

*Prof. W. H. Johnson -
with S. Brock's best regards.*

F
68
F98



*F68
F15*

THE SPIRIT OF THE PILGRIMS.

AN

ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF NEW ENGLAND

OF

PHILADELPHIA

DECEMBER 22d, 1846,

IN

Commemoration of the Landing of the Pilgrims

CCXXVI YEARS AGO,

BY

W. H. FURNESS.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY JOHN C. CLARK, 60 DOCK STREET.

1846.





Class _____

Book _____

THE SPIRIT OF THE PILGRIMS.

AN
ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF NEW ENGLAND

OF

PHILADELPHIA

DECEMBER 22d, 1846,

IN

Commemoration of the Landing of the Pilgrims

CCXXVI YEARS AGO,

BY

W. H. FURNESS.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY JOHN C. CLARK, 60 DOCK STREET.

1846.

1964
10/17

5-3873

Anniversary of the Landing of the Pilgrims.

Philadelphia, Dec. 22d, 1846.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

At a meeting of the Board of Officers of the Society of the Sons of New England, after the public exercises of this day, it was—"Resolved, That the thanks of the Society be presented to the Rev. Mr. Furness for his eloquent Oration, and that a copy be requested for publication."

It is with pleasure that we have the opportunity, officially, to communicate the same to you, and it will give us equal pleasure to receive your favorable response to the request submitted.

With high respect,

We are your ob't serv'ts,

W. H. DILLINGHAM,

JNO. W. CLAGHORN,

JNO. T. S. SULLIVAN,

Committee.

To the Rev. WM. H. FURNESS.

Dec. 23d, 1846.

GENTLEMEN,

In compliance with the request so courteously expressed, I place the accompanying MS. at your disposal.

Respectfully, yours,

W. H. FURNESS.

W. H. DILLINGHAM,

JNO. W. CLAGHORN,

JNO. T. S. SULLIVAN, Esqs.

THE SPIRIT OF THE PILGRIMS.

Two hundred and twenty-six years ago, a vessel of a hundred and eighty tons burthen, the *Mayflower*, was floating on the waters of Massachusetts bay. It had brought from the old world one hundred and one persons of both sexes and of different ages. They disembarked. And we, who were born in that home which they made for themselves and their children, are met to commemorate their first landing, an event, now indubitably proved to be a cardinal fact in the world's history, not only by the great purpose which inspired it, but also by the beneficent results which have flowed from it.

Yes, the Landing of the Fathers of New England is one of the grand pictures of History. At the first glance, we discern a fine harmony in it, a striking accordance between the central group and the natural scenery in the midst of which they stand. It has been remarked generally that inanimate nature always lends its beauty to man when he is achieving any noble deed, that the scene, the place of any great event sets it off, suiting the frame to the picture. A storm of unusual fierceness, we are told, was raging while Cromwell was dying. So also were the last hours of Napoleon accompanied. We perceive a fearful beauty in the correspondence between those stormy spirits and the uproar of the elements. In like manner, when Columbus, led by a vision of opulent kingdoms in the West, came across the Atlantic,—as we behold him gazing upon the new land, we are impressed with the beautiful agreement between the brightness of the spectacle on which his eyes are fixed, and the triumphant enthusiasm of the hero. The fragrant breath of the new world appearing before him as if it

had just risen out of the sea, the rich vegetation of the tropics—do they not strike us as accessories to the unity and grandeur of the picture? And so too, when our Pilgrim fathers first landed,—as we contemplate the event, a picturesque harmony becomes visible between the actors and the scene. The wintry glooms, the rocky and icy coast, the ground covered with snow, and the chilling wind—all accord with the stern resolution in which that heroic company was clad as in coats of mail. To greet our fathers, when they came, Nature put on a garb of Puritan austerity. She received them with no oriental splendors. Her salutation was rough and dry, in the spirit of their own severe simplicity. But they never questioned their welcome. They sprung upon the shore; and as we descry them now, through the mists of more than two centuries, emerging from the dark back-ground of a wintry sea and sky, and standing upon the rocky threshold of their new home, girt with a steadfastness of purpose, of which the frost, that locked the earth in its chains, was only a faint symbol, the picture stands before us, rounded into a whole, and severely beautiful.

