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SPEECHES, ADDRESSES, AND OCCASIONAL SERMONS,

BY

THEODORE PARKER,

MINISTER OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN BOSTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO [Pg iii]

FRANCIS JACKSON,

THE FOE 'GAINST EVERY FORM OF WRONG,
THE FRIEND OF JUSTICE,
WHOSE WIDE HUMANITY CONTENDS
FOR WOMAN'S NATURAL AND UNALIENABLE RIGHT; AGAINST
HIS NATION'S CRUELTY PROTECTS THE SLAVE;
IN THE CRIMINAL BEHOLDS A BROTHER TO BE REFORMED;
GOES TO MEN FALLEN AMONG THIEVES,—
WHOM PRIESTS AND LEVITES SACRAMENTALLY PASS BY,—
AND SEEKS TO SOOTHE AND HEAL AND BLESS THEM THAT ARE
READY TO PERISH:
WITH ADMIRATION FOR HIS UNSURPASSED INTEGRITY,
HIS COURAGE WHICH NOTHING SCARES,
AND HIS TRUE RELIGION
THAT WOULD BRING PEACE ON EARTH AND GOOD-WILL TO MAN,
THESE VOLUMES

ARE THANKFULLY DEDICATED
BY HIS MINISTER AND FRIEND,

THEODORE PARKER.

PREFACE.

[Pg v]

I have collected in these volumes several Speeches, Addresses and occasional Sermons, which I have delivered at various times during the last seven years. Most of them were prepared for some special emergency: only two papers, that on "The Relation of Jesus to his Age and the Ages," and that on "Immortal Life," were written without reference to some such emergency. All of them have been printed before, excepting the sermon "Of General Taylor," and the address on "The American Scholar;" some have been several times reprinted. I do not know that they are worthy of republication in this permanent form, but the leading ideas of these volumes are very dear to me, and are sure to live as long as the human race shall continue. So I have published a small edition, hoping that the truths which I know are contained in these pages will do a service long after the writer, and the occasion of their utterance, have passed off and been forgot. I offer them to whom they may concern.

THEODORE PARKER.

AUGUST 24, 1851.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

[Pg vii]

I.

[Pg 1]

THE RELATION OF JESUS TO HIS AGE AND THE AGES.—A SERMON PREACHED AT THE THURSDAY LECTURE, IN BOSTON, DECEMBER 26, 1844.

JOHN VII. 48.

"Have any of the Rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him?"

In all the world there is nothing so remarkable as a great man; nothing so rare; nothing which so well repays study. Human nature is loyal at its heart, and is, always and everywhere, looking for this its true earthly sovereign. We sometimes say that our institutions, here in America, do not require great men; that we get along better without than with such. But let a real, great man light on our quarter of the planet; let us understand him, and straightway these democratic hearts of ours burn with admiration and with love. We wave in his words, like corn in the harvest wind. We should rejoice to obey him, for he would speak what we need to hear. Men are always half expecting such a man. But when he comes, the real, great man that God has been preparing, [Pg 2] —men are disappointed; they do not recognize him. He does not enter the city through the gates which expectants had crowded. He is a fresh fact, brand new; not exactly like any former fact. Therefore men do not recognize nor acknowledge him. His language is strange, and his form unusual. He looks revolutionary, and pulls down ancient walls to build his own temple, or, at least, splits old rocks asunder, and quarries anew fresh granite and marble.

There are two classes of great men. Now and then some arise whom all acknowledge to be great, soon as they appear. Such men have what is true in relation to the wants and expectations of to-day. They say, what many men wished but had not words for; they translate into thought what, as a dim sentiment, lay a burning in many a heart, but could not get entirely written out into consciousness. These men find a welcome. Nobody misunderstands them. The world follows at their chariot-wheels, and flings up its cap and shouts its huzzas,—for the world is loyal, and follows its king when it sees and knows him. The good part of the world follows the highest man it comprehends; the bad, whoever serves its turn.

But there is another class of men so great, that all cannot see their greatness. They are in advance of men's conjectures, higher than their dreams; too good to be actual, think some. Therefore, say many, there must be some mistake; this man is not so great as he seems; nay, he [Pg 3] is no great man at all, but an impostor. These men have what is true not merely in relation to the wants and expectations of men here and to-day; but what is true in relation to the Universe, to Eternity, to God. They do not speak what you and I have been trying to say, and cannot; but what we shall one day years hence, wish to say, after we have improved and grown up to man's estate.

Now it seems to me, the men of this latter class, when they come, can never meet the approbation of the censors and guides of public opinion. Such as wished for a new great man had a superstition of the last one in their minds. They expected the new to be just like the old, but he is altogether unlike. Nature is rich, but not rich enough to waste any thing. So there are never two great men very strongly similar. Nay, this new great man, perhaps, begins by destroying much that the old one built up with tears and prayers. He shows, at first, the limitations and defects of the former great man; calls in question his authority. He refuses all masters; bows not to tradition; and with seeming irreverence, laughs in the face of the popular idols. How will the "respectable men," the men of a few good rules and those derived from their fathers "the best of men and the wisest,"—how will they regard this new great man? They will see nothing remarkable in him except that he is fluent and superficial, dangerous and revolutionary. He [Pg 4] disturbs their notions of order; he shows that the institutions of society are not perfect; that their imperfections are not of granite or marble, but only of words written on soft wax, which may be erased and others written thereon anew. He shows that such imperfect institutions are less than one great man. The guides and censors of public opinion will not honor such a man, they will hate him. Why not? Some others not half so well bred, nor well furnished with precedents, welcome the new great man; welcome his ideas; welcome his person. They say, "Behold a Prophet."

When Jesus, the son of Mary, a poor woman, wife of Joseph the carpenter, in the little town of Nazareth, when he "began to be about thirty years old," and began also to open his mouth in the synagogues and the highways, nobody thought him a great man at all, as it seems. "Who are you?" said the guardians of public opinion. He found men expecting a great man. This, it seems, was the common opinion, that a great man was to arise, and save the Church, and save the State. They looked back to Moses, a divine man of antiquity, whose great life had passed into the world, and to whom men had done honor, in various ways; amongst others, by telling all sorts of wonders he wrought, and declaring that none could be so great again; none get so near to God. [Pg 5] They looked back also to the prophets, a long line of divine men, so they reckoned, but less than the awful Moses; his stature was far above the nation, who hid themselves in his shadow. Now the well-instructed children of Abraham thought the next great man must be only a copy of the last, repeat his ideas, and work in the old fashion. Sick men like to be healed by the medicine which helped them the last time; at least, by the customary drugs which are popular.

In Judea, there were then parties of men, distinctly marked. There were the Conservatives,—they represented the church, tradition, ecclesiastical or theocratical authority. They adhered to the words of the old books, the forms of the old rites, the tradition of the elders. "Nobody but a Jew can be saved," said they; "he only by circumcision, and the keeping of the old formal law; God likes that, He accepts nothing else." These were the Pharisees, with their servants the Scribes. Of this class were the Priests and the Levites in the main, the National party, the Native-Hebrew party of that time. They had tradition, Moses and the prophets; they believed in tradition, Moses and the prophets, at least in public; what they believed in private God knew, and so did they. I know nothing of that.

Then there was the indifferent party; the Sadducees, the State. They had wealth, and they believed in it, both in public and private too. They had a more generous and extensive cultivation [Pg 6] than the Pharisees. They had intercourse with foreigners, and understood the writers of Ionia and Athens which the Pharisee held in abhorrence. These were sleek respectable men, who, in part, disbelieved the Jewish theology. It is no very great merit to disbelieve even in the devil, unless you have a positive faith in God to take up your affections. The Sadducee believed neither in angel nor resurrection—not at all in the immortality of the soul. He believed in the state, in the laws, the constables, the prisons and the axe. In religious matters, it seems the Pharisee had a positive belief, only it was a positive belief in a great mistake. In religious matters the Sadducee had no positive belief at all; not even in an error: at least, some think so. His distinctive affirmation was but a denial. He believed what he saw with his eyes, touched with his fingers, tasted with his tongue. He never saw, felt, nor tasted immortal life; he had no belief therein. There was once a heathen Sadducee who said, "My right arm is my God!"

There was likewise a party of Come-outers. They despaired of the State and the Church too, and turned off into the wilderness, "where the wild asses quench their thirst," building up their organizations free, as they hoped, from all ancient tyrannies. The Bible says nothing directly of these men in its canonical books. It is a curious omission; but two Jews, each acquainted with [Pg 7] foreign writers, Josephus and Philo, give an account of these. These were the Essenes, an ascetic sect, hostile to marriage, at least, many of them, who lived in a sort of association by themselves, and had all things in common.

The Pharisees and the Sadducees had no great living and ruling ideas; none I mean which represented man, his hopes, wishes, affections, his aspirations and power of progress. That is no very rare case, perhaps, you will say, for a party in the Church or the State to have no such ideas, but they had not even a plausible substitute for such ideas. They seemed to have no faith in man, in his divine nature, his power of improvement. The Essenes had ideas; had a positive belief; had faith in man, but it was weakened in a great measure by their machinery. They, like the Pharisee and the Sadducee, were imprisoned in their organization, and probably saw no good out of their own party lines.

It is a plain thing that no one of these three parties would accept, acknowledge, or even perceive the greatness of Jesus of Nazareth. His ideas were not their notions. He was not the man they were looking for; not at all the Messiah, the anointed one of God, which they wanted. The Sadducee expected no new great man unless it was a Roman quæstor, or procurator; the Pharisees looked for a Pharisee stricter than Gamaliel; the Essenes for an Ascetic. It is so now. Some seem to think that if Jesus were to come back to the earth, he would preach Unitarian [Pg 8] sermons, from a text out of the Bible, and prove his divine mission and the everlasting truths, the truths of necessity that he taught, in the Unitarian way, by telling of the miracles he wrought eighteen hundred years ago; that he would prove the immortality of the soul by the fact of his own corporeal resurrection. Others seem to think that he would deliver homilies of a severer character; would rate men roundly about total depravity, and tell of unconditional election, salvation without works, and imputed righteousness, and talk of hell till the women and children fainted, and the knees of men smote together for trembling. Perhaps both would be mistaken.

So it was then. All these three classes of men, imprisoned in their prejudices and superstitions, were hostile. The Pharisees said, "We know that God spake unto Moses; but as for this fellow, we know not whence he is. He blasphemeth Moses and the prophets; yea, he hath a devil, and is mad, why hear him?" The Sadducees complained that "he stirred up the people;" so he did. The Essenes, no doubt, would have it that he was "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." Tried by these three standards, the judgment was true; what could he do

to please these three parties? Nothing! nothing that he would do. So they hated him; all hated him, and sought to destroy him. The cause is plain. He was so deep they could not see his [Pg 9] profoundness; too high for their comprehension; too far before them for their sympathy. He was not the great man of the day. He found all organizations against him; Church and State. Even John the Baptist, a real prophet, but not the prophet, doubted if Jesus was the one to be followed. If Jesus had spoken for the Pharisees, they would have accepted his speech and the speaker too. Had he favored the Sadducees, he had been a great man in their camp, and Herod would gladly have poured wine for the eloquent Galilean, and have satisfied the carpenter's son with purple and fine linen. Had he praised the Essenes, uttering their Shibboleth, they also would have paid him his price, have made him the head of their association perhaps, at least, have honored him in their way. He spoke for none of these. Why should they honor or even tolerate him? It were strange had they done so. Was it through any fault or deficiency of Jesus, that these men refused him? quite the reverse. The rain falls and the sun shines on the evil and the good; the work of infinite power, wisdom and goodness is before all men, revealing the invisible things, yet the fool hath said, ay, said in his heart, "There is no God!"

