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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

VERMONT STATE

Agricultural Society

AND

WOOL GROWERS' ASSOCIATION,

AT ITS ANNUAL FAIR, AT BURLINGTON,

Thursday, Sept. 16th, 1869,

BY

HON. LUKE P. POLAND.

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1869.

ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT :

People sometimes have the idea, that a man who can *speak* at all, can discourse upon any and every subject as he may please.

The ancients, indeed, regarded *knowledge* as a part of the art of oratory. "The orator," said they, "must know everything." When knowledge was merely speculative, when it could not be put to the severe test of practice, that was comparatively easy. And yet, even then, this theory sometimes involved the orator in the awkward necessity of confronting his *speculations* with other men's *practice*. As, for example, when a Greek orator chanced to discourse to a popular assemblage on the art of war, his hearers wondered where he could have picked up so much upon a subject with which he had had no opportunity of becoming conversant : how he could speak so learnedly of camps and weapons and manœuvres. But there chanced to be "a chiel among them takin' notes," one who was something more than an amateur in this department. It was the Carthaginian, Hannibal, who, being asked what he thought of the orator, replied, "that man knows no more of the art of war than a child."

And I am, to-day, addressing an assembly, not where a single Hannibal will test my knowledge of the subject. I am addressing an assembly of Hannibals ; of men who, upon these hills, and along these valleys of our own Vermont, have been trained to

turn up the furrows of peace, instead of war, to handle the scythe and the sickle, instead of the sword, and to ride the harvest wagon afield, instead of the lumbering cannon; though many of them, 'tis true, have of late been taught familiarity with the husbandry of war, as well as of peace, have left drops of their own life-blood to enrich the soil of the foe, and will wear to their graves an ineffaceable record of "honorable scars." It may be, however, that I shall be permitted to discuss aspects of the subject with reference to which all intelligent citizens have some thoughts, and that what I shall say may be neither discreditable to myself nor unprofitable to you.

The subject of my address will be: *The relation of Science to Agriculture, and of Agriculture to the State.*

Agriculture, or perhaps more properly speaking, horticulture, is the oldest of all arts; an art of which it may reverently be said, that it came from heaven,—was in some genuine sense an inspiration. If Adam had had a coat-of-arms, it probably would have embraced implements of husbandry—a shovel, a rake, and a hoe. For before the fall, work was held in honor. There were no sinecures, no higher classes, no drones.

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?"

The tilling of the soil was the only art antecedent to the apostasy; agriculture was the only pursuit. We hear of no professional classes until after the advent of a certain supremacy into Eden—dare we say it? Thence sprung tailors, doctors, lawyers, and even ministers. They came to mend the ruin which this interloper had wickedly made.

By his fall, Adam may have lost all knowledge of the art. At all events he lost the only perfect theatre for applying it which the earth ever produced. For thenceforth it became its office to bring forth, not as Milton has written:

“ Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm,
 Others whose fruit burnished with golden rind,
 Hung amiable, (Hesperian fables true,
 If true, here only), and of delicious taste :
 Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
 Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,
 Or palmy hillock ; or the flowery lap
 Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
 Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose : ”

but thorns and thistles, to be eradicated only with the mattock or the hoe ; it was a soil already preoccupied with products inimical to man and his wants, and to be brought into subjection only by the most diligent and patient exertion “ in the sweat of his brow.” Naturally enough, men sought to evade the pressure of this destiny—securing means of livelihood in pursuits on which the primal curse seemed to rest more lightly, but finding their level at last only in the condition and habits of the savage.

You come to-day from your homes, from the soil that *you own*, consecrated perhaps by the toil and sweat of your fathers ; where the farm-house shines white by day, and, starlike, beams bright with industry’s lamp by night ; and where the great barns cluster, with their yawning doors, and their yards at times populous with flocks and herds ; over whose broad acres all summer you write out your thoughts and plans as on the pages of a book that you bind up and store away in the autumn for winter’s rumination. You are the landholders of Vermont. You hold your farms in fee simple. They are crown lands, which can not be alienated. You are sovereigns in your own right. These acres are just as much yours as the air that you, and your children, and your cattle breathe, or the light and heat that minister to your crops. And yet, this was not always so. Property in land, possession of land, was once a thing unknown. In the savage state, man hunted and fished for a living. He lived upon the life that hunted through the forest, cut the air upon wing, or darted through the waters. By his agility he took his prey, by his craft he snared it. It be-

came his by right of conquest, by the assertion of his power over it. With him "might made right." He took captives in war, and made them his slaves. His right to them was founded on the same principle as his right in the products of the chase. The idea that land could be owned, seems to have been too abstract for his mind; wholly inconsistent, too, with his nomadic habits of life. Besides, why should he wish to *own* what he did not use? He did not cultivate land, why should he *appropriate* it? The two ideas, conquest and use, seemed to be the foundation of his conception of property; and neither of them related to land. His wigwam occupied the *land*, just as his canoe occupied the *water*. When he went to other hunting grounds, or fishing grounds, he left both as free to new comers as the air around them. He owned only what he had laid his hands on and subjected to his own personal uses—the deer he shot, the fish he caught, the fowl he snared. He had not learned that the land can be subdued, as well as the inferior animals; that the plow and the spade have their victories, as well as the bow, the arrow, and the tomahawk; that he could make captives of the elements, make the winds and the waters his ministers, and the earth open her hidden treasure-house for the supply of his necessities. But even in those prolific solitudes, where was needed no modern legislation to protect the winged and finny tribes, where no deer-stalker ever plied his dangerous trade, the vicissitudes of the chase sometimes left the wild huntsman without his food. And as the demands of nature were regular and inexorable; as the hungry man must eat, notwithstanding his savage stoicism, it became necessary to provide a regular source of supply. The obvious relief from this dilemma, (there were no soup committees in those days,) was the taming and raising of such wild animals as were found capable of domestication. Thus the savage, the wanderer, the mighty hunter, became the shepherd. This is the first step in the progress of civilization.

And in order to domesticate animals, man must first, in some measure, domesticate himself; have a home, a domicile for the time being; shifting his domicile with the varying wants of his flocks and herds. Here is an advanced idea of property; that authority and right acquired by skill in taming, by care in raising. To his original inventory, the fruits of the chase, the savage now added his herds, the scanty crops, too, that, for their sake, he begins to teach the reluctant earth to yield to his rude husbandry, a few simple implements of household convenience and agricultural use, the weapons that he fashions with his own hand from wood and stone. He thus begins to hold, as his own, what he has not in immediate and constant use. And yet, the tenure of such property was exceedingly slight, for even under the old Roman law, a single year of possession was all that was necessary to complete the prescriptive right to movable property, and the lack of possession for the same time was full evidence of a lack of title. Thus we see that the development of the idea of property keeps pace with the progress of civilization; indeed, without it, civilization itself would be impossible. For civilization is founded upon that division of life and of labor which affords encouragement and reward to individuals; that gives every man his own, or proper compensation for it. Thus we see in the savage the germ of that passion which has beautified the earth with cities; which has beautified cities with works of art; for it is the possession of property, the pursuit of wealth, which brings men into large towns; it is success in this pursuit which makes them able to purchase works of art. But as yet, the savage finds no special *value* in land. Ceres, Earth's daughter, whom the ancient mythology made the mother of Plutus, the god of wealth, he despises. Land has no substantial value—is not an object of desire. Nature's domain is so wide, his habits are so nomadic, that he readily finds forage and pasturage, as he folds up his light tent

and moves from place to place, like the untamed Arab, his perpetual type. Not until that stage of civilization had been reached when he was content to lay aside his wandering habits and pursuits and become the citizen, was the idea of property in land fully developed; and even then, the title was for a long time somewhat incomplete. The right to transfer the title in movable property was early recognized. Traffic and commerce depended on it; necessitated it. And it was an easy step from the right to use and control, to the right to deprive one's self of use and control. But the right to alienate land, immovable property, came more tardily, and still later the right to dispose of it by *will*. Solon, the great Athenian lawgiver, first recognized this right, but only in the case of persons dying childless. And for a long period, land which had descended from an ancestor could not be totally alienated by the owner, except to procure the necessities of life, and even then the right of preemption remained in the lawful heir. From this, the step was easy and natural to the unrestricted right to alienate landed property. Until then, no man was the unconditional proprietor of his own lands.

I have thus traced man's development from the state of the untutored savage to that of the husbandman, because it is in itself a progress not without instruction and interest; instructive, since it compels us to recognize the obligations which past ages have placed upon us; interesting, because it involves the slow development of the law of property. I say, *law of property*, for though it is the custom to ridicule law and law's representatives, without it not one of you could have fee simple in your well tilled acres. Without law there would be no government, no society. Industry would be fruitless. Law alone gives you security in the enjoyment of the products of your labor. Without it there could be no such thing as wealth; for who would sow, that another might reap? Law spreads its ægis of protection over your farms, makes

thrift possible, and accumulation sure. And yet law is not responsible for poverty, as some superficial political economists would have us believe. Poverty is the primitive condition of the race. To use Shakspeare's line, man is "steeped in poverty to the very lips." And although it is beyond the power of law to make an equal distribution of property, to lift up the low and cast down the high, to make the crooked straight and the rough places plain, yet, without law, property itself would be impossible, destitution and misery would be universal, social anarchy would inevitably prevail.

We have now succeeded in making a farmer of our savage. At the outset, we shall hardly expect him to display any great proficiency or skill in his new field of labor. The wise man of old sent the sluggard to the ant for lessons of industry. And in the same vein, Pope suggests to man :

"The art of building, from the bee receive,
Learn of the moth to plow, the worm to weave,
Learn of the little nautilus to sail,
Spread her thin oar, and catch the driving gale."

To no inconsiderable extent, the tilling of the soil was at the first the work of woman. Man tried to shift his part of the curse of Eden upon feminine shoulders—keeping up the pleasures of the forest, while woman was eating her bread in the sweat of her brow. But this husbandwoman, (if I may be allowed so contradictory a compound,) scarcely more than lacerated the soil with the shoulder-blade of the moose, or the knotted stick. And yet, in the course of time, the two best cultivated countries in the world owed their fertility to the labor of women. While Osiris was dictating laws to the Egyptians, Isis, his wife, was giving them precepts in agriculture; and the highest honor that the Greeks could bestow on the Queen of Sicily, was to make her the goddess of the harvest. Lift the veil of fiction from such names as Flora, Pomona, Ceres, and we should probably find that the

bearers of them had rendered their country distinguished services in the cultivation of the earth.

Classic literature affords us glimpses of the condition of agriculture in the best days of Greece and Rome. After the famous retreat of the *Ten Thousand*, that wonderful captain and historian, Xenophon, returned to the solitude of rural life, and collected a volume of maxims on the management of the farm, which furnishes valuable information even to the intelligent farmer of the nineteenth century. Virgil, too, takes no loftier theme than this for the *Georgics*, throwing the charm of poetry over rural pursuits, and so dignifying the art of agriculture, that, as some one has said, he makes his husbandman toss even the dung with the air of a prince. Horace, too, epicure and tippler as he was, was also an amateur farmer, and writes both elegantly and sensibly of the practical duties of his calling. Indeed, these old fellows, even in their day and generation, seem to have understood about all the general principles recognized by the practical farmer of to-day; such as rotation of crops, surface drainage, composting of manures, irrigation, and improvement of stock. In the literal sense, they were practical farmers. They knew nothing indeed of the *philosophy* of these pursuits. They followed certain rules, because repeated trials had proved their value. It was largely a matter of tradition with them.

So, until the present century, has it been all over the world. And, with some, it is an open question to-day, whether practical farming, based upon observation and experience, is not the wiser kind; whether books and schools ever will raise up a generation of farmers superior to the fathers. Into the lips of his "Old Pennsylvania farmer," Bayard Taylor puts these words:

"If father'd lived I'd like to know what he would say to these
New notions of the younger men who farm by chemistries.
There's different stock and other grapes, there's patent plow and cart;
Five hundred dollars for a bull! it would have broke his heart."

Learning, indeed, never can take the place of common sense; never can be any compensation for lack of brains. Men sometimes find their way to the bar, and into the pulpit, and the practice of medicine, who fail at their business, not from want of book knowledge, but from the absence of something more elemental, which schools and colleges can not undertake to impart. And so, doubtless, the books on science are not to be blamed if the scientific farmer sometimes fails. It is the proper blending of science and practice, of theory and traditional knowledge, that makes the most successful farmer. Speculation alone leads into extravagant vagaries, which experience and observation will avoid. It takes a practical farmer to pick out the science that is valuable to him.

Some wise man among the ancients said, "That man is the greatest benefactor of his race, who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before." And Dean Swift, without hinting at obligations, has put the same sentiment into the mouth of that stupendous figment of his fertile imagination, the King of the Brobdingnags. But no one suspected that this coming benefactor was the visionary chemist, then at work among his retorts and gallipots in his dingy laboratory. Science was busy with greater problems than this. Should she abandon her search for the philosopher's stone to test the qualities of guano? Should she desecrate her crucible, never profaned by less royal substances than the supposed constituents of gold and precious stones, by admitting the ingredients of composts? Should she leave her research among the stars, her casting of horoscopes for men and nations, and come down to the discovery of the best methods of tilling mother earth? It is indeed a singular phenomenon, that man's earliest application of thought to physical subjects had to do with infinite space; that astronomy was of earlier birth than geography; that the heavens were charted and mapped long before the earth and sea. But the unscientific man rejoiced in the light of Arcturus, no less

than he who could locate him in the heavens. Early science tended toward simple speculation ; later science has been occupied with more practical questions ; has learned that the husbandman is the divinity-called agent through which the world is to be blessed. She has therefore abandoned her old search for tinsel and gewgaws. It is indeed her crowning glory, that by a sort of subtle alchemy she can metamorphose the excrement of tropical birds into heavily waving verdure, the solid rocks into oats, and barley and wheat, and the dry bones of the valleys into esculent roots ; that she can change the sterile plain into the fruitful field ; stagnant fens and miasmatic bog-holes (where the will o' the wisp allures the benighted traveler) into the level lawn and undulating mead. At first view, it does seem strange, that man should have well nigh exhausted the resources of invention in other departments before he turned his attention to the development of the forces of nature, which the God of nature had hidden in the earth all around him ; before he sought to relieve himself of that physical servitude to which the fall had made him subject. It required only a genius for invention, the touch of that Ithuriel spear, to bring nature's secrets to the light.

Reapers and mowers, threshers and pitchers, were still made up of living human muscle and brawn, only because mind had not yet asserted itself over the department of matter. Now, through the brilliant achievements of modern inventors, through the application of modern science, men make, not simply two, but two score blades of grass grow where one grew before. The muscle of the horse is put in the stead of the muscle of man ; and intellect occupies the seat of the reaper and the mower. But the tillers of the soil were not ordinarily men of disciplined and inquisitive minds. Invention first confined itself to the mechanic arts. Mechanics felt the necessities and limitations of their own department of labor, and hastened to remove them. But when

inventions became profitable, when the patentee found his lap full of gold, then inventive efforts were stimulated in all directions, and the mechanic felt the limitations and inconveniences of the agriculturalist also.

It was precisely so, too, with regard to scientific farming. If farming is a science, then the man who prosecutes it the most scientifically, with most of true philosophy, will prosecute it most profitably; this was the argument. Every intelligent farmer knows that there are certain conditions essential to the growth and maturity of each crop. Science, alone, can precisely determine these conditions. Every intelligent farmer knows that in a high latitude he must select a warm soil for his corn. Science tells him that this plant adds to its growth only three grains daily when the soil is twenty degrees above freezing point, while it adds twelve grains, or four times as much, daily, when the temperature of the soil is twenty degrees higher; or that the rapidity of its growth is as the square of the increase of the temperature of the soil. The scientific farmer selects the southern slope, because he knows that upon a given area it will receive a greater number of solar rays than the northern, or than a dead level. His philosophy teaches him that if he scatter upon the surface of the soil, charcoal dust, or muck, or some other dark substance, he will increase its power of absorption; or that he may raise the temperature of the soil by thorough under-drainage. Science informs him that the vaporization of water requires one thousand times as much heat as would be needed to raise the temperature of soil a single degree; or, to put the statement into a more concrete form, that the vaporization of one pound of water from one hundred pounds of saturated earth, causes a loss of ten degrees of heat. He learns, too, that wheat will not germinate in a soil below forty-five degrees or above ninety-five degrees, and that corn requires ten degrees more heat than wheat. In the selection of

soils, too, it is a law, as unalterable as that of the Medes and Persians, "which altereth not," that different plants require different kinds of food. This requisition is absolute, and can not, as in the demands of annual growth, be replaced by any substitute. Lack of phosphoric acid and ammonia insures a shriveled kernel of wheat, and the negligent husbandman finds in autumn that the expected crop "has mocked him with empty ears." If there be lack of silex, the crop will, in popular phrase, be "struck with rust." Clover, pease and beans demand lime, and the intelligent farmer feeds them with plaster. Raspberries and blackberries have an appetite for potash, and spring up on ground recently burned over, or cling to walls beneath which the earth is fed by the crumbling stone decomposed by the elements. These are instincts of nature which can not safely be neglected or despised.

Entomology, the natural history of insects, also deserves the husbandman's study. He should know what insects are his friends, and what are his foes; which destroy the growing crop, and which wage war against hostile insects. With respect to birds, there is also no little misapprehension. They are especially the husbandman's benefactors. The sparrow, though his reputation has suffered somewhat in that rhythmical chronicle of "Mother Goose," whose recital never fails to bring moisture to the eyes of childhood, (I mean the murder of Cock Robin,) maintains his character for destructiveness by his merciless and unceasing onslaught upon caterpillars and the like. It has been found, by the actual count of the curious, that two of these birds have carried to their nests forty caterpillars in a single hour. But the capacity of the robin for this species of warfare is still more marvellous. And by way of parenthesis, may I not suggest this as the probable *casus belli* which resulted so disastrously to the long mourned and much lamented Cock Robin. A curious in-

quirer caught a robin scarcely half grown, weighing but twenty-four pennyweights, and found, by actual observation, that he ate sixty-eight worms, weighing thirty-four pennyweights, in twelve hours; thus consuming forty-one per cent. more than his own weight, and came off as brisk as ever, with only four pennyweights added to his own avoirdupois. And it is estimated from these data that a pair of old robins with four birdlings will consume two hundred and fifty worms per day; that is, each parent bird procuring a worm every five minutes to supply family necessities. The sage crow, likewise, (upon whose head wise legislators have sometimes, but to so little purpose, set a premium,) is said to eat five hundred grubs to a single kernel of corn. Thus the premiums offered, and the scarecrows set up, are really for the protection of grubs! I believe in fact that, without exception, birds of our latitude lay mankind under similar obligation, and are really entitled to gratitude and protection, instead of being ruthlessly robbed by wanton boys or shot by ignorant men.

But intelligent farming, farming that is really scientific, is also a source of mental culture. From a mere physical drudgery, it is thus converted into a work of intellectual growth and development. Make the boys feel this, and they will stay at home. It will take the monotony out of farm work. It will ennoble it. If you can not show a lad that there is something to farming beside development of mere brawn and muscle, you need not wonder if he grows restless and wants to escape to the machine-shop, or to the excitement of traffic. But show him that there is philosophy in farming; that there is scope enough to develop all his faculties, mental and moral, as well as physical, and the gold regions of California and the broad prairies of the West will have fewer attractions for him. Vermont can not afford to suffer the most enterprising of her sons to desert her green hills, needful as they are to leaven unborn States with the industry, frugality

and independence which here have their native region. It is time that our hillsides should cease to swarm. There is room enough in the old hive. Our half-tilled fields claim our best efforts; and Vermont boys never can better repay the care of their mother than by making her acres a literal garden.

But it is urged that this once honored calling has lately fallen into discredit among us; that it is not dignified as it once was. Such prejudice does no dishonor to the vocation itself, but rather to him who cherishes it. Why! in order that a single grain of wheat may be matured, that its constituent elements, its starch, and gluten, and sugar, may be perfected, God keeps this ponderous earth in motion, wheeling along the ecliptic at the rate of sixty-eight thousand miles per hour. But somehow our young men think they want no interest in the operation. It has not dignity enough! They are averse to farming. They regard it as an inferior, a subordinate employment. It is only so, as a cornerstone is subordinate in a building. It is only so, as all things else depend upon it. It is the foundation—all the rest is superstructure. Not a dignified calling? Jackson, Calhoun, Clay, and greater than all, Webster, recreated their gifted natures in the sweets of rural life. What a touching picture is that of Webster, at Marshfield, who, upon his deathbed, had his splendid cattle driven past his window, that he might take a parting look into their great eyes, and kind, honest faces!

There is a close relationship between the earth and man. Man was fashioned *out of it*. He is composed of exactly the same materials as the solid globe on which he dwells. Contact with earth seems to renew his manhood. There is always a grain of truth to be found in the old mythologies. You remember the fable of Antæus contending with Hercules. Whenever Antæus was nearly suffocated in the iron grasp of his antagonist, if he but touched the earth, his strength was restored. It is ever so with

man and nature. And true as it is in a *physical* sense, it is still truer in a *moral*. Whether it be true that nature loves to make return to those that love her, or whether it be true that the employment of her devotees has in it less of temptation, it is the fact, that he who weds her is strengthened by her.

The salutary influence which a fondness for rural life exerts upon the English is very noticeable. It has stamped itself upon their national character. There is perhaps no completer type of dignified manhood than the English gentleman. This, Washington Irving attributes to his fondness for rural life. It gives a healthful tone to mind and spirit, that neither the dissipations of the town nor the excitements of political life can wholly neutralize or pervert. It brings man face to face with nature. It gives opportunity, nay, creates necessity, for self contemplation, for manly independence of thought, and subjects one to the operation of the purest and most ennobling external influences. Rural life is entirely free from the excitement and dissipation incident to traffic and commerce, the influence of which is almost always to lower the moral tone of those who engage in them. The tendency of agricultural pursuits is toward simplicity and purity in *social*, and democracy in *civil* life. The distinction of classes is less inexorably recognized in rural than in suburban populations. In another sense than the poet intended,

“One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.”

The character of a nation is determined by its rural population. We are apt to think otherwise. The favored few indeed enjoy in the city superior facilities—attain a more refined, oftentimes a higher, culture; but the unfavored many fall far below the average. Our larger cities are fearful illustrations of this truth. It is therefore upon the country people of a nation like ours that the national government must rely. Among them is the strongest spirit of nationality and the readiest submission to just laws. If,

during the recent rebellion, our population had been mainly gathered in large cities, the result might have been far different. In our cities were found the largest number of rebel sympathizers. It has been said, that if at the time of the revolution, we had had as many large cities as now, it is doubtful whether Independence ever had been declared. The *torics* of the revolution were not to be found among the sturdy yeomanry of the land.

History teaches us that there is no stability to that government which does not rest upon the rural population. Traffic tends to make men material. The poet has said :

“ That trade’s proud empire hastes to swift decay;
As ocean sweeps the labored mole away.”

The decline of the great Roman Empire dates from the time when the patricians and nobles had acquired large estates in the provinces ; when Italian soil was neglected by those born upon it, and the peasant became the mere menial employed about the villas and in the gardens of the great. That nation is doomed which is deserted by the genius of agriculture. In their palmyest days, it is said that Carthage and Alexandria set in motion fifty plows to a single keel. The poet Goldsmith had studied Roman history to good purpose, else he had never written the oft-quoted lines :

“ Princes and kings may flourish or may fade,
A breath can make them, as a breath has made :
But a bold yeomanry, their country’s pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.”

This strong natural affinity between man and mother Earth, of which I have spoken, there is not a man among us but experiences. Through all the sharp strife of our life-struggle, in our competition for the world’s honor, for riches, for fame, there are always twilight pauses—breathing times—when we look longingly to the day in which, all our distinctions won, and worn, and laid aside, we may escape to some rural retreat beneath clustering maples or graceful elms among our native hills. Who of us all

that has thus occupied himself with other pursuits, has not, with the poet, sighed for the time again

“ When the reapers at morn
Came down from the hill, at the sound of the horn,
Or when dragging the rake he followed them out
While they tossed the light sheaves with their laughter about ;
Through the fields, with boy-daring, barefooted we ran
Where the stubble foreshadowed the path of the man.”

In spite of our very selves we are drawn back to those boyhood days, “ when in the rude dusky barn we tumbled on the odorous hay, or watched the sunlight struggling through crevices in the roof, or the swallow-hole in the gable ; where the shadow and sunlight strove together, making it both solemn and cheerful.”

We Americans are said to be a self-conceited race ; and we must confess that the charge is at least as true of us as of other nations. We attribute the rapid growth and prosperity of our young republic somewhat to the genius of our free institutions, somewhat to the superiority of our original stock. We need to be reminded that much of it is also due to physical causes. The God of nations planted us amid conditions essential to our growth and development as a great people. Had our territory been land-locked, instead of opening to us an area bounded only by the great oceans that kneel begging at our feet for our commerce ; had we been surrounded by powerful governments hostile to our free institutions, we might, ere this, have fulfilled the prognostications of monarchs and monarchies, and gone to wreck, as did the republics of the old world, while we were yet undeveloped and in our youth. It was our territorial oneness and isolation that protected us in the late rebellion. We must remain one and alone. This was the decree of Him who has appointed the nations their habitations upon the face of the earth. I would not underrate the original character and energy of the American people. I am not unmindful of that sturdy, indomitable, granitic, puritan element which has come down to us and courses like iron in our veins.

But under less auspicious physical conditions, this would have proved far less efficient.

Humboldt has said that our facility for internal communication, our extensive and unparalleled river systems, is the life-giving element which is big with future consequences; that it holds us and must continue to hold us together by community of interest. The valley of the Mississippi, the Father of Waters, which branches backward to its original sources, like a great tree bearing fruit for the nations, could not be cut off from the ocean. It was ordained by Him "who stretcheth out the north over the empty places, and hangeth the earth upon nothing," when he modelled the outline of the continent, that its ultimate inhabitants should constitute a nation, one and undivided. If it be true, as an intelligent German writer has said, that Europe has held the sceptre of the old world because of the superiority in internal and external commercial facilities afforded by her indented coasts, peninsulas, bays, seas, and interior river systems, what may we not predict for America, with natural advantages far more remarkable? We often hear men talk of the striking assimilative power of the Anglo-American races. But the unparalleled assimilation of distinct races here is in no small degree the result of physical causes.

But these special advantages carry with them the burden of special responsibility. One of the dangers is, that our own people—planted upon a continent with such facilities for locomotion—a continent whose every side is washed by great oceans, and across which there is now an iron pathway for travel and transportation; so that "deep calleth unto deep," and the Atlantic answers to the Pacific as each lifts up the voice of its waters: one of the dangers is, that our own people shall grow too restless for the sober, monotonous pursuits of agricultural life. Our young men are tempted from the farm to engage in the more ex-

citing and enterprising pursuits of traffic and commerce, foreign and domestic, while the deserted lands are falling into the possession of the alien-born, whose blood leaps less hotly in his veins. I believe that history teaches this uniform lesson, that the *tillers* of the soil ultimately become the *owners* of the soil; and also this lesson, that the owners of the soil ultimately become the rulers of the nation.

This continent was kept veiled in its virgin obscurity until the fifteenth century, that the experience of the past might demonstrate the weakness of the old order of things, so that its settlers might come hither and build up a new system adapted to a new continent; a great political fabric which should be for the "shelter of the nations;" a very Bethesda, where they might be healed of their longtime civil and political maladies. Our fathers began the work well, laid the corner-stone of empire in prayer and tears and blood. Their children have entered into their labors in a kindred spirit. The existing order of things is a natural outgrowth of our past. The recent struggle has broken the bands in which the young giant found himself bound, and now he goes forth, chastened but strong, to meet his future. We can read our perils in the history of the past. The ghosts of past nations visit us, as Hamlet's father came back to his son, to tell us how they died. Through ambition, pride, luxury, and political corruption, they perished. Extended territory does not make a great nation, neither does wealth itself. Montesquieu says, that "even the yield of land depends less upon the fertility of the soil than upon the intelligence and freedom of its inhabitants." Nor do wars necessarily destroy nations. Schiller says "that the thirty years war made Germany a nation." Plutarch says that the civil wars which were waged by Alexander introduced the civility, the language, and the arts of Greece into the savage East; introduced marriage; built seven cities, and united hostile nations under one government.

Emerson says, "the frosts that kill the harvests of a year save the harvests of a century, by destroying the weevil and the locust." Wars break up the old order of things and open a fair field for what is new. The god of arms does, indeed, insist upon personal sacrifices, and the sacrifice of property and of life. But what he takes from individuals and families, he gives back to the life of the State. The best generation of men this century has produced, were developed by the urgencies of the revolutionary period; and it will doubtless be found that many of our future law-makers and defenders of our institutions had their training during the period of the rebellion.

Liberty, founded on Christian morals, interpreted by intelligence, regulated by law, stimulated and protected by favorable physical conditions, is the secret of our American success and progress. We have the collected experience of the centuries to guide us; the example of the fathers to inspire us; their God to protect and guide us; our children and children's children to rise up and call us blessed. Let us never forget that we can not be defended by a population which has been degraded and oppressed, even by law. No restraints are to be put upon intelligent freemen, but what are essential to the security of society. Each citizen must feel that he is a unit in the grand sum total of national existence; that he has political value and consequence. This will make him fit to exercise a freeman's prerogative; will foster the feeling of personal responsibility.

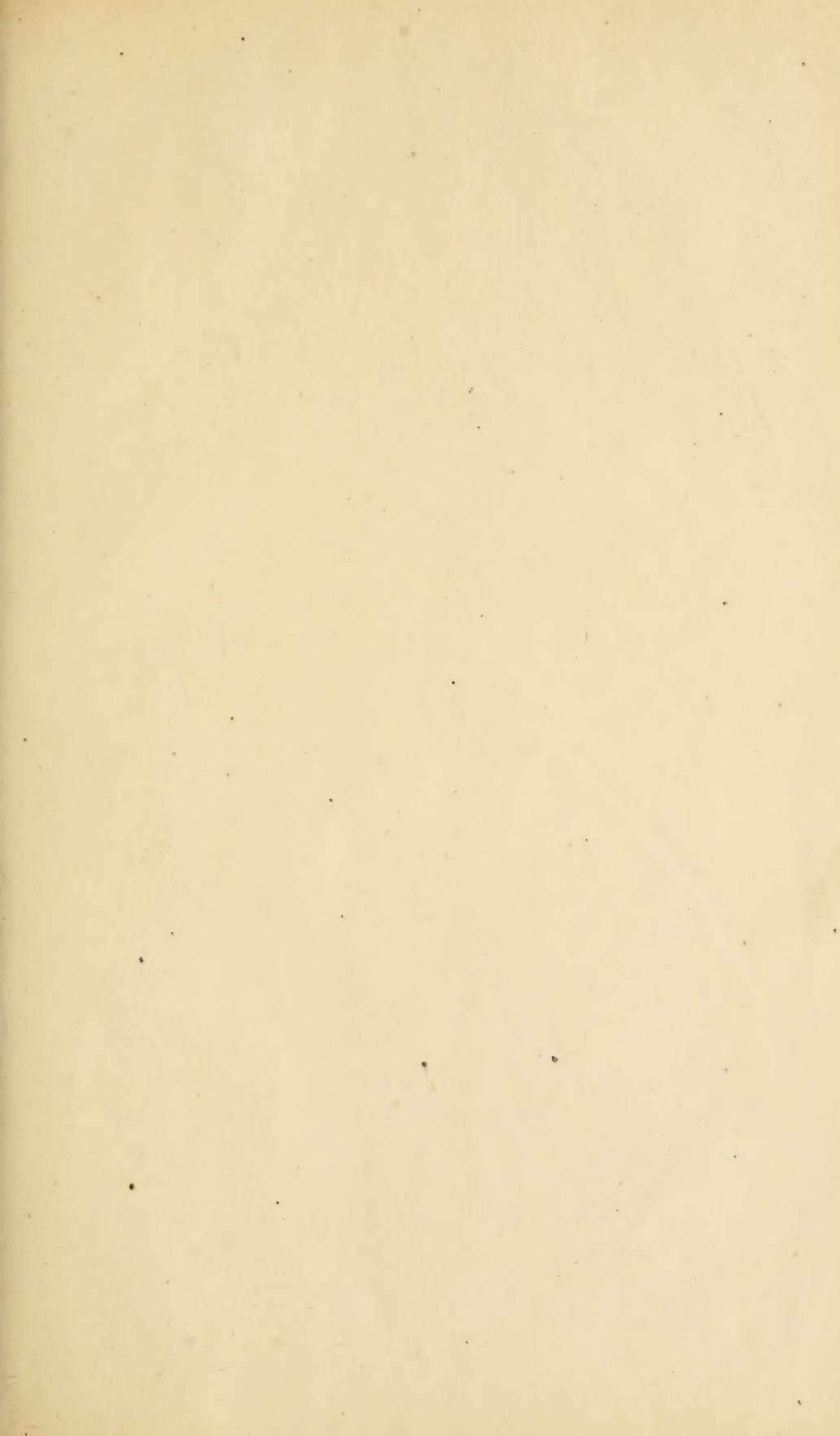
De Tocqueville says: "Men are not corrupted by the exercise of power, nor debased by submission; but by the exercise of a power they think illegal, and submission to a rule they think oppressive."

If we are true to the guardianship of the individual citizen, he will always prove true to us; in peace, he will be our pride; in war, our defence. Then will be realized that vision, seen afar off

by a great orator and statesman, who yet died without the sight, and which he thus apostrophizes: "Happy and free, empress-mother of States, who watchest the rights and fame of all; and reposing secure and serene among the mountain summits of thy freedom, holdest in one hand the fair olive-branch of peace, and in the other the thunder-bolt and meteor-flag of reluctant and rightful war. There mayest thou sit forever, the star of Union upon thy brow, the rock of independence beneath thy feet!"











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