But the landing of the Pilgrim fathers of New England is something more than a picture, pleasing to the imagination. That event had a meaning in it, a very simple meaning, and all the greater and the deeper for its simplicity. The spirit—the spirit which inspired that company, and which, as they landed, was mirrored in the solemn aspect of external nature,—it is for this that we honour them. What but this invests their memories with so saintly a heroism? It is not any special form of doctrine, any theological creed, of which they were the teachers and the witnesses, that makes this anniversary sacred. Over the hills and valleys of New England every wind of doctrine is now blowing; still the children of the Pilgrims of every name unite to do homage to their greatness.

They claim our reverence, not as the founders of a sect, sectarian though they were, but as the martyrs of ideas, of invisible, impalpable principles of thought. Whether the prin-

ciples that moved them, the aims that led them on, were great or trifling, true or false, I ask not now. Let it be that their objects were altogether visionary, still I say, they had their life, not in things pertaining to the senses, to the body, but in ideas, in things pertaining to the spirit. When they appeared on these Western shores, they had snapt asunder the ties of kindred and home; and how dear those ties are, your own hearts at this festive season know full well. They had bidden farewell to the pleasant places, hallowed by the memories of childhood and love. They quitted the graves of their fathers, repressing the strong instinct which chains even the savage to the spot where the bones of his dead lie mouldering. They turned away from the elegancies and comforts of a refined social existence, and threw themselves in their frail vessel upon the wild and capricious deep. We see them plunging into the darkness and the storm, bending their way to an unknown world. They near the shore upon whose rocks sit Cruelty and Famine, but they know no fear. They find what they sought.

And what did they seek? What impulse drove them hither? For what purpose did they come? Not, I say, for any vision of gold, not to gratify the lust of conquest and power, not to revel in the luxuries of a voluptuous clime, not for any thing primarily relating to bodily well-being, to animal enjoyment. They came seeking food for the soul, that invisible nutriment which the mind finds in itself, in the subjects of its own thoughts. Things, which lie nowhere within the precincts of the senses, which the inward eye of the mind discerns, which conscience recognises, which the heart hungers for,—such were the things which led onwards our Pilgrim fathers, and, as with the wings of angels, fanned the fire of life in them, till it was kindled into a flame of indomitable energy, and they were enabled to surrender all things for the sake of the ideal which their souls craved.

Thus our Fathers, looking not at the visible but at the invisible, exemplify and attest the higher nature of man. They prove that man liveth not by bread alone, that there is other

food for him than that which entereth by the mouth and goeth into the stomach. The Pilgrims came hither, not like ravening animals seeking something to eat, but as mighty spirits, nerved for doing and enduring by that nourishment which the mind assimilates, and which faith digests. They vindicate our intellectual being, that nature within our nature, which you may call the mind, the spirit, the divinity, or what you will, but which no name can define. In a word, they are witnesses to the reality of the soul. Honour be to them for that! Were there nothing more to be said for them, for this be their memory revered forever. The landing of the Pilgrim fathers is a grand demonstration of the spirit that is in man. It discloses the fact that, diminutive as man may be in his visible appearance, in his bodily shape, he is indefinable in his inmost nature, and sustains relations to things of which his physical organs take no cognizance.