Jesus spoke not for the prejudices of such, and therefore they rejected him. But as he spoke truths for man, truths from God, truths adapted to man's condition there, to man's condition [Pg 10] everywhere and always, when the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes went away, their lips curling with scorn; when they gnashed on one another with their teeth, there were noble men and humble women, who had long awaited the consolation of Israel, and they heard him, heard him gladly. Yes, they left all to follow him. Him! no, it was not him they followed; it was God in him they obeyed, the God of truth, the God of love.

There were men not counted in the organized sects; men weary of absurdities; thirsting for the truth; sick, they knew not why nor of what, yet none the less sick, and waiting for the angel who should heal them, though by troubled waters and remedies unknown. These men had not the prejudices of a straightly organized and narrow sect. Perhaps they had not its knowledge, or its good manners. They were "unlearned and ignorant men," those early followers of Christ. Nay, Jesus himself had no extraordinary culture, as the world judges of such things. His townsmen wondered, on a famous occasion, how he had learned to read. He knew little of theologies, it would seem; the better for him, perhaps. No doubt the better for us that he insisted on none. He knew they were not religion. The men of Galilee did not need theology. The youngest scribe in the humblest theological school at Jerusalem, if such a thing were in those days, could have [Pg 11] furnished theology enough to believe in a life-time. They did need religion; they did see it as Jesus unfolded its loveliness; they did welcome it when they saw; welcome it in their hearts.

If I were a poet as some are born, and skilled to paint with words what shall stand out as real, to live before the eye, and then dwell in the affectionate memory for ever, I would tell of the audience which heard the Sermon on the mount, which listened to the parables, the rebukes, the beautiful beatitudes. They were plain men, and humble women; many of them foolish like you and me; some of them sinners. But they all had hearts; had souls, all of them—hearts made to love, souls expectant of truth. When he spoke, some said, no doubt, "That is a new thing, that The true worshipper shall worship in spirit and in truth, as well here as in Jerusalem, now as well as any time; that also is a hard saying, Love your enemies; forgive them, though seventy times seven they smite and offend you; that notion that the law and the prophets are contained, all that is essentially religious thereof, in one precept, Love men as yourself, and God with all your might. This differs a good deal from the Pharisaic orthodoxy of the synagogue. That is a bold thing, presumptuous and revolutionary to say, I am greater than the temple, wiser than Solomon, a better symbol of God than both." But there was something deeper than Jewish orthodoxy in their [Pg 12] hearts; something that Jewish orthodoxy could not satisfy, and what was yet more troublesome to ecclesiastical guides, something that Jewish orthodoxy could not keep down, nor even cover up. Sinners were converted at his reproof. They felt he rebuked whom he loved. Yet his pictures of sin and sinners too, were any thing but flattering. There was small comfort in them. Still it was not the publicans and harlots who laid their hands on the place where their hearts should be, saying, "You hurt our feelings," and "we can't bear you!" Nay, they pondered his words, repenting in tears. He showed them their sin; its cause, its consequence, its cure. To them he came as a Saviour, and they said, "Thou art well-come," those penitent Magdalens weeping at his feet.

It would be curious could we know the mingled emotions that swayed the crowd which rolled up around Jesus, following him, as the tides obey the moon, wherever he went; curious to see how faces looked doubtful at first as he began to speak at Tabor or Gennesareth, Capernaum or Gischala, then how the countenance of some lowered and grew black with thunder suppressed but cherished, while the face of others shone as a branch of stars seen through some disparted cloud in a night of fitful storms, a moment seen and then withdrawn. It were curious to see how gradually many discordant feelings, passion, prejudice and pride were hushed before the tide of [Pg 13] melodious religion he poured out around him, baptizing anew saint and sinner, and old and young, into one brotherhood of a common soul, into one immortal service of the universal God; to see how this young Hebrew maid, deep-hearted, sensitive, enthusiastic, self-renouncing, intuitive of heavenly truth, rich as a young vine, with clustering affections just purpling into ripeness,—how she seized, first and all at once, the fair ideal, and with generous bosom confidingly embraced it too; how that old man, gray-bearded, with baldness on his head, full of precepts and precedents, the lore of his fathers, the experience of a hard life, logical, slow, calculating, distrustful, remembering much and fearing much, but hoping little, confiding only in the fixed, his reverence for the old deepening as he himself became of less use,—to see how he received the glad inspirations of the joiner's son, and wondering felt his youth steal slowly back upon his

heart, reviving aspirations, long ago forgot, and then the crimson tide of early hope come gushing, tingling on through every limb; to see how the young man halting between principle and passion, not yet petrified into worldliness, but struggling, uncertain, half reluctant, with those two serpents, Custom and Desire, that beautifully twined about his arms and breast and neck, their wormy folds, concealing underneath their burnished scales the dragon's awful strength, the viper's poison fang, the poor youth caressing their snaky crests, and toying with their tongues of [Pg 14] flame—to see how he slowly, reluctantly, amid great questionings of heart, drank in the words of truth, and then, obedient to the angel in his heart, shook off, as ropes of sand, that hideous coil and trod the serpents underneath his feet. All this, it were curious, ay, instructive too, could we but see.

They heard him with welcome various as their life. The old men said, "It is Moses or Elias; it is Jeremiah, one of the old prophets arisen from the dead, for God makes none such, now-a-days, in the sterile dotage of mankind." The young men and maidens doubtless it was that said, "This is the Christ; the desire of the nations; the hope of the world, the great new prophet; the Son of David; the Son of Man; yes, the Son of God. He shall be our king." Human nature is loyal, and follows its king soon as it knows him. Poor lost sheep! the children of men look always for their guide, though so often they look in vain.

How he spoke, words deep and piercing; rebukes for the wicked, doubly rebuking, because felt to have come out from a great, deep, loving heart. His first word was, perhaps, "Repent," but with the assurance that the kingdom of God was here and now, within reach of all. How his doctrines, those great truths of nature, commended themselves to the heart of each, of all simple-souled men looking for the truth! He spoke out of his experience; of course into theirs. He spoke great [Pg 15] doctrines, truths vast as the soul, eternal as God, winged with beauty from the loveliness of his own life. Had he spoken for the Jews alone, his words had perished with that people; for that time barely, the echo of his name had died away in his native hamlet; for the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essence, you and I had heard of him but as a Rabbi; nay, had never been blest by him at all. Words for a nation, an age, a sect, are of use in their place, yet they soon come to nought. But as he spoke for eternity, his truths ride on the wings of time; as he spoke for man, they are welcome, beautiful and blessing, wherever man is found, and so must be till man and time shall cease.

He looked not back, as the Pharisee, save for illustrations and examples. He looked forward for his direction. He looked around for his work. There it lay, the harvest plenteous, the laborers few. It is always so. He looked not to men for his idea, his word to speak; as little for their applause. He looked in to God, for guidance, wisdom, strength, and as water in the wilderness, at the stroke of Moses, in the Hebrew legend, so inspiration came at his call, a mighty stream of truth for the nation, faint, feeble, afraid, and wandering for the promised land; drink for the thirsty, and cleansing for the unclean.

But he met opposition; O, yes, enough of it. How could it be otherwise? It must be so. The very soul of peace, he brought a sword. His word was a consuming fire. The Pharisees wanted to be [Pg 16] applauded, commended; to have their sect, their plans, their traditions praised and flattered. His word to them was, "Repent;" of them, to the people, "Such righteousness admits no man to the kingdom of heaven; they are a deceitful prophecy, blind guides, hypocrites; not sons of Abraham, but children of the devil." They could not bear him; no wonder at it. He was the aggressor; had carried the war into the very heart of their system. They turned out of their company a man whose blindness he healed, because he confessed that fact. They made a law that all who believed on him, should also be cast out. Well they might hate him, those old Pharisees. His existence was their reproach; his preaching their trial; his life with its outward goodness, his piety within, was their condemnation. The man was their ruin, and they knew it. The cunning can see their own danger, but it is only men wise in mind, or men simple of heart, that can see their real, permanent safety and defence; never the cunning, neither then, neither now.

Jesus looked to God for his truth, his great doctrines not his own, private, personal, depending on his idiosyncracies, and therefore only subjectively true,—but God's, universal, everlasting, the absolute religion. I do not know that he did not teach some errors also, along with it. I care not if he did. It is by his truths that I know him, the absolute religion he taught and lived; by his highest [Pg 17] sentiments that he is to be appreciated. He had faith in God and obeyed God; hence his inspiration, great, in proportion to the greater endowment, moral and religious, which God gave him, great likewise in proportion to his perfect obedience. He had faith in man none the less. Who ever yet had faith in God that had none in man? I know not. Surely no inspired prophet. As Jesus had faith in man, so he spoke to men. Never yet, in the wide world, did a prophet arise, appealing with a noble heart and a noble life to the soul of goodness in man, but that soul answered to the call. It was so most eminently with Jesus. The Scribes and Pharisees could not understand by what authority he taught. Poor Pharisees! how could they? His phylacteries were no broader than those of another man; nay, perhaps he had no phylacteries at all, nor even a broad-bordered garment. Men did not salute him in the market-place, sandals in hand, with their "Rabbi! Rabbi!" Could such men understand by what authority he taught? no more than they dared answer his questions. They that knew him, felt he had authority quite other than that claimed by the Scribes; the authority of true words, the authority of a noble life; yes, the authority which God gives a great moral and religious man. God delegates authority to men just in proportion to their power of truth, and their power of goodness; to their being and their life. [Pg 18] So God spoke in Jesus, as he taught the perfect religion, anticipated, developed, but never yet transcended.

This then was the relation of Jesus to his age: the sectarians cursed him; cursed him by their gods; rejected him, abused him, persecuted him; sought his life. Yes, they condemned him in the name of God. All evil says the proverb, begins in that name; much continues to claim it. The religionists, the sects, the sectarian leaders rejected him, condemned and slew him at the last, hanging his body on a tree. Poor priests of the people, they hoped thereby to stifle that awful soul! they only stilled the body; that soul spoke with a thousand tongues. So in the times of old when the Saturnian day began to dawn, it might be fabled that the old Titanic race, lovers of darkness and haters of the light, essayed to bar the rising morning from the world, and so heaped Pelion upon Ossa, and Olympus on Pelion; but first the day sent up his crimson flush upon the cloud, and then his saffron tinge, and next the sun came peering o'er the loftiest height, magnificently fair—and down the mountain's slanting ridge poured the intolerable day; meanwhile those triple hills, laboriously piled, came toppling, tumbling down, with lumbering crush, and underneath their ruin hid the helpless giants' grave. So was it with men who sat in Moses' seat. But this people, that "knew not the Law," and were counted therefore accursed, they [Pg 19] welcomed Jesus as they never welcomed the Pharisee, the Sadducee or the Scribe. Ay, hence were their tears. The hierarchical fire burnt not so bright contrasted with the sun. That people had a Simon Peter, a James, and a John, men not free from faults no doubt, the record shows it, but with hearts in their bosoms, which could be kindled, and then could light other hearts. Better still, there were Marthas and Marys among that people who "knew not the law" and were cursed. They were the mothers of many a church.

The character of Jesus has not changed; his doctrines are still the same; but what a change in his relation to the age, nay to the ages. The stone that the builders rejected is indeed become the head of the corner, and its foundation too. He is worshipped as a God. That is the rank assigned him by all but a fraction of the Christian world. It is no wonder. Good men worship the best thing they know, and call it God. What was taught to the mass of men, in those days, better than the character of Christ? Should they rather worship the Grecian Jove, or the Jehovah of the Jews? To me it seems the moral attainment of Jesus was above the hierarchical conception of God, as taught at Athens, Rome, Jerusalem. Jesus was the prince of peace, the king of truth, praying for [Pg 20] his enemies—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" The Jehovah of the Old Testament, was awful and stern, a man of war, hating the wicked. The sacerdotal conception of God at Rome and Athens was lower yet. No wonder then, that men soon learned to honor Jesus as a God, and then as God himself. Apostolical and other legends tell of his divine birth, his wondrous power that healed the sick, palsied and crippled, deaf and dumb and blind; created bread; turned water into wine, and bid obedient devils come and go, a power that raised the dead. They tell that nature felt with him, and at his death the strongly sympathizing sun paused at high noon, and for three hours withheld the day; that rocks were rent, and opening graves gave up their sainted dead, who trod once more the streets of Zion, the first fruits of them that slept; they tell too how disappointed Death gave back his prey, and spirit-like, Jesus restored, in flesh and shape the same, passed through the doors shut up, and in a bodily form was taken up to heaven before the face of men! Believe men of these things as they will. To me they are not truth and fact, but mythic symbols and poetry; the psalm of praise with which the world's rude heart extols and magnifies its King. It is for his truth and his life, his wisdom, goodness, piety, that he is honored in my heart; yes, in the world's heart. It is for this that in his name churches are built, [Pg 21] and prayers are prayed; for this that the best things we know, we honor with his name.

He is the greatest person of the ages; the proudest achievement of the human race. He taught the absolute religion, love to God and man. That God has yet greater men in store I doubt not; to say this is not to detract from the majestic character of Christ, but to affirm the omnipotence of God. When they come, the old contest will be renewed, the living prophet stoned; the dead one worshipped. Be that as it may, there are duties he teaches us far different from those most commonly taught. He was the greatest fact in the whole history of man. Had he conformed to what was told him of men; had he counselled only with flesh and blood; he had been nothing but a poor Jew—the world had lost that rich endowment of religious genius, that richest treasure of religious life, the glad tidings of the one religion, absolute and true. What if he had said, as others, "None can be greater than Moses, none so great?" He had been a dwarf; the spirit of God had faded from his soul! But he conferred with God, not men; took counsel of his hopes, not his fears. Working for men, with men, by men, trusting in God, and pure as truth, he was not scared at the little din of church or state, and trembled not, though Pilate and Herod were made friends only to crucify him that was a born King of the world. Methinks I hear that lofty spirit say to you [Pg 22] or me, poor brother, fear not, nor despair. The goodness actual in me is possible for all. God is near thee now as then to me; rich as ever in truth, as able to create, as willing to inspire. Daily and nightly He showers down his infinitude of light. Open thine eyes to see, thy heart to live. Lo, God is here.:

II. [Pg 23]

THE TRUE IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH.—A DISCOURSE AT THE INSTALLATION OF THEODORE PARKER AS MINISTER OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN BOSTON, JANUARY 4, 1846.

For nearly a year we have assembled within these walls from week to week,—I think not idly; I know you have not come for any trivial end. You have recently made a formal organization of yourselves for religious action. To-day, at your request, I enter regularly on a ministry in the midst of you. What are we doing; what do we design to do? We are here to establish a Christian church; and a Christian church, as I understand it, is a body of men and women united together in a common desire of religious excellence and with a common regard for Jesus of Nazareth, regarding him as the noblest example of morality and religion,—as the model, therefore, in this respect for us. Such a church may have many rites, as our Catholic brothers, or but few rites, as our Protestant brothers, or no rites at all, as our brothers, the Friends. It may be, nevertheless, a [Pg 24] Christian church; for the essential of substance, which makes it a religious body, is the union for the purpose of cultivating love to God and man; and the essential of form, which makes it a Christian body, is the common regard for Jesus, considered as the highest representative of God that we know. It is not the form, either of ritual or of doctrine, but the spirit which constitutes a Christian church. A staff may sustain an old man, or a young man may bear it in his hands as a toy, but walking is walking, though the man have no staff for ornament or support. A Christian spirit may exist under rituals and doctrines the most diverse. It were hard to say a man is not a Christian, because he believes in the doctrine of the Trinity, or the Pope, while Jesus taught no such doctrine; foolish to say one is no Christian because he denies the existence of a Devil, though Jesus believed it. To make a man's Christian name depend on a belief of all that is related by the numerous writers in the Bible, is as absurd as to make that depend on a belief in all the words of Luther, or Calvin, or St. Augustine. It is not for me to say a man is not theoretically a Christian because he believes that Slavery is a Divine and Christian institution; that War is grateful to God—saying, with the Old Testament, that God himself "is a man of war," who teaches men to fight, and curses such as refuse;—or because he believes that all men are born totally [Pg 25] depraved, and the greater part of them are to be damned everlastingly by "a jealous God," who is "angry with the wicked every day," and that the few are to be "saved" only because God unjustly punished an innocent man for their sake. I will not say a man is not a Christian though he believe all the melancholy things related of God in some parts of the Old Testament, yet I know few doctrines so hostile to real religion as these have proved themselves. In our day it has strangely come to pass that a little sect, themselves hooted at and called "Infidels" by the rest of Christendom, deny the name of Christian to such as publicly reject the miracles of the Bible. Time will doubtless correct this error. Fire is fire, and ashes ashes, say what we may; each will work after its kind. Now if Christianity be the absolute religion, it must allow all beliefs that are true, and it may exist and be developed in connection with all forms consistent with the absolute religion, and the degree thereof represented by Jesus.

The action of a Christian church seems to be twofold: first on its own members, and then, through their means, on others out of its pale. Let a word be said of each in its order. If I were to ask you why you came here to-day; why you have often come to this house hitherto?—the serious amongst you would say: That we might become better; more manly; upright before God and downright before men; that we might be Christians, men good and pious after the fashion Jesus [Pg 26] spoke of. The first design of such a church then is to help ourselves become Christians. Now the substance of Christianity is Piety—Love to God, and Goodness—Love to men. It is a religion, the germs whereof are born in your heart, appearing in your earliest childhood; which are developed just in proportion as you become a man, and are indeed the standard measure of your life. As the primeval rock lies at the bottom of the sea and appears at the top of the loftiest mountains, so in a finished character religion underlies all and crowns all. Christianity, to be perfect and entire, demands a complete manliness; the development of the whole man, mind, conscience, heart and soul. It aims not to destroy the sacred peculiarities of individual character. It cherishes and develops them in their perfection, leaving Paul to be Paul, not Peter, and John to be John, not Jude nor James. We are born different, into a world where unlike things are gathered together, that there may be a special work for each. Christianity respects this diversity in men, aiming not to undo but further God's will; not fashioning all men after one pattern, to think alike, act alike, be alike, even look alike. It is something far other than Christianity which demands that. A Christian church then should put no fetters on the man; it should have unity of purpose, but with the most entire freedom for the individual. When you sacrifice the man to the mass in church or [Pg 27] state, church or state becomes an offence, a stumbling-block in the way of progress, and must end or mend. The greater the variety of individualities in church or state, the better is it, so long as all are really manly, humane and accordant. A church must needs be partial, not catholic, where all men think alike, narrow and little. Your church-organ, to have compass and volume, must have pipes of various sound, and the skilful artist destroys none, but tunes them all to harmony; if otherwise, he does not understand his work. In becoming Christians let us not cease to be men; nay, we cannot be Christians unless we are men first. It were unchristian to love Christianity better than the truth, or Christ better than man.

But Christianity is not only the absolute religion; it has also the ideal-man. In Jesus of Nazareth it gives us, in a certain sense, the model of religious excellence. It is a great thing to have the perfect idea of religion; to have also that idea made real, satisfactory to the wants of any age, were a yet further greatness. A Christian church should aim to have its members Christians as Jesus was the Christ; sons of man as he was; sons of God as much as he. To be that it is not needful to observe all the forms he complied with, only such forms as help you; not needful to

have all the thoughts that he had, only such thoughts as are true. If Jesus were ever mistaken, as [Pg 28]
the Evangelists make it appear, then it is a part of Christianity to avoid his mistakes as well as to accept his truths. It is the part of a Christian church to teach men so; to stop at no man's limitations; to prize no word so high as truth; no man so dear as God. Jesus came not to fetter men, but free them.

Jesus is a model-man in this respect: that he stands in a true relation to men, that of forgiveness for their ill-treatment, service for their needs, trust in their nature, and constant love towards them,—towards even the wicked and hypocritical; in a true relation to God, that of entire obedience to Him, of perfect trust in Him, of love towards Him with the whole mind, heart and soul; and love of God is also love of truth, goodness, usefulness, love of Love itself. Obedience to God and trust in God is obedience to these things, and trust in them. If Jesus had loved any opinion better than truth, then had he lost that relation to God, and so far ceased to be inspired by Him; had he allowed any partial feeling to overcome the spirit of universal love, then also he had sundered himself from God, and been at discord, not in harmony with the Infinite.

If Jesus be the model-man, then should a Christian church teach its members to hold the same relation to God that Christ held; to be one with Him; incarnations of God, as much and as far as Jesus was one with God, and an incarnation thereof, a manifestation of God in the flesh. It is [Pg 29]
Christian to receive all the truths of the Bible; all the truths that are not in the Bible just as much. It is Christian also to reject all the errors that come to us from without the Bible or from within the Bible. The Christian man, or the Christian church, is to stop at no man's limitation; at the limit of no book. God is not dead, nor even asleep, but awake and alive as ever of old; He inspires men now no less than beforetime; is ready to fill your mind, heart and soul with truth, love, life, as to fill Moses and Jesus, and that on the same terms; for inspiration comes by universal laws, and not by partial exceptions. Each point of spirit, as each atom of space, is still bathed in the tides of Deity. But all good men, all Christian men, all inspired men will be no more alike than all wicked men. It is the same light which is blue in the sky and golden in the sun. "All nature's difference makes all nature's peace."

We can attain this relation to man and God only on condition that we are free. If a church cannot allow freedom it were better not to allow itself, but cease to be. Unity of purpose, with entire freedom for the individual, should be the motto. It is only free men that can find the truth, love the truth, live the truth. As much freedom as you shut out, so much falsehood do you shut in. It is a poor thing to purchase unity of church-action at the cost of individual freedom. The Catholic church tried it, and you see what came thereof: science forsook it, calling it a den of lies. Morality [Pg 30]
forsook it, as the mystery of iniquity, and religion herself protested against it, as the mother of abominations. The Protestant churches are trying the same thing, and see whither they tend and what foes rise up against them,—Philosophy with its Bible of nature, and Religion with its Bible of man, both the hand-writing of God. The great problem of church and state is this: To produce unity of action and yet leave individual freedom not disturbed; to balance into harmonious proportions the mass and the man, the centripetal and centrifugal powers, as, by God's wondrous, living mechanism, they are balanced in the worlds above. In the state we have done this more wisely than any nation heretofore. In the churches it remains yet to do. But man is equal to all which God appoints for him. His desires are ever proportionate to his duty and his destinies. The strong cry of the nations for liberty, a craving as of hungry men for bread and water, shows what liberty is worth, and what it is destined to do. Allow freedom to think, and there will be truth; freedom to act, and we shall have heroic works; freedom to live and be, and we shall have love to men and love to God. The world's history proves that, and our own history. Jesus, our model-man, was the freest the world ever saw!

Let it be remembered that every truth is of God, and will lead to good and good only. Truth is the [Pg 31]
seed whereof welfare is the fruit; for every grain thereof we plant some one shall reap a whole harvest of welfare. A lie is "of the Devil," and must lead to want and woe and death, ending at last in a storm where it rains tears and perhaps blood. Have freedom, and you will sow new truth to reap its satisfaction; submit to thraldom, and you sow lies to reap the death they bear. A Christian church should be the home of the soul, where it enjoys the largest liberty of the sons of God. If fettered elsewhere, here let us be free. Christ is the liberator; he came not to drive slaves, but to set men free. The churches of old did their greatest work, when there was most freedom in those churches.

Here too should the spirit of devotion be encouraged; the soul of man communing with his God in aspirations after purity and truth, in resolutions for goodness, and piety, and a manly life. These are a prayer. The fact that men freely hold truths in common, great truths and universal; that unitedly they lift up their souls to God seeking instruction of Him, this will prove the strongest bond between man and man. It seems to me that the Protestant churches have not fully done justice to the sentiment of worship; that in taking care of the head we have forgotten the heart. To think truth is the worship of the head; to do noble works of usefulness and charity the worship of the will; to feel love and trust in man and God, is the glad worship of the heart. A Christian [Pg 32]
church should be broad enough for all; should seek truth and promote piety, that both together might toil in good works.

Here should be had the best instruction which can be commanded; the freest, truest, and most manly voice; the mind most conversant with truth; the eloquence of a heart that runs over with goodness, whose faith is unfaltering in truth, justice, purity, and love; a faith in God, whose charity is living love to men, even the sinful and the base. Teaching is the breathing of one man's inspiration into another, a most real thing amongst real men. In a church there should be

instruction for the young. God appoints the father and mother the natural teachers of children; above all is it so in their religious culture. But there are some who cannot, many who will not fulfil this trust. Hence it has been found necessary for wise and good men to offer their instruction to such. In this matter it is religion we need more than theology, and of this it is not mere traditions and mythologies we are to teach, the anile tales of a rude people in a dark age, things our pupils will do well to forget soon as they are men, and which they will have small reason to thank us for obscuring their minds withal; but it is the great, everlasting truths of religion which should be taught, enforced by examples of noble men, which tradition tells of, or the present age affords, all this to be suited to the tender years of the child. Christianity should [Pg 33] be represented as human, as man's nature in its true greatness; religion shown to be beautiful, a real duty corresponding to man's deepest desire, that as religion affords the deepest satisfaction to man, so it is man's most universal want. Christ should be shown to men as he was, the manliest of men, the most divine because the most human. Children should be taught to respect their nature; to consider it as the noblest of all God's works; to know that perfect truth and goodness are demanded of them, and by that only can they be worthy men; taught to feel that God is present in Boston and to-day, as much as ever in Jerusalem in the time of Jesus. They should be taught to abhor the public sins of our times, but to love and imitate its great examples of nobleness, and practical religion, which stand out amid the mob of worldly pretenders in this day.

Then, too, if one of our members falls into unworthy ways, is it not the duty of some one to speak with him, not as with authority to command, but with affection to persuade? Did any one of you ever address an erring brother on the folly of his ways with manly tenderness, and try to charm him back, and find a cold repulse? If a man is in error he will be grateful to one that tells him so; will learn most from men who make him ashamed of his littleness of life. In this matter it seems many a good man comes short of his duty. [Pg 34]

There is yet another way in which a church should act on its own household, and that is by direct material help in time of need. There is the eternal distinction of the strong and the weak, which cannot be changed. But as things now go there is another inequality not of God's appointment, but of man's perversity, the distinction of rich and poor—of men bloated by superfluous wealth and men starving and freezing from want. You know and I know how often the strong abuse their strength, exerting it solely for themselves and to the ruin of the weak; we all know that such are reckoned great in the world, though they may have grown rich solely by clutching at what others earned. In Christianity, and before the God of justice, all men are brothers; the strong are so that they may help the weak. As a nation chooses its wisest men to manage its affairs for the nation's good, and not barely their own, so God endows Charles or Samuel with great gifts that they may also bless all men thereby. If they use those powers solely for their pleasure then are they false before men; false before God. It is said of the church of the Friends that no one of their number has ever received the charity of an almshouse, or for a civil offence been shut up in a jail. If the poor forsake a church, be sure that the church forsook God long before.

But the church must have an action on others out of its pale. If a man or a society of men have a [Pg 35] truth, they hold it not for themselves alone, but for all men. The solitary thinker, who in a moment of ecstatic action in his closet at midnight discovers a truth, discovers it for all the world and for eternity. A Christian church ought to love to see its truths extend; so it should put them in contact with the opinions of the world, not with excess of zeal or lack of charity.

A Christian church should be a means of reforming the world, of forming it after the pattern of Christian ideas. It should therefore bring up the sentiments of the times, the ideas of the times, and the actions of the times, to judge them by the universal standard. In this way it will learn much and be a living church, that grows with the advance of men's sentiments, ideas and actions, and while it keeps the good of the past will lose no brave spirit of the present day. It can teach much; now moderating the fury of men, then quickening their sluggish steps. We expect the sins of commerce to be winked at in the street; the sins of the state to be applauded on election days and in a Congress, or on the fourth of July; we are used to hear them called the righteousness of the nation. There they are often measured by the avarice or the ambition of greedy men. You expect them to be tried by passion, which looks only to immediate results and partial ends. Here they are to be measured by Conscience and Reason, which look to permanent results and [Pg 36] universal ends; to be looked at with reference to the Laws of God, the everlasting ideas on which alone is based the welfare of the world. Here they are to be examined in the light of Christianity itself. If the church be true, many things which seem gainful in the street and expedient in the senate-house, will here be set down as wrong, and all gain which comes therefrom seen to be but a loss. If there be a public sin in the land, if a lie invade the state, it is for the church to give the alarm; it is here that it may war on lies and sins; the more widely they are believed in and practised, the more are they deadly, the more to be opposed. Here let no false idea or false action of the public go without exposure and rebuke. But let no noble heroism of the times, no noble man pass by without due honor. If it is a good thing to honor dead saints and the heroism of our fathers; it is a better thing to honor the saints of to-day, the live heroism of men who do the battle, when that battle is all around us. I know a few such saints; here and there a hero of that stamp, and I will not wait till they are dead and classic before I call them so and honor them as such, for

"To side with truth is noble when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just; [Pg 37]
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified,
And the multitude make virtue of the faith they once denied;
For Humanity sweeps onward; where to-day the martyr stands,
On the morrow crouches Judas, with the silver in his hands;
Far in front the cross stands ready, and the crackling fagots burn,
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return
To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn."

Do you not see that if a man have a new truth, it must be reformatory and so create an outcry? It will seem destructive as the farmer's plough; like that, it is so to tares and thistles, but the herald of the harvest none the less. In this way a Christian church should be a society for promoting true sentiments and ideas. If it would lead, it must go before men; if it would be looked up to, it must stand high.

That is not all: it should be a society for the promotion of good works. We are all beneath our idea, and therefore transgressors before God. Yet He gives us the rain, the snow and the sun. It falls on me as well as on the field of my neighbor, who is a far juster man. How can we repent, cast our own sins behind us, outgrow and forget them better, than by helping others to work out their salvation? We are all brothers before God. Mutually needful we must be; mutually helpful we should be. Here are the ignorant that ask our instruction, not with words only, but with the prayer of their darkness, far more suppliant than speech. I never see an ignorant man younger [Pg 38] than myself, without a feeling of self-reproach, for I ask: "What have I been doing to suffer him to grow up in nakedness of mind?" Every man, born in New England, who does not share the culture of this age, is a reproach to more than himself, and will at last actively curse those who began by deserting him. The Christian church should lead the movement for the public education of the people.

Here are the needy who ask not so much your gold, your bread, or your cloth, as they ask also your sympathy, respect and counsel; that you assist them to help themselves, that they may have gold won by their industry, not begged out of your benevolence. It is justice more than charity they ask. Every beggar, every pauper, born and bred amongst us, is a reproach to us, and condemns our civilization. For how has it come to pass that in a land of abundance here are men, for no fault of their own, born into want, living in want, and dying of want? and that, while we pretend to a religion which says all men are brothers! There is a horrid wrong somewhere.

Here too are the drunkard, the criminal, the abandoned person, sometimes the foe of society, but far oftener the victim of society. Whence come the tenants of our almshouses, jails, the victims of vice in all our towns? Why, from the lowest rank of the people; from the poorest and most ignorant! Say rather from the most neglected, and the public sin is confessed, and the remedy [Pg 39] hinted at. What have the strong been doing all this while, that the weak have come to such a state? Let them answer for themselves.

Now for all these ought a Christian church to toil. It should be a church of good works; if it is a church of good faith it will be so. Does not Christianity say the strong should help the weak? Does not that mean something? It once did. Has the Christian fire faded out from those words, once so marvellously bright? Look round you, in the streets of your own Boston! See the ignorant, men and women with scarce more than the stature of men and women; boys and girls growing up in ignorance and the low civilization which comes thereof, the barbarians of Boston. Their character will one day be a blot and a curse to the nation, and who is to blame? Why, the ablest and best men, who might have had it otherwise if they would. Look at the poor, men of small ability, weak by nature, born into a weak position, therefore doubly weak; men whom the strong use for their purpose, and then cast them off as we throw away the rind of an orange after we have drunk its generous juice. Behold the wicked, so we call the weak men that are publicly caught in the cobweb of the law; ask why they became wicked; how we have aimed to reform them; what we have done to make them respect themselves, to believe in goodness, in man and God? and then [Pg 40] say if there is not something for Christian men to do, something for a Christian church to do! Every almshouse in Massachusetts shows that the churches have not done their duty, that the Christians lie lies when they call Jesus "master" and men "brothers!" Every jail is a monument, on which it is writ in letters of iron that we are still heathens, and the gallows, black and hideous, the embodiment of death, the last argument a "Christian" State offers to the poor wretches it trained up to be criminals, stands there, a sign of our infamy, and while it lifts its horrid arm to crush the life out of some miserable man, whose blood cries to God against Cain in the nineteenth century, it lifts that same arm as an index of our shame.

Is that all? Oh, no! Did not Jesus say, resist not evil—with evil? Is not war the worst form of that evil; and is there on earth a nation so greedy of war; a nation more reckless of provoking it; one where the war-horse so soon conducts his foolish rider into fame and power? The "Heathen" Chinese might send their missionaries to America, and teach us to love men! Is that all? Far from it. Did not Christ say, whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, do you even so unto them; and are there not three million brothers of yours and mine in bondage here, the hopeless sufferers of a savage doom; debarred from the civilization of our age, the barbarians of the [Pg 41] nineteenth century; shut out from the pretended religion of Christendom, the heathens of a Christian land; chained down from the liberty unalienable in man, the slaves of a Christian republic? Does not a cry of indignation ring out from every legislature in the North; does not the

press war with its million throats, and a voice of indignation go up from East and West, out from the hearts of freemen? Oh, no. There is none of that cry against the mightiest sin of this age. The rock of Plymouth, sanctified by the feet which led a nation's way to freedom's large estate, provokes no more voice than the rottenest stone in all the mountains of the West. The few that speak a manly word for truth and everlasting right, are called fanatics; bid be still, lest they spoil the market! Great God! and has it come to this, that men are silent over such a sin? 'Tis even so. Then it must be that every church which dares assume the name of Christ, that dearest name to men, thunders and lightens on this hideous wrong! That is not so. The church is dumb, while the state is only silent; while the servants of the people are only asleep, "God's ministers" are dead!

In the midst of all these wrongs and sins, the crimes of men, society and the state, amid popular ignorance, pauperism, crime, and war, and slavery too—is the church to say nothing, do nothing; [Pg 42] nothing for the good of such as feel the wrong, nothing to save them who do the wrong? Men tell us so, in word and deed; that way alone is "safe!" If I thought so, I would never enter the church but once again, and then to bow my shoulders to their manliest work, to heave down its strong pillars, arch and dome, and roof, and wall, steeple and tower, though like Samson I buried myself under the ruins of that temple which profaned the worship of God most high, of God most loved. I would do this in the name of man; in the name of Christ I would do it; yes, in the dear and blessed name of God.

It seems to me that a church which dares name itself Christian, the Church of the Redeemer, which aspires to be a true church, must set itself about all this business, and be not merely a church of theology, but of religion; not of faith only, but of works; a just church by its faith bringing works into life. It should not be a church termagant, which only peevishly scolds at sin, in its anile way; but a church militant against every form of evil, which not only censures, but writes out on the walls of the world the brave example of a Christian life, that all may take pattern therefrom. Thus only can it become the church triumphant. If a church were to waste less time in building its palaces of theological speculation, palaces mainly of straw, and based upon the chaff, erecting air-castles and fighting battles to defend those palaces of straw, it would surely have more time to use in the practical good works of the day. If it thus made a city free [Pg 43] from want and ignorance and crime, I know I vent a heresy, I think it would be quite as Christian an enterprise, as though it restored all the theology of the dark ages; quite as pleasing to God. A good sermon is a good thing, no doubt, but its end is not answered by its being preached; even by its being listened to and applauded; only by its awakening a deeper life in the hearers. But in the multitude of sermons there is danger lest the bare hearing thereof be thought a religious duty, not a means, but an end, and so our Christianity vanish in words. What if every Sunday afternoon the most pious and manly of our number, who saw fit, resolved themselves into a committee of the whole for practical religion, and held not a formal meeting, but one more free, sometimes for the purpose of devotion, the practical work of making ourselves better Christians, nearer to one another, and sometimes that we might find means to help such as needed help, the poor, the ignorant, the intemperate and the wicked? Would it not be a work profitable to ourselves, and useful to others weaker than we? For my own part I think there are no ordinances of religion like good works; no day too sacred to help my brother in; no Christianity like a practical love of God shown by a practical love of men. Christ told us that if we had brought our gift to the very altar, and there remembered our brother had cause of complaint against us, we must leave the divine [Pg 44] service, and pay the human service first! If my brother be in slavery, in want, in ignorance, in sin, and I can aid him and do not, he has much against me, and God can better wait for my prayer than my brother for my help!

The saints of olden time perished at the stake; they hung on gibbets; they agonized upon the rack; they died under the steel of the tormentor. It was the heroism of our fathers' day that swam the unknown seas; froze in the woods; starved with want and cold; fought battles with the red right hand. It is the sainthood and heroism of our day that toils for the ignorant, the poor, the weak, the oppressed, the wicked. Yes, it is our saints and heroes who fight fighting; who contend for the slave, and his master too, for the drunkard, the criminal; yes, for the wicked or the weak in all their forms. It is they that with weapons of heavenly proof fight the great battle for the souls of men. Though I detest war in each particular fibre of my heart, yet I honor the heroes among our fathers who fought with bloody hand; peace-makers in a savage way, they were faithful to the light; the most inspired can be no more, and we, with greater light, do, it may be, far less. I love and venerate the saints of old; men who dared step in front of their age; accepted Christianity when it cost something to be a Christian, because it meant something; they applied [Pg 45] Christianity, so far as they knew it, to the lies and sins of their times, and won a sudden and a fiery death. But the saints and the heroes of this day, who draw no sword, whose right hand is never bloody, who burn in no fires of wood or sulphur, nor languish briefly on the hasty cross; the saints and heroes who, in a worldly world, dare to be men; in an age of conformity and selfishness, speak for Truth and Man, living for noble aims; men who will swear to no lies howsoever popular; who will honor no sins, though never so profitable, respected and ancient; men who count Christ not their master, but teacher, friend, brother, and strive like him to practise all they pray; to incarnate and make real the Word of God, these men I honor far more than the saints of old. I know their trials, I see their dangers, I appreciate their sufferings, and since the day when the man on Calvary bowed his head, bidding persecution farewell with his "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," I find no such saints and heroes as live now! They win hard fare, and hard toil. They lay up shame and obloquy. Theirs is the most painful of martyrdoms. Racks and fagots soon waft the soul of God, stern messengers but swift. A boy could bear that passage, the martyrdom of death. But the temptation of a long life of neglect, and scorn, and obloquy, and shame, and want, and desertion by false friends; to live blameless though

blamed, cut off from human sympathy, that is the martyrdom of to-day. I shed no tears for such [Pg 46]
martyrs. I shout when I see one; I take courage and thank God for the real saints, prophets and heroes of to-day. In another age, men shall be proud of these puritans and pilgrims of this day. Churches shall glory in their names and celebrate their praise in sermon and in song. Yea, though now men would steal the rusty sword from underneath the bones of a saint or hero long deceased, to smite off therewith the head of a new prophet, that ancient hero's son; though they would gladly crush the heart out of him with the tomb-stones they piled up for great men, dead and honored now, yet in some future day, that mob, penitent, baptized with a new spirit, like drunken men returned to sanity once more, shall search through all this land for marble white enough to build a monument to that prophet whom their fathers slew; they shall seek through all the world for gold of fineness fit to chronicle such names! I cannot wait; but I will honor such men now, not adjourn the warning of their voice, and the glory of their example, till another age! The church may cast out such men; burn them with the torments of an age too refined in its cruelty to use coarse fagots and the vulgar axe! It is no less to these men; but the ruin of the church. I say the Christian church of the nineteenth century must honor such men, if it would do a church's work; must take pains to make such men as these, or it is a dead church, with no claim [Pg 47]
on us, except that we bury it. A true church will always be the church of martyrs. The ancients commenced every great work with a victim! We do not call it so; but the sacrifice is demanded, got ready, and offered by unconscious priests long ere the enterprise succeeds. Did not Christianity begin with a martyrdom?

In this way, by gaining all the truth of the age in thought or action, by trying public opinions with its own brave ideas, by promoting good works, applying a new truth to an old error, and with unpopular righteousness overcoming each popular sin, the Christian church should lead the civilization of the age. The leader looks before, goes before, and knows where he is going; knows the way thither. It is only on this condition that he leads at all. If the church by looking after truth, and receiving it when it comes, be in unison with God, it will be in unison with all science, which is only the thought of God translated from the facts of nature into the words of men. In such a case, the church will not fear philosophy, nor in the face of modern science aim to reëstablish the dreams and fables of a ruder day. It will not lack new truth, daring only to quote, nor be obliged to sneak behind the inspired words of old saints as its only fortress, for it will have [Pg 48]
words just as truly inspired, dropping from the golden mouths of saints and prophets now. For leaders it will look not back, but forth; will fan the first faint sparkles of that noble fire just newly kindled from the skies; not smother them in the ashes of fires long spent; not quench them with holy water from Jordan or the Nile. A church truly Christian, professing Christ as its model-man, and aiming to stand in the relation he stood, must lead the way in moral enterprises, in every work which aims directly at the welfare of man. There was a time when the Christian churches, as a whole, held that rank. Do they now? Not even the Quakers—perhaps the last sect that abandoned it. A prophet, filled with love of man and love of God, is not therein at home. I speak a sad truth, and I say it in sorrow. But look at the churches of this city: do they lead the Christian movements of this city—the temperance movement, the peace movement, the movement for the freedom of men, for education, the movement to make society more just, more wise and good, the great religious movement of these times—for, hold down our eyelids as we will, there is a religious movement at this day on foot, such as even New England never saw before;—do they lead in these things? Oh, no, not at all. That great Christian orator, one of the noblest men New England has seen in this century, whose word has even now gone forth to the nations beyond the [Pg 49]
sea, while his spirit has gone home to his Father, when he turned his attention to the practical evils of our time and our land, and our civilization, vigorously applying Christianity to life, why he lost favor in his own little sect! They feared him, soon as his spirit looked over their narrow walls, aspiring to lead men to a better work. I know men can now make sectarian capital out of the great name of Channing, so he is praised; perhaps praised loudest by the very men who then cursed him by their gods. Ay, by their gods he was accursed! The churches lead the Christian movements of these times?—why, has there not just been driven out of this city, and out of this State, a man conspicuous in all these movements, after five and twenty years of noble toil; driven out because he was conspicuous in them! You know it is so, and you know how and by whom he is thus driven out![1]

Christianity is humanity; Christ is the Son of man; the manliest of men; humane as a woman; pious and hopeful as a prayer; but brave as man's most daring thought. He has led the world in morals and religion for eighteen hundred years, only because he was the manliest man in it; the humanest and bravest man in it, and hence the divinest. He may lead it eighteen hundred years more, for we are bid believe that God can never make again a greater man; no, none so great. [Pg 50]
But the churches do not lead men therein, for they have not his spirit; neither that womanliness which wept over Jerusalem, nor that manliness which drew down fire enough from heaven to light the world's altars for well-nigh two thousand years.

There are many ways in which Christ may be denied:—one is that of the bold blasphemer, who, out of a base and haughty heart mocks, scoffing at that manly man, and spits upon the nobleness of Christ! There are few such deniers: my heart mourns for them. But they do little harm. Religion is so dear to men, no scoffing word can silence that, and the brave soul of this young Nazarene has made itself so deeply felt that scorn and mockery of him are but an icicle held up against the summer's sun. There is another way to deny him, and that is:—to call him Lord, and never do his bidding; to stifle free minds with his words; and with the authority of his name to

cloak, to mantle, screen and consecrate the follies, errors, sins of men! From this we have much to fear.

The church that is to lead this century will not be a church creeping on all fours; mewling and whining, its face turned down, its eyes turned back. It must be full of the brave, manly spirit of the day, keeping also the good of times past. There is a terrific energy in this age, for man was never so much developed, so much the master of himself before. Great truths, moral and [Pg 51] political, have come to light. They fly quickly. The iron prophet of types publishes his visions, of weal or woe, to the near and far. This marvellous age has invented steam, and the magnetic telegraph, apt symbols of itself, before which the miracles of fable are but an idle tale. It demands, as never before, freedom for itself, usefulness in its institutions; truth in its teachings, and beauty in its deeds. Let a church have that freedom, that usefulness, truth, and beauty, and the energy of this age will be on its side. But the church which did for the fifth century, or the fifteenth, will not do for this. What is well enough at Rome, Oxford or Berlin, is not well enough for Boston. It must have our ideas, the smell of our ground, and have grown out of the religion in our soul. The freedom of America must be there before this energy will come; the wisdom of the nineteenth century before its science will be on the churches' side, else that science will go over to the "infidels."

Our churches are not in harmony with what is best in the present age. Men call their temples after their old heroes and saints—John, Paul, Peter, and the like. But we call nothing else after the old names; a school of philosophy would be condemned if called Aristotelian, Platonic, or even Baconian. We out-travel the past in all but this. In the church it seems taught there is no progress unless we have all the past on our back; so we despair of having men fit to call churches [Pg 52] by. We look back and not forward. We think the next saint must talk Hebrew like the old ones, and repeat the same mythology. So when a new prophet comes we only stone him.

A church that believes only in past inspiration will appeal to old books as the standard of truth and source of light; will be antiquarian in its habits; will call its children by the old names; and war on the new age, not understanding the man-child born to rule the world. A church that believes in inspiration now will appeal to God; try things by reason and conscience; aim to surpass the old heroes; baptize its children with a new spirit, and using the present age will lead public opinion, and not follow it. Had Christ looked back for counsel, he might have founded a church fit for Abraham or Isaac to worship in, not for the ages to come, or the age then. He that feels he is near to God, does not fear to be far from men; if before, he helps lead them on; if above, to lift them up. Let us get all we can from the Hebrews and others of old time, and that is much; but still let us be God's free men, not the Gibeonites of the past.

Let us have a church that dares imitate the heroism of Jesus; seek inspiration as he sought it; judge the past as he; act on the present like him; pray as he prayed; work as he wrought; live as he lived. Let our doctrines and our forms fit the soul, as the limbs fit the body, growing out of it, growing with it. Let us have a church for the whole man: truth for the mind; good works for the [Pg 53] hands; love for the heart; and for the soul, that aspiring after perfection, that unfaltering faith in God which, like lightning in the clouds, shines brightest, when elsewhere it is most dark. Let our church fit man, as the heavens fit the earth!

In our day men have made great advances in science, commerce, manufactures, in all the arts of life. We need, therefore, a development of religion corresponding thereto. The leading minds of the age ask freedom to inquire; not merely to believe, but to know; to rest on facts. A great spiritual movement goes swiftly forward. The best men see that religion is religion; theology is theology, and not religion; that true religion is a very simple affair, and the popular theology a very foolish one; that the Christianity of Christ is not the Christianity of the street, or the state, or the churches; that Christ is not their model-man, only "imputed" as such. These men wish to apply good sense to matters connected with religion; to apply Christianity to life, and make the world a better place, men and women fitter to live in it. In this way they wish to get a theology that is true; a mode of religion that works, and works well. If a church can answer these demands, it will be a live church; leading the civilization of the times, living with all the mighty life of this age, and nation. Its prayers will be a lifting up of the hearts in noble men towards God, [Pg 54] in search of truth, goodness, piety. Its sacraments will be great works of reform, institutions for the comfort and the culture of men. Let us have a church in which religion, goodness towards men, and piety towards God, shall be the main thing; let us have a degree of that suited to the growth and demands of this age. In the middle ages, men had erroneous conceptions of religion, no doubt; yet the church led the world. When she wrestled with the state, the state came undermost to the ground. See the results of that supremacy—all over Europe there arose the cloister, halls of learning for the chosen few, minster, dome, cathedral, miracles of art, each costing the wealth of a province. Such was the embodiment of their ideas of religion, the prayers of a pious age done in stone, a psalm petrified as it rose from the world's mouth; a poor sacrifice, no doubt, but the best they knew how to offer. Now if men were to engage in religion as in politics, commerce, arts; if the absolute religion, the Christianity of Christ, were applied to life with all the might of this age, as the Christianity of the church was then applied, what a result should we not behold! We should build up a great state with unity in the nation, and freedom in the people; a state where there was honorable work for every hand, bread for all mouths, clothing for all backs, culture for every mind, and love and faith in every heart. Truth would be [Pg 55] our sermon, drawn from the oldest of Scriptures, God's writing there in nature, here in man;

works of daily duty would be our sacrament; prophets inspired of God would minister the word, and piety send up her psalm of prayer, sweet in its notes, and joyfully prolonged. The noblest monument to Christ, the fairest trophy of religion, is a noble people, where all are well fed and clad, industrious, free, educated, manly, pious, wise and good.

Some of you may now remember, how ten months and more ago, I first came to this house to speak. I shall remember it forever. In those rainy Sundays the very skies looked dark. Some came doubtingly, uncertain, looking around, and hoping to find courage in another's hope. Others came with clear glad face; openly, joyfully, certain they were right; not fearing to meet the issue; not afraid to be seen meeting it. Some came, perhaps, not used to worship in a church, but not the less welcome here; some mistaking me for a destroyer, a doubter, a denier of all truth, a scoffer, an enemy to man and God! I wonder not at that. Misguided men had told you so, in sermon and in song; in words publicly printed and published without shame; in the covert calumny, slyly whispered in the dark! Need I tell you my feelings; how I felt at coming to the town made famous by great men, Mayhew, Chauncy, Buckminster, Kirkland, Holley, Pierpont, Channing, Ware— [Pg 56] names dear and honored in my boyish heart! Need I tell you how I felt at sight of the work which stretched out before me? Do you wonder that I asked: Who is sufficient for these things? and said: Alas, not I, Thou knowest, Lord! But some of you told me you asked not the wisdom of a wiser man, the ability of one stronger, but only that I should do what I could. I came, not doubting that I had some truths to say; not distrusting God, nor man, nor you; distrustful only of myself. I feared I had not the power, amid the dust and noises of the day, to help you see and hear the great realities of religion as they appeared to me; to help you feel the life of real religion, as in my better moments I have felt its truth! But let that pass. As I came here from Sunday to Sunday, when I began to feel your spirits prayed with mine a prayer for truth and life; as I looked down into your faces, thoughtful and almost breathless, I forgot my self-distrust; I saw the time was come; that, feebly as I know I speak, my best thoughts were ever the most welcome! I saw that the harvest was plenteous indeed: but the preacher, I feel it still, was all unworthy of his work!

Brothers and Sisters: let us be true to our sentiments and ideas. Let us not imitate another's form unless it symbolize a truth to us. We must not affect to be singular, but not fear to be alone. Let [Pg 57] us not foolishly separate from our brothers elsewhere. Truth is yet before us, not only springing up out of the manly words of this Bible, but out of the ground; out of the heavens; out of man and God. Whole firmaments of truth hang ever o'er our heads, waiting the telescopic eye of the true-hearted see-er. Let us follow truth, in form, thought or sentiment, wherever she may call. God's daughter cannot lead us from the path. The further on we go, the more we find. Had Columbus turned back only the day before he saw the land, the adventure had been worse than lost.

We must practise a manly self-denial. Religion always demands that, but never more than when our brothers separate from us, and we stand alone. By our mutual love and mutual forbearance, we shall stand strong. With zeal for our common work, let us have charity for such as dislike us, such as oppose and would oppress us. Let us love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for such as despitefully use us. Let us overcome their evil speech with our own goodness. If others have treated us ill, called us unholy names, and mocked at us, let us forgive it all, here and now, and help them also to forget and outgrow that temper which bade them treat us so. A kind answer is fittest rebuke to an unkind word.

If we have any truth it will not be kept hid. It will run over the brim of our urn and water our [Pg 58] brother's field. Were any truth to come down to us in advance from God, it were not that we might forestall the light, but shed it forth for all His children to walk by and rejoice in. "One candle will light a thousand" if it be itself lighted. Let our light shine before men so that they may see our good deeds, and themselves praise God by a manly life. This we owe to them as to ourselves. A noble thought and a mean man make a sorry union. Let our idea show itself in our life—that is preaching, right eloquent. Do this, we begin to do good to men, and though they should oppose us, and our work should fail, we shall have yet the approval of our own heart, the approval of God, be whole within ourselves, and one with Him.

Some of you are venerable men. I have wondered that a youthful ardor should have brought you here. Your silvery heads have seemed a benediction to my work. But most of you are young. I know it is no aping of a fashion that has brought you here. I have no eloquence to charm or please you with; I only speak right on. I have no reputation but a bad name in the churches. I know you came not idly, but seeking after truth. Give a great idea to an old man, and he carries it to his grave; give it to a young man, and he carries it to his life. It will bear both young and old through the grave and into eternal Heaven beyond. [Pg 59]

Young men and women, the duties of the world fall eminently on you. God confides to your hands the ark which holds the treasures of the age. On young shoulders He lays the burden of life. Yours is the period of passion; the period of enterprise and of work. It is by successive

generations that mankind goes forward. The old, stepping into honorable graves, leave their places and the results they won to you. But departing they seem to say, as they linger and look back: Do ye greater than we have done! The young just coming into your homes seem to say: Instruct us to be nobler than yourselves! Your life is the answer to your children and your sires. The next generation will be as you make it. It is not the schools but the people's character that educates the child. Amid the trials, duties, dangers of your life, religion alone can guide you. It is not the world's eye that is on you, but God's; it is not the world's religion that will suffice you, but the religion of a Man, which unites you with truth, justice, piety, goodness; yes, which makes you one with God!

Young men and women—you can make this church a fountain of life to thousands of fainting souls. Yes, you can make this city nobler than city ever was before. A manly life is the best gift you can leave mankind; that can be copied forever. Architects of your own weal or woe, your destiny is mainly in your own hands. It is no great thing to reject the popular falsehoods; little [Pg 60] and perhaps not hard. But to receive the great sentiments and lofty truths of real religion, the Christianity of Christ; to love them, to live them in your business and your home, that is the greatest work of man. Thereby you partake of the spirit and nature of God; you achieve the true destiny for yourself; you help your brothers do the same.

When my own life is measured by the ideal of that young Nazarene, I know how little I deserve the name of Christian; none knows that fact so well as I. But you have been denied the name of Christian because you came here, asking me to come. Let men see that you have the reality, though they withhold the name. Your words are the least part of what you say to men. The foolish only will judge you by your talk; wise men by the general tenor of your life. Let your religion appear in your work and your play. Pray in your strongest hours. Practise your prayers. By fair-dealing, justice, kindness, self-control, and the great work of helping others while you help yourself, let your life prove a worship. These are the real sacraments and Christian communion with God, to which water and wine are only helps. Criticize the world not by censure only, but by the example of a great life. Shame men out of their littleness, not by making mouths, but by walking great and beautiful amongst them. You love God best when you love men most. Let your [Pg 61] prayers be an uplifting of the soul in thought, resolution, love, and the light thereof shall shine through the darkest hour of trouble. Have not the Christianity of the street; but carry Christ's Christianity there. Be noble men, then your works must needs be great and manly.

This is the first Sunday of a new year. What an hour for resolutions; what a moment for prayer! If you have sins in your bosom, cast them behind you now. In the last year, God has blessed us; blessed us all. On some his angels waited, robed in white, and brought new joys; here a wife, to bind men closer yet to Providence; and there a child, a new Messiah, sent to tell of innocence and heaven. To some his angels came clad in dark livery, veiling a joyful countenance with unpropitious wings, and bore away child, father, sister, wife, or friend. Still were they angels of good Providence, all God's own; and he who looks aright finds that they also brought a blessing, but concealed, and left it, though they spoke no word of joy. One day our weeping brother shall find that gift and wear it as a diamond on his breast.

The hours are passing over us, and with them the day. What shall the future Sundays be, and what the year? What we make them both. God gives us time. We weave it into life, such figures as we may, and wear it as we will. Age slowly rots away the gold we are set in, but the adamantine [Pg 62] soul lives on, radiant every way in the light streaming down from God. The genius of eternity, star-crowned, beautiful, and with prophetic eyes, leads us again to the gates of time, and gives us one more year, bidding us fill that golden cup with water as we can or will. There stand the dirty, fetid pools of worldliness and sin; curdled, and mantled, film-covered, streaked and striped with many a hue, they shine there, in the slanting light of new-born day. Around them stand the sons of earth and cry: Come hither; drink thou and be saved! Here fill thy golden cup! There you may seek to fill your urn; to stay your thirst. The deceitful element, roping in your hands, shall mock your lip. It is water only to the eye. Nay, show-water only unto men half-blind. But there, hard by, runs down the stream of life, its waters never frozen, never dry; fed by perennial dews falling unseen from God. Fill there thine urn, oh, brother-man, and thou shalt thirst no more for selfishness and crime, and faint no more amid the toil and heat of day; wash there, and the leprosy of sin, its scales of blindness, shall fall off, and thou be clean for ever. Kneel there and pray; God shall inspire thy heart with truth and love, and fill thy cup with never-ending joy![2]

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Rev. John Pierpont.

[2] See note at the end of this volume.

III.

[Pg 63]

A SERMON OF WAR, PREACHED AT THE MELODEON, ON SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 1846.

EXODUS XV. 3.

"The Lord is a Man of War."

1 JOHN IV. 8.

"God is Love."

I ask your attention to a Sermon of War. I have waited some time before treating this subject at length, till the present hostilities should assume a definite form, and the designs of the Government become more apparent. I wished to be able to speak coolly and with knowledge of the facts, that we might understand the comparative merits of the present war. Besides, I have waited for others, in the churches, of more experience to speak, before I ventured to offer my counsel; but I have thus far waited almost in vain! I did not wish to treat the matter last Sunday, for that was the end of our week of Pentecost, when cloven tongues of flame descend on the city, and some are thought to be full of new wine, and others of the Holy Spirit. The heat of the [Pg 64] meetings, good and bad, of that week, could not wholly have passed away from you or me, and we ought to come coolly and consider a subject like this. So the last Sunday I only sketched the back-ground of the picture, to-day intending to paint the horrors of war in front of that "Presence of Beauty in Nature," to which with its "Meanings" and its "Lessons," I then asked you to attend.

It seems to me that an idea of God as the Infinite is given to us in our nature itself. But men create a more definite conception of God in their own image. Thus a rude savage man, who has learned only the presence of power in Nature, conceives of God mainly as a force, and speaks of Him as a God of power. Such, though not without beautiful exceptions, is the character ascribed to Jehovah in the Old Testament. "The Lord is a man of war." He is "the Lord of Hosts." He kills men, and their cattle. If there is trouble in the enemies' city, it is the Lord who hath caused it. He will "whet his glittering sword and render vengeance to his enemies. He will make his arrows drunk with blood, and his sword shall devour flesh!" It is with the sword that God pleads with all men. He encourages men to fight, and says, "Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood." He sends blood into the streets; he waters the land with blood, and in blood he dissolves [Pg 65] the mountains. He brandishes his sword before kings, and they tremble at every moment. He treads nations as grapes in a wine-press, and his garments are stained with their life's blood.[3]

A man who has grown up to read the Older Testament of God revealed in the beauty of the [Pg 66] universe, and to feel the goodness of God therein set forth, sees him not as force only, or in chief, but as love. He worships in love the God of goodness and of peace. Such is the prevalent character ascribed to God in the New Testament, except in the book of "Revelation." He is the "God of love and peace;" "our Father," "kind to the unthankful and the unmerciful." In one word, God is love. He loves us all, Jew and Gentile, bond and free. All are his children, each of priceless value in His sight. He is no God of battles; no Lord of hosts; no man of war. He has no sword, nor arrows; He does not water the earth nor melt the mountains in blood, but "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." He has no garments dyed in blood; curses no man for refusing to fight. He is spirit, to be worshipped in spirit and in truth! The commandment is: Love one another; resist not evil with evil; forgive seventy times seven; overcome evil with good; love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do [Pg 67] good to them that hate you; pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.[4] There is no nation to shut its ports against another, all are men; no caste to curl its lip at inferiors, all are brothers, members of one body, united in the Christ, the ideal man and head of all. The most useful is the greatest. No man is to be master, for the Christ is our teacher. We are to fear no man, for God is our Father.

These precepts are undeniably the precepts of Christianity. Equally plain is it that they are the dictates of man's nature, only developed and active; a part of God's universal revelation; His law writ on the soul of man, established in the nature of things; true after all experience, and true before all experience. The man of real insight into spiritual things sees and knows them to be true.

Do not believe it the part of a coward to think so. I have known many cowards; yes, a great many; some very cowardly, pusillanimous and faint-hearted cowards; but never one who thought so, or pretended to think so. It requires very little courage to fight with sword and musket, and that of a cheap kind. Men of that stamp are plenty as grass in June. Beat your drum, and they will follow; [Pg 68] offer them but eight dollars a month, and they will come—fifty thousand of them, to smite and kill.[5] Every male animal, or reptile, will fight. It requires little courage to kill; but it takes much to resist evil with good, holding obstinately out, active or passive, till you overcome it. Call that non-resistance, if you will; it is the stoutest kind of combat, demanding all the manhood of a man.

I will not deny that war is inseparable from a low stage of civilization; so is polygamy, slavery, cannibalism. Taking men as they were, savage and violent, there have been times when war was unavoidable. I will not deny that it has helped forward the civilization of the race, for God often makes the folly and the sin of men contribute to the progress of mankind. It is none the less a folly or a sin. In a civilized nation like ourselves, it is far more heinous than in the Ojibeways or the Camanches.

War is in utter violation of Christianity. If war be right, then Christianity is wrong, false, a lie. But if Christianity be true, if reason, conscience, the religious sense, the highest faculties of man, are to be trusted, then war is the wrong, the falsehood, the lie. I maintain that aggressive war is a sin; that it is national infidelity, a denial of Christianity and of God. Every man who understands [Pg 69] Christianity by heart, in its relations to man, to society, the nation, the world, knows that war is a wrong. At this day, with all the enlightenment of our age, after the long peace of the nations, war is easily avoided. Whenever it occurs, the very fact of its occurrence convicts the rulers of a nation either of entire incapacity as statesmen, or else of the worst form of treason; treason to the people, to mankind, to God! There is no other alternative. The very fact of an aggressive war shows that the men who cause it must be either fools or traitors. I think lightly of what is called treason against a government. That may be your duty to-day, or mine. Certainly it was our fathers' duty not long ago; now it is our boast and their title to honor. But treason against the people, against mankind, against God, is a great sin, not lightly to be spoken of. The political authors of the war on this continent, and at this day, are either utterly incapable of a statesman's work, or else guilty of that sin. Fools they are, or traitors they must be.

Let me speak, and in detail, of the Evils of War. I wish this were not necessary. But we have found ourselves in a war; the Congress has voted our money and our men to carry it on; the Governors call for volunteers; the volunteers come when they are called for. No voice of [Pg 70] indignation goes forth from the heart of the eight hundred thousand souls of Massachusetts; of the seventeen million freemen of the land how few complain; only a man here and there! The Press is well-nigh silent. And the Church, so far from protesting against this infidelity in the name of Christ, is little better than dead. The man of blood shelters himself behind its wall, silent, dark, dead and emblematic. These facts show that it is necessary to speak of the evils of war. I am speaking in a city, whose fairest, firmest, most costly buildings are warehouses and banks; a city whose most popular Idol is Mammon, the God of Gold; whose Trinity is a Trinity of Coin! I shall speak intelligibly, therefore, if I begin by considering war as a waste of property. It paralyzes industry. The very fear of it is a mildew upon commerce. Though the present war is but a skirmish, only a few random shots between a squad of regulars and some strolling battalions, a quarrel which in Europe would scarcely frighten even the Pope; yet see the effect of it upon trade. Though the fighting be thousands of miles from Boston, your stocks fall in the market; the rate of insurance is altered; your dealer in wood piles his boards and his timber on his wharf, not finding a market. There are few ships in the great Southern mart to take the freight of many; exchange is disturbed. The clergyman is afraid to buy a book, lest his children want bread. It is so [Pg 71] with all departments of industry and trade. In war the capitalist is uncertain and slow to venture, so the laborer's hand will be still, and his child ill-clad and hungry.

In the late war with England, many of you remember the condition of your fisheries, of your commerce; how the ships lay rotting at the wharf. The dearness of cloth, of provisions, flour, sugar, tea, coffee, salt, the comparative lowness of wages, the stagnation of business, the scarcity of money, the universal sullenness and gloom—all this is well remembered now. So is the ruin it brought on many a man.

Yet but few weeks ago some men talked boastingly of a war with England. There are some men who seem to have no eyes nor ears, only a mouth; whose chief function is talk. Of their talk I will say nothing; we look for dust in dry places. But some men thus talked of war, and seemed desirous to provoke it, who can scarce plead ignorance, and I fear not folly, for their excuse. I leave such to the just resentment sure to fall on them from sober, serious men, who dare to be so unpopular as to think before they speak, and then say what comes of thinking. Perhaps such a war was never likely to take place, and now, thanks to a few wise men, all danger thereof seems at an end. But suppose it had happened—what would become of your commerce, of your fishing smacks on the Banks or along the shore? what of your coasting vessels, doubling the headlands [Pg 72] all the way from the St. John's to the Nueces? what of your whale ships in the Pacific? what of your Indiamen, deep freighted with oriental wealth? what of that fleet which crowds across the Atlantic sea, trading with east and west and north and south? I know some men care little for the rich, but when the owners keep their craft in port, where can the "hands" find work or their mouths find bread? The shipping of the United States amounts nearly to 2,500,000 tons. At $40 a ton, its value is nearly $100,000,000. This is the value only of those sea-carriages; their cargoes I cannot compute. Allowing one sailor for every twenty tons burden, here will be 125,000 seamen. They and their families amount to 500,000 souls. In war, what will become of them? A capital of more than $13,000,000 is invested in the fisheries of Massachusetts alone. More than 19,000 men find profitable employment therein. If each man have but four others in his family, a small number for that class, here are more than 95,000 persons in this State alone, whose daily bread depends on this business. They cannot fish in troubled waters, for they are fishermen, not politicians. Where could they find bread or cloth in time of war? In Dartmoor prison? Ask that of your demagogues who courted war!

Then, too, the positive destruction of property in war is monstrous. A ship of the line costs from $500,000 to $1,000,000. The loss of a fleet by capture, by fire, or by decay, is a great loss. You know at what cost a fort is built, if you have counted the sums successively voted for Fort Adams in Rhode Island, or those in our own harbor. The destruction of forts is another item in the cost of war. The capture or destruction of merchant ships with their freight, creates a most formidable loss. In 1812 the whole tonnage of the United States was scarce half what it is now. Yet the loss of ships and their freight, in "the late war," brief as it was, is estimated at $100,000,000. Then the loss by plunder and military occupation is monstrous. The soldier, like the savage, cuts down the tree to gather its fruit. I cannot calculate the loss by burning towns and cities. But suppose Boston were bombarded and laid in ashes. Calculate the loss if you can. You may say "This could not be," for it is as easy to say No, as Yes. But remember what befell us in the last war; remember how recently the best defended capitals of Europe, Vienna, Paris, Antwerp, have fallen into hostile hands. Consider how often a strong place, like Coblentz, Mentz, Malta, Gibraltar, St. Juan d'Ulloa, has been declared impregnable, and then been taken; calculate the force which might be brought against this town, and you will see that in eight and forty hours, or half that time, it might be left nothing but a heap of ruins smoking in the sun! I doubt not the valor of American [Pg 74] soldiers, the skill of their engineers, nor the ability of their commanders. I am ready to believe all this is greater than we are told. Still, such are the contingencies of war. If some not very ignorant men had their way, this would be a probability and perhaps a fact. If we should burn every town from the Tweed to the Thames, it would not rebuild our own city. [Pg 73]

But on the supposition that nothing is destroyed, see the loss which comes from the misdirection of productive industry. Your fleets, forts, dock-yards, arsenals, cannons, muskets, swords and the like, are provided at great cost, and yet are unprofitable. They do not pay. They weave no cloth; they bake no bread; they produce nothing. Yet from 1791 to 1832, in forty-two years we expended in these things, $303,242,576, namely, for the navy, etc., $112,703,933; for the army, etc., 190,538,643. For the same time, all other expenses of the nation came to but $37,158,047. More than eight ninths of the whole revenue of the nation was spent for purposes of war. In four years, from 1812 to 1815, we paid in this way, $92,350,519.37. In six years, from 1835 to 1840, we paid annually on the average $21,328,903; in all $127,973,418. Our Congress has just voted $17,000,000, as a special grant for the army alone. The 175,118 muskets at Springfield, are valued at $3,000,000; we pay annually $200,000 to support that arsenal. The navy-yard at [Pg 75] Charlestown, with its stores, etc., has cost $4,741,000. And, for all profitable returns, this money might as well be sunk in the bottom of the sea. In some countries it is yet worse. There are towns and cities in which the fortifications have cost more than all the houses, churches, shops, and other property therein. This happens not among the Sacs and Foxes, but in "Christian" Europe.

Then your soldier is the most unprofitable animal you can keep. He makes no railroads; clears no land; raises no corn. No, he can make neither cloth nor clocks! He does not raise his own bread, mend his own shoes, make his shoulder-knot of glory, nor hammer out his own sword. Yet he is a costly animal, though useless. If the President gets his fifty thousand volunteers, a thing likely to happen—for though Irish lumpers and hod-men want a dollar or a dollar and a half a day, your free American of Boston will enlist for twenty-seven cents, only having his livery, his feathers, and his "glory" thrown in—then at $8 a month, their wages amount to $400,000 a month. Suppose the present Government shall actually make advantageous contracts, and the subsistence of the soldier cost no more than in England, or $17 a month, this amounts to $850,000. Here are $1,250,000 a month to begin with. Then, if each man would be worth a dollar a day at any productive work, and there are 26 work days in the month, here are $1,300,000 more to be added, making $2,550,000 a month for the new army of occupation. This is only for [Pg 76] the rank and file of the army. The officers, the surgeons, and the chaplains, who teach the soldiers to *wad* their muskets with the leaves of the Bible, will perhaps cost as much more; or, in all, something more than $5,000,000 a month. This of course does not include the cost of their arms, tents, ammunition, baggage, horses, and hospital stores, nor the 65,000 gallons of whiskey which the government has just advertised for! What do they give in return? They will give us three things, valor, glory, and—talk; which, as they are not in the price current, I must estimate as I can, and set them all down in one figure = 0; not worth the whiskey they cost.

New England is quite a new country. Seven generations ago it was a wilderness; now it contains about 2,500,000 souls. If you were to pay all the public debts of these States, and then, in fancy, divide all the property therein by the population, young as we are, I think you would find a larger amount of value for each man than in any other country in the world, not excepting England. The civilization of Europe is old; the nations old, England, France, Spain, Austria, Italy, Greece; but they have wasted their time, their labor and their wealth in war, and so are poorer than we upstarts of a wilderness. We have fewer fleets, forts, cannon and soldiers for the population, than any other "Christian" country in the world. This is one main reason why we have no national debt; [Pg 77] why the women need not toil in the hardest labor of the fields, the quarries and the mines; this is the reason that we are well fed, well clad, well housed; this is the reason that Massachusetts can afford to spend $1,000,000 a year for her public schools! War, wasting a nation's wealth, depresses the great mass of the people, but serves to elevate a few to opulence and power. Every despotism is established and sustained by war. This is the foundation of all the aristocracies of the old world, aristocracies of blood. Our famous men are often ashamed that their wealth was honestly got by working, or peddling, and foolishly copy the savage and bloody emblems of ancient heraldry in their assumed coats of arms, industrious men seeking to have a griffin on their seal! Nothing is so hostile to a true democracy as war. It elevates a few, often bold, bad men, at the expense of the many, who pay the money and furnish the blood for war.

War is a most expensive folly. The revolutionary war cost the General Government directly and in specie $135,000,000. It is safe to estimate the direct cost to the individual States also at the same sum, $135,000,000; making a total of $270,000,000. Considering the interruption of business, the waste of time, property and life, it is plain that this could not have been a fourth part of the whole. But suppose it was a third, then the whole pecuniary cost of the war would be [Pg 78] $810,000,000. At the beginning of the Revolution the population was about 3,000,000; so that war, lasting about eight years, cost $270 for each person. To meet the expenses of the war each year there would have been required a tax of $33.75 on each man, woman and child!

In the Florida war we spent between $30,000,000 and $40,000,000, as an eminent statesman once said, in fighting five hundred invisible Indians! It is estimated that the fortifications of the city of Paris, when completely furnished, will cost more than the whole taxable property of Massachusetts, with her 800,000 souls. Why, this year our own grant for the army is $17,000,000. The estimate for the navy is $6,000,000 more; in all $23,000,000. Suppose, which is most unlikely, that we should pay no more, why, that sum alone would support public schools, as good and as costly as those of Massachusetts, all over the United States, offering each boy and girl, bond or free, as good a culture as they get here in Boston, and then leave a balance of $3,000,000 in our hands! We pay more for ignorance than we need for education! But $23,000,000 is not all we must pay this year. A great statesman has said, in the Senate, that our war expenses at present are nearly $500,000 a day, and the President informs your Congress that $22,952,904 more will be wanted for the army and navy before next June! [Pg 79]

For several years we spent directly more than $21,000,000 for war purposes, though in time of peace. If a railroad cost $30,000 a mile, then we might build 700 miles a year for that sum, and in five years could build a railroad therewith from Boston to the further side of Oregon. For the war money we paid in forty-two years, we could have had more than 10,000 miles of railroad, and, with dividends at seven per cent., a yearly income of $21,210,000. For military and naval affairs, in eight years, from 1835 to 1843, we paid $163,336,717. This alone would have made 5,444 miles of railroad, and would produce at seven per cent., an annual income of $11,433,569.19.

In Boston there are nineteen public grammar schools, a Latin and English High school. The buildings for these schools twenty in number, have cost $653,208. There are also 135 primary schools, in as many houses or rooms. I know not their value, as I think they are not all owned by the city. But suppose them to be worth $150,000. Then all the school-houses of this city have cost $803,208. The cost of these 156 schools for this year is estimated at $172,000. The number of scholars in them is 16,479. Harvard University, the most expensive college in America, costs about $46,000 a year. Now the ship Ohio, lying here in our harbor, has cost $834,845, and we pay for it each year $220,000 more. That is, it has cost $31,637 more than these 155 school- [Pg 80] houses of this city, and costs every year $2,000 more than Harvard University, and all the public schools of Boston!

The military academy at West Point contains two hundred and thirty-six cadets; the appropriation for it last year, was $138,000, a sum greater I think, than the cost of all the colleges in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts, with their 1,445 students.

The navy-yard at Charlestown, with its ordnance, stores, etc., cost $4,741,000. The cost of the 78 churches in Boston is $3,246,500; the whole property of Harvard University is $703,175; the 155 school-houses of Boston are worth $803,208; in all $4,752,883. Thus the navy-yard at Charlestown has cost almost as much as the 78 churches and the 155 school-houses of Boston, with Harvard College, its halls, libraries, all its wealth thrown in. Yet what does it teach?

Our country is singularly destitute of public libraries. You must go across the ocean to read the history of the Church or State; all the public libraries in America cannot furnish the books referred to in Gibbon's Rome, or Gieseler's History of the Church. I think there is no public library in Europe which has cost three dollars a volume. There are six: the Vatican, at Rome; the Royal, at Paris; the British Museum, at London; the Bodleian, at Oxford; the University Libraries at Gottingen and Berlin—which contain, it is said, about 4,500,000 volumes. The recent grant of [Pg 81] $17,000,000 for the army is $3,500,000 more than the cost of those magnificent collections!

There have been printed about 3,000,000 different volumes, great and little, within the last 400 years. If the Florida war cost but $30,000,000, it is ten times more than enough to have purchased one copy of each book ever printed, at one dollar a volume, which is more than the average cost.

Now all these sums are to be paid by the people, "the dear people," whom our republican demagogues love so well, and for whom they spend their lives, rising early, toiling late, those self-denying heroes, those sainted martyrs of the republic, eating the bread of carefulness for them alone! But how are they to be paid? By a direct tax levied on all the property of the nation, so that the poor man pays according to his little, and the rich man in proportion to his much, each knowing when he pays and what he pays for? No such thing; nothing like it. The people must pay and not know it; must be deceived a little, or they would not pay after this fashion! You pay for it in every pound of sugar, copper, coal, in every yard of cloth; and if the counsel of some lovers of the people be followed, you will soon pay for it in each pound of coffee and tea. In this way the rich man always pays relatively less than the poor; often a positively smaller sum. Even here I think that three-fourths of all the property is owned by one-fourth of the people, yet that [Pg 82] three-fourths by no means pays a third of the national revenue. The tax is laid on things men cannot do without,—sugar, cloth, and the like. The consumption of these articles is not in proportion to wealth but persons. Now the poor man, as a general rule, has more children than

the rich, and the tax being more in proportion to persons than property, the poor man pays more than the rich. So a tax is really laid on the poor man's children to pay for the war which makes him poor and keeps him poor. I think your captains and colonels, those sons of thunder and heirs of glory, will not tell you so. They tell you so! They know it! Poor brothers, how could they? I think your party newspapers, penny or pound, will not tell you so; nor the demagogues, all covered with glory and all forlorn, who tell the people when to hurrah and for what! But if you cipher the matter out for yourself you will find it so, and not otherwise. Tell the demagogues, whig or democrat, that. It was an old Roman maxim, "The people wished to be deceived; let them." Now it is only practised on; not repeated—in public.

Let us deal justly even with war, giving that its due. There is one class of men who find their pecuniary advantage in it. I mean army contractors, when they chance to be favorites of the party in power; men who let steamboats to lie idle at $500 a day. This class of men rejoice in a war. The [Pg 83] country may become poor, they are sure to be rich. Yet another class turn war to account, get the "glory," and become important in song and sermon. I see it stated in a newspaper that the Duke of Wellington has received, as gratuities for his military services, $5,400,000, and $40,000 a year in pensions!

But the waste of property is the smallest part of the evil. The waste of life in war is yet more terrible. Human life is a sacred thing. Go out into the lowest street of Boston; take the vilest and most squalid man in that miserable lane, and he is dear to some one. He is called brother; perhaps husband; it may be father; at least, son. A human heart, sadly joyful, beat over him before he was born. He has been pressed fondly to his mother's arms. Her tears and her smiles have been for him; perhaps also her prayers. His blood may be counted mean and vile by the great men of the earth who love nothing so well as the dear people, for he has no "coat of arms," no liveried servant to attend him, but it has run down from the same first man. His family is ancient as that of the most long descended king. God made him; made this splendid universe to wait on him and teach him; sent his Christ to save him. He is an immortal soul. Needlessly to spill that man's blood is an awful sin. It will cry against you out of the ground—Cain! where is thy [Pg 84] brother? Now in war you bring together 50,000 men like him on one side, and 50,000 of a different nation on the other. They have no natural quarrel with one another. The earth is wide enough for both; neither hinders the sun from the other. Many come unwillingly; many not knowing what they fight for. It is but accident that determines on which side the man shall fight. The cannons pour their shot—round, grape, canister; the howitzers scatter their bursting shells; the muskets rain their leaden death; the sword, the bayonet, the horses' iron hoof, the wheels of the artillery, grind the men down into trodden dust. There they lie, the two masses of burning valor, extinguished, quenched, and grimly dead, each covering with his body the spot he defended with his arms. They had no quarrel; yet they lie there, slain by a brother's hand. It is not old and decrepid men, but men of the productive age, full of lusty life.

But it is only the smallest part that perish in battle. Exposure to cold, wet, heat; unhealthy climates, unwholesome food, rum, and forced marches, bring on diseases which mow down the poor soldiers worse than musketry and grape. Others languish of wounds, and slowly procrastinate a dreadful and a tenfold death. Far away, there are widows, orphans, childless old fathers, who pore over the daily news to learn at random the fate of a son, a father, or a husband! [Pg 85] They crowd disconsolate into the churches, seeking of God the comfort men took from them, praying in the bitterness of a broken heart, while the priest gives thanks for "a famous victory," and hangs up the bloody standard over his pulpit!

When ordinary disease cuts off a man, when he dies at his duty, there is some comfort in that loss. "It was the ordinance of God," you say. You minister to his wants; you smoothe down the pillow for the aching head; your love beguiles the torment of disease, and your own bosom gathers half the darts of death. He goes in his time and God takes him. But when he dies in such a war, in battle, it is man who has robbed him of life. It is a murderer that is butchered. Nothing alleviates that bitter, burning smart!

Others not slain are maimed for life. This has no eyes; that no hands; another no feet nor legs. This has been pierced by lances, and torn with the shot, till scarce any thing human is left. The wreck of a body is crazed with pains God never meant for man. The mother that bore him would not know her child. Count the orphan asylums in Germany and Holland; go into the hospital at Greenwich, that of the invalids in Paris, you see the "trophies" of Napoleon and Wellington. Go to the arsenal at Toulon, see the wooden legs piled up there for men now active and whole, and you will think a little of the physical horrors of war. [Pg 86]

In Boston there are perhaps about 25,000 able-bodied men between 18 and 45. Suppose them all slain in battle, or mortally hurt, or mown down by the camp-fever, vomito, or other diseases of war, and then fancy the distress, the heart-sickness amid wives, mothers, daughters, sons and fