singers, whose embalmed life is the highest feat of art ; who now cast their moon-light illumination over solitude, weariness and fallen fortunes. You say, 't is a languid plea-sure. Yes, but its tractableness, coming and going like a dog at our bidding, compensates the quietness, and contrasts with the slowness of fortune and the inaccessibleness of persons.

You meet with a man of science, a good thinker or good wit, - but you do not know how to draw out of him that which he knows. But the book is a sure friend, always ready at your first leisure, - opens to the very page you desire, and shuts at your first fatigue, - as possibly your professor might not.

It is a tie between men to have read the same book, and it is a disadvantage not to have read the book your mates have read, or not to have read it at the same time, so that it may take the place in your culture it does in theirs, and you shall understand their allusions to it, and not give it more or less emphasis than they do. Yet the strong character does not need this sameness of culture. The imagination knows its own food in every pasture, and if it has not had the Arabian Nights, Prince Le Boo, or Homer or Scott, has drawn equal delight and terror from haunts and passages which you will hear of with envy.

In saying these things for books, I do not for a moment forget that they are secondary, mere means, and only used in the off-hours, only in the pause, and, as it were, the sleep, or passive state of the mind. The intellect reserves all its rights. Instantly, when the mind itself wakes, all books, all past acts are forgotten, huddled aside as impertinent in the august presence of the creator. Their costliest benefit is that they set us free from themselves ; for they wake the imagination and the sentiment, - and in their inspirations we dispense with books. Let me add then, - read proudly ; put the duty of being read invariably on the author. If he is not read, whose fault is it ? I am quite ready to be charmed, - but I shall not make believe I am charmed.

But there is no end to the praise of books, to the value of the library. Who shall estimate their influence on our population where all the millions read and write ? It is the joy of nations that man can communicate all his thoughts, discoveries and virtues to records that may last for centuries.

But I am pleading a cause which in the event of this day has already won : and I am happy in the assurance that the whole assembly to whom I speak entirely sympathize in the feeling of this town in regard to the new Library, and its honored Founder.

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