Possibly, in saying this, that our Fathers, in coming hither, illustrate the greatness of man, I may seem to say very little. Has not assurance of the same fact been given to the world a thousand times over? Religion, every where existing, aye, and superstition in its most degraded forms—does it not bear witness that man stands related to something besides matter, that his being transcends the sphere of his senses, that far as his eye reaches, he has an inward sense that reaches further and deeper still, that strong as his arm is to subdue this earth, there is a strength in him greater than that? Why, even in their most homely occupations, when men are toiling apparently only for bread or for gold, the bright signs and marks of their higher nature shine forth through the dust and dirt in which they grub and grovel. Still they draw the life of their enterprise not out of the earth, but from an imaginary world; and in all places of human activity, over every ship that sails, in every counting room, and in every shop, a multitudinous host of visions do incessantly hover, and men are occupied with things not realized, and every where they are tyrannized over by that mysterious imaginative faculty, which is the pledge of our relationship to things unseen.

I know very well that those who are occupied with the ordinary pursuits of life are prone to be very skeptical about immaterial realities. They boast themselves practical, matter-of-fact men. They will have nothing to do with any thing that cannot be computed by their standards of silver and gold, or bank paper. They believe their own eyes, and only their own eyes. Their faith is at their fingers' ends indeed, but it is only there. And yet in the fluctuations of trade, amidst the tumbling ruins of their fortunes, how plainly oftentimes does it appear that these very persons have been living, moving, and having their being, not in the actual, but in an ideal world of their own! The veriest miser, whose whole soul would seem to be concentrated in the itching palm of his hand—does not his brain teem with images and visions? His nature is proved to be a great nature by its very capacity of degradation. His appetite for accumulation is sharpened by that imaginative faculty which allies him to the invisible.

Wherever we turn, we behold demonstrations of the fact, that man is made to live upon other food than that which comes out of the ground; that his true nourishment is the produce of an invisible country; that he feeds upon ideas. At this very hour, what is it that is prompting our young men to sacrifice kindred and home, as our fathers did, and all the arts and blessings of peace, and go upon a pilgrimage to the bloody shrine of inhuman War? Why are they rushing to the scene of danger and death? Is it the scent of blood which they snuff from afar? Do they fly like vultures to the field of carnage? Oh no! disgraceful as the war is, in which we are engaged, a war, in which our glory is our shame, and our victories are defeats, still, in common with all wars, it shows that men are kindled to action and self-sacrifice by ideas, by the idea of country, by the idea of renown, by the glowing visions of their own imagination, and so powerfully swayed by these, that, at their bidding, they joyfully surrender all the endearments of life, and go to embrace danger as a bride.

There is a superficial philosophy that is continually telling us, that men are swayed only by their palpable interests, that if you think to move individuals or nations to any great act of justice, to any noble effort in behalf of the sacred rights of man, you must appeal to their interests, you must bait the truth with profit, you must show them some substantial advantages to be gained, which they can see, and handle, and weigh, and whose value they can arithmetically compute. But I say, it is not so. It is never so. Men are continually sacrificing their interests, their dearest interests, life itself, to ideas, to the idea of glory, to the sentiment of patriotism; and the sight of a mere piece of painted cloth, floating idly on the air, the emblem of national honour, will set them all a-flame. Never have men been moved to any great and world-stirring achievements by the consideration of their interests, however plain those interests may have been. In all those great revolutions, in those momentous periods, when nations have gone forward, when the course of centuries has been determined, the grand moving spring at such periods has never been a calculation of visible interests; but great ideas, invisible principles, have seized the mind of man, lifting him off his feet, carrying him upward and onward, as in a chariot of fire, far above the narrow circle of his interests, aye, and above himself; and thus has Humanity been advanced.

And therefore, by the way, although we may well mourn bitterly over the disgraceful contest in which our country is at this present engaged, we may find cause of great encouragement and hope in the evidence which this very war furnishes, that the people of this land are not yet so enervated by a prosperity unexampled in the history of the world, not yet so hardened by the sordid influences of self-interest, but that they are an imaginative people still, still unquestionably susceptible of the inspiration of ideas. For my own part, when, in a case in which no principle of right is involved, and every dictate of magnanimity is despised, I see the hearts of the young carried away, and the wisdom of the old paralyzed by

the vague idea of national honour, I cannot doubt that the soul of this country will sooner or later be stirred to its very centre by the sacred idea of Universal Freedom, by the blessed vision of Everlasting Peace, by the inalienable Rights of Man, by the benign principles of our common Christianity; for these are the things by which, in the nature of things, in the unchangeable wisdom of the Creator, man is fashioned to be inspired as by no thing else. At all events, of one thing we may be assured—it is taught by the whole history of the world and the whole philosophy of our nature, and religion demands it—that if this nation is to fulfil the sacred promise which it has given to Humanity, the great hope which it has inspired, if it is to be true to the principles by which it professes to live, if it is ever to cleanse itself of that inhuman bondage which it now cherishes and fights for, and which is the one particular shame of its freedom, it will never be by motives of interest, but by the inspiring influence of great ideas, kindling this people into a generous enthusiasm, and ravishing all hearts with the ineffable beauty and power of those simple principles of right, which now, alas! float vaguely before us as impracticable abstractions.

But after all, although under all aspects, in all his pursuits, in peace and in war, man unconsciously demonstrates his possession of a high imaginative nature, by which he is related to the invisible world of ideas, and draws life and strength therefrom, still I turn again to the Pilgrim Fathers of New England, and again I say: Let us honour them for this, if for nothing else, that they have vindicated the greatness of man's nature.

They were, many of them, persons of high culture and of gentle blood, the natives of a country wrought all over and embellished with all that could fascinate the intellect and the heart, made sacred by venerable seats of learning, by places famous in history, by homes embosomed in the graceful associations of domestic love. How tenderly they loved their country, how carefully they strove to cherish the memory of

the places they quitted, is apparent in the names which they gave to the places to which they came. But they trod under their feet all considerations of policy, all the seductions of ease and affection, and joyfully accepted the wild guidance of the free winds and waves, and so asserted the supremacy of the ideal world over the actual. Thus have they revealed human greatness.

Under this aspect they stand forth in striking contrast with the multitude of their own, and of all times. As they left the shores of Europe, no doubt they were pitied by thousands, and regarded as going upon a fool's errand. We can almost hear the mocking laughter, the charges of frantic enthusiasm, of senseless fanaticism, which rung after them from the polished circles, upon which many of them had turned their backs. But these they regarded as little as the winds that howled around them; and the event, showing so triumphantly as it now does that they were objects, not of pity or laughter, but of the profoundest admiration, admonishes us that we must take heed how we indulge in the luxury of contempt and ridicule, seeing how inevitably Time will turn the tables upon us, and make us ridiculous forever, if we chance to pour our contempt upon those whom Posterity shall delight to honour, and whose names shall illustrate our age. There is enough, heaven knows, for pity in the world; there is matter enough for ridicule, without our making ourselves contemptible, as we certainly shall do in the end, if we sneer at those who differ from us, simply because we cannot understand them, nor enter into the spirit by which they are moved.

But so it has been from the foundation of the world. In science, in literature, in religion, in all its highest and best interests, the progress of the world has been obstructed, not more by the brute ignorance, the superstition, the depravity of men, than by the contempt of the wise, and the ridicule of the prudent. How strikingly was this the case in regard to that highest fact in history, the introduction of the Christian religion. The boasted wisdom of the world laughed it to scorn; the profound historian of Rome treated it with con-

tempt; and the mighty influence of the religious and the respectable was directed to the extinction of that light, even in blood. And so it has been in other and lesser instances. It has been hard to overcome the inertia of ignorance; but the intellectual and spiritual pride of those who have had the established institutions of learning, and science, and religion, in charge, has also been a serious obstacle to the progress of knowledge and truth. At the present day, when inventions and discoveries in science of the most magnificent import are following, one upon another, with such startling rapidity, we may well hope that sensible men will be shamed out of the folly of despising things simply because they are new and strange, and have never been dreamed of by their philosophy. But in other and far more serious matters we need to be warned how we indulge in hasty judgments, in senseless denunciations, in thoughtless ridicule, lest it turn out, by and by, that we have made only ourselves contemptible and ridiculous, and there will be no honour for our memories. The warning that we need we may find this day, one of the admonishing recollections of which is: that the Fathers of New England, the men whom we honour for their wisdom and heroism, the founders of states, the head-workmen among those who reared this great American Empire, were pronounced by multitudes in their own day to be enthusiasts and fanatics, as wild and as hair-brained as any to whom the present generation attribute the same character. Sons of New England, it is to little purpose that you commemorate your fathers, you do not enter into the spirit of the occasion which now calls us together, if, from the contrast of what our fathers appeared to be to the men of their own day, with what they are now proved to have been, we do not learn this much at least: to be very cautious how we despise those whose aims, visionary as they may seem, are yet on their very face pacific and beneficent; whose zeal, fanatical as it may appear, is nevertheless quickened into a burning hatred of Wrong, into a consuming thirst of the heart, which nothing but the Freedom and Improvement of the whole world can appease. Let the

sons of the Pilgrims, boasting such an ancestry, have no smile of scorn, but only tears of reverent sympathy for those who run mad for Justice and Humanity.

I have spoken of the Fathers of New England as men, who by their unworldly aims, by their spiritual purposes, attest the manhood of universal man. But what specially were their purposes? What precisely were the ideas to which they have shown themselves so self-devoted? The grand idea which dwelt at the centre of their being, which was the soul of their working, was freedom, freedom in the highest and most sacred concerns, freedom to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. But I am not going to make any unfounded claim for them in this regard, nor is there any need. That they had caught inspiring glimpses of religious freedom is abundantly clear. The existence of this great nation attests it. Whatsoever of freedom there is in our institutions, is in great part, the product of that germ of liberty, which our fathers planted in the rocky soil of New England. The farewell words which were addressed to them by their pastor, John Robinson, as they were leaving Leyden to come to these shores, are the very accents of liberty. "I charge you," said he to the Pilgrims, "before God and his blessed angels, that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word. I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no further than the instruments of their reformation. Luther and Calvin were great and shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God. I beseech you, remember it, it is an article of your church covenant, that you be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God." Such was the language, on the shores of Europe, of the pastor of the flock from which our fathers came. In the earliest period of the history of New England, we have Governor Haynes of Connecticut writing

to Roger Williams, after this manner: "I think, Mr. Williams, I must confess to you, that the most wise God hath provided and cut out this part of his world for a refuge and receptacle of all sorts of consciences." And hear the words of Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, for whom is claimed the great distinction of being "the first man in modern Christendom," to assert the principle of religious liberty in all its breadth. "No person in this Colony," says he, "shall be molested or questioned for matters of conscience to God, so he be loyal and keep the peace. Sir, we must part with lands and lives before we part with this jewel." Where such sentiments were cherished, we may well conjecture that the atmosphere was not altogether unfavorable to liberty, although Roger Williams himself, for the largeness of his doctrine, was banished from Massachusetts, and the unholy fires of persecution were kindled there for the followers of George Fox.

That our Fathers comprehended intellectually the great principle of freedom in all its extent, as it was comprehended by Roger Williams for instance, cannot be maintained. Their main principle seems, by some facts in their history, to have been, that all men were free to think for themselves, provided they thought as *they* did: a very considerable proviso, it must be confessed. But their claim to our reverence is not to be extinguished on this score. For even we, their children, who are well advanced into the third century which has opened upon the world since their landing, and who are surrounded by the lights of a more cultivated time, have not yet got the principle of religious freedom wrought into our being, infused into our blood. It is true there is a rare degree of toleration among us; but it is the toleration of those who are indifferent to all opinions, because they are zealously attached to none. It is true, too, that the principles of freedom lie at the foundation of our forms of government, distinctly and broadly recognised; but, nevertheless, we have not yet reached a point whence we can look down upon our fathers. There were giants in those days still. And we are dwarfs in

the comparison, and must be satisfied to look up to them for some time to come. Happy will it be for us if we recognise their superiority, and aspire to reach the same eminence. And this we shall do, if we really honour them, if we mean any thing by the commemorative service of this day.

I am not going to magnify the past at the expense of the present. Let us be just all around. This country *is* a land of freedom, great appearances and facts to the contrary notwithstanding. But, then, the true glory of our freedom does not lie in our profession of freedom, comprehensive and formal as that is. Our great national creed is, like many other creeds, to a melancholy extent a dead letter. Still, I say there is freedom here, a very great degree of comparative civil and religious freedom; and it is found not in our logical speculations and statements, but in the instinct, in the spirit, in the tendencies of freedom, which, however much they may have to struggle with, are nevertheless strong in this country. Here lies our hope, in the free tendencies of this nation.

But it is in this very respect, in the spirit of liberty, which is the most cheering characteristic of the present, that the Pilgrim fathers far excel us. Imperfectly as they comprehended the principle, partial as was the glimpse they had caught of it, still freedom was with them a perfect passion, to this extent at least, that for the sake of it, they sacrificed country and home, and turned away from the abodes of civilization, and came to a horrid wilderness, prepared to endure every privation, and brave every danger, and consider themselves as having gained more than the world could give, by the exchange. Their love of freedom is to be remembered to their immortal honour, because, so far as it went, it was no dead profession, no sickly and transient emotion, but a steady and consuming fire in their hearts, and they were inflamed by it to acts of heroic self-devotion.

And now in respect of self-sacrificing loyalty to their own free convictions, shall the sons of New England be so foolhardy as to challenge comparison with the Fathers? What! at this juncture of public affairs, in which every man of us has

the deepest interest, shall we place ourselves side by side with those self devoted men of old, when the slightest risk, when the merest considerations of policy deter us from the exercise of that freedom of thought and speech, the exercise of which we know to be our right and our duty? I believe that there are thousands and thousands of New England men, who in their hearts consider the war which is now raging to the south, as unchristian, barbarous, inhuman. As the sons of the brave Pilgrims then, why, in God's name, do they not speak out? Why are they not faithful to their convictions as their fathers were to theirs? Why, brothers, is not our native land at this very hour, all electric with the spirit of the Past? Where is the fearless independence of our ancestors? Why do not the thunders of remonstrance roll out from the deep heart of New England? Where is

“The voice of Massachusetts, of her free sons and daughters,
Deep calling unto deep aloud,—the sound of many waters!”

Alas, the free thoughts of men rise and die away there unexpressed, and the silence of New England at this crisis, is more melancholy than the awful desert stillness which was first broken by the voices of our Pilgrim fathers.

Since we so poorly sustain comparison with our fathers, it ill becomes us to sit in judgment upon them, for their imperfect ideas of spiritual freedom. They were men in earnest. For their own convictions they made every sacrifice. They exiled themselves voluntarily from their own country. They came to a bleak and cheerless desert, that they might in peace worship God according to their own consciences. And when others came among them, contradicting, questioning, condemning, that which they clung to as the truth, and for which they had forsaken friends and home, it was simply past their endurance. They could not bear it. They ought to have borne it. Yes, they ought. And they would have borne it, you say, had they understood what is meant by religious freedom. Undoubtedly they would. But, before we condemn

them, we must be devoted to our convictions as enthusiastically as they were to theirs, and then we shall be able to estimate the trial to which they were put, the trial of *patience*, one of the very hardest of the Christian virtues, when they found themselves beset in their desert-home by the very vexations of dissent which they had left the old world to get rid of. When we appreciate this trial, we shall see that their task was no easy one to the infirmity of human nature; and we shall be ready to forgive them, and honour them for what they were, and not condemn them for what they were not.

Here, brothers, let me remark, that as we are met to commemorate the past, it may possibly be that such allusions as I have made to the present, may be deemed unseasonable. But I pray you, remember the day and the deed which we celebrate. The past is unprofitable if it does not throw light upon the present. Our fathers did a hard work, and it is no easy work to pay due honour to their memory. Wordsworth, in his lines on Rob Roy's grave, hath said,

“Forgive me if my phrase seems strong—
 “A poet worthy of Rob Roy,
 “Must scorn a timid song.”

And so, if we would worthily celebrate our Pilgrim fathers, we must note the contrast between them and ourselves; we must strive to catch some portion of their spirit. We must recall their images, not for idle amusement, but that they may live again in their children.

The free spirit which inspired the Fathers of New England, was fostered by the circumstances in which they were placed, when they arrived on these shores. Inclement as was the season at which they came, and rocky as was the soil on which they settled, the simple circumstance that they fixed their abode on the sea coast, was favourable to the growth of freedom. Sir James Mackintosh remarks in his history of England, that liberty in Germany was preserved at the sources of

the Rhine, amid the mountains, and at its mouths on the coast; those positions being favourable to freedom, by the sense of security and independence which they promoted. Mountains are natural fortresses, and they who dwell in them, feeling themselves guarded and safe, become fearless and free. Hence the familiar phrase of the poet, "the mountain-breath of liberty." The sea-coast also, while it develops man's powers by inviting him to enterprise, serves to cut him off from contact with others, and consequently from aggression, and thus also creates a feeling of independence. And so we discern great truth in the more than once quoted lines of the first of living poets:—

"Two voices are there; one is of the sea,
 "One of the mountains; each a mighty voice;
 "In both, from age to age, Thou didst rejoice,
 "They were thy chosen music, Liberty!"

That music can be heard only upon one very simple condition. We must have ears to hear. It was heard by our Fathers. It was the grand accompaniment of their majestic work. It was the music to which they laboured in building a free commonwealth. May the ears of the present generation, too often, alas! deafened by the clattering engines of trade, or filled, perchance, with cotton,—may the ears of the sons of New England be unstopped, and may we, too, learn to breathe, and speak, and act in harmony with the great agencies of Nature, keeping time to the lofty and onward march of her music.

Another circumstance which was favourable to the free spirit of our Fathers, and which has had no slight influence in forming the character of their descendants, is the climate of the country to which they came. It is severe, and the soil rocky and ungenial. Had the Pilgrims been only a company of adventurers seeking subsistence or gain, they would scarcely have landed, or they would have remained only to die. But they were something more and better. They hun-

gered for food. They were in danger of starvation. But, amidst the pressure of physical necessity, they never forgot their spiritual wants. At one and the same time they sought the food that cometh out of the earth, and the bread that cometh down from heaven. They were bent, not merely upon living, but upon living for a purpose, to realize their ideal, to found a free and religious state. They lost no time, amidst all their privations, in securing opportunities of spiritual growth and culture, and accordingly we find, that in less than sixteen years after their first landing, they had provided the means of a liberal education. Having such high aims, being inspired with a great spirit, it could not be but that, hard as the struggle was, they should come off conquerors over a stern climate and a barren soil. Matter must yield to spirit. It is the law of God. And so all physical hardships became the ministers and servants of the resolute Fathers of New England. The effect of the climate upon the domestic character of that region is obvious. The storms and snows of its long winters drive men in-doors to cherish their household joys, and to draw close the ties of family. The niggardliness of nature tended also to promote frugality and economy, and to sharpen the inventive faculties. What could not be done in one way, must be done in another; and so ingenuity was exercised in devising ways and means. And thus the character of the descendants of the Pilgrims has become marked for acuteness, for the readiness with which they change hands and fit themselves to new pursuits and to all trades; so that now-a-days it is hardly possible, by any fluctuations in our national policy, to defeat their commercial success. Tariffs or no tariffs, banks or no banks, it is all one to the men of New England. They will get something more than a living any how. But I have no desire now to take up a strain of self-laudation. For I apprehend that humility is not always one of the most conspicuous traits of the New England character. I would not be censorious; but it is well, by the way, to look at our faults, and therefore I may be permitted to say, that the left hand in New England sometimes

seems to be almost as cunning as the right, for it is very apt to find out and to point out the good which the right is doing. We are rather too self-conscious a people. The enterprise of New England is great, but it is none the better for our own praises. "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips."

There is one other circumstance in relation to our Fathers that demands a grateful recognition; and that is, that they were Englishmen, that they came from the land of Shakspeare and Milton, that we inherit through them the treasures of a literature, second in wealth to that of no other nation on earth. We cannot estimate our obligations and our privileges in this respect. Our fathers loved the land of their birth, and in settling here they believed that they were extending its borders and its renown. Mistake me not; I pass no commendation on the government of England. Like all governments, its aim is power. But it is restrained, and made to serve the cause of human freedom (whenever it does serve it), by the public opinion, by the free spirit of its people. Of that free spirit our fathers largely partook. They came, charged with it, to this new world. They breathed it abroad over the land, and the wilderness was glad, and began to blossom as the rose.

And now, Sons of New England, shall we not take heart, when we mark what our fathers achieved through their brave and unstipulating fidelity to their own convictions. We are prone to be disheartened and to despair, to let things take their course, even though that course be evil and ruinous in our eyes. We feel all our efforts to be palsied as by some inexorable necessity. We have no strength to be loyal to our own convictions. And yet in respect of the circumstances in which we are placed, mark the difference between us and our fathers. Our Fathers, when they landed, stood on the borders of a rude continent, unreclaimed from barbarism. They were brought into conflict with brute and stubborn matter. But

they had a *spirit* within them awake to spiritual aims, to invisible principles, from which they drew a strength before which the solid earth became plastic, and so they made the desert like Eden, like the Garden of the Lord, and became the creators of a new and better world. We, on the other hand, are surrounded by a living world, a world of beings like ourselves, and we are called upon to act upon one another, upon the brothers of our flesh and our spirit, allied to us by that nature, "one touch of which makes the whole world kin." The materials upon which we are required to act, which we are to mould by our spiritual force, if we *have* any spiritual force, if the high faith of the Fathers yet dwells in the hearts of the sons—the materials which we, I say, are in our day and generation to assist in fashioning to order and beauty, are all made to our hand. They lie all open and thirsting for the beneficent influence of great ideas. The living world of mankind has well been compared to a cunningly tuned musical instrument. "Strike one string and all the strings begin sounding."

Be followers, then, of your fathers. Prove your relationship to them by a kindred faith, by those ties of the soul which transcend the ties of blood, and your influence shall be potent like theirs. You shall become so many living centres of Life, and Freedom, and Power, and so help forward that new creation, which is more glorious far than that at which the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

BOARD OF OFFICERS.

~~~~~

*President.*

SAMUEL BRECK.

*Vice Presidents.*

SAMUEL H. PERKINS,                      JOSEPH R. CHANDLER.

*Treasurer.*

SAMUEL BRADFORD.

*Secretary.*

JOHN T. S. SULLIVAN.

*Directors.*

JOHN W. CLAGHORN,                      JOHN TOWNE,  
JOHN MASON,                              WILLIAM WHITNEY,  
CHARLES TOPPAN,                         GEORGE W. LORD,  
                                                    ALFRED L. ELWYN.

*Chaplains.*

WILLIAM H. FURNESS,  
JOEL PARKER, D.D.  
MARK A. D. W. HOWE.

*Physicians.*

ORLANDO H. PARTRIDGE,  
HENRY BOND,  
HEBER CHASE.

*Counsellors.*

GARRICK MALLORY,  
WILLIAM H. DILLINGHAM,  
ALBRON P. BRADBURY.

*Auditors.*

EDWIN BOOTH,  
JOSEPH COFFIN,  
GEORGE F. PEABODY.









LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 069 164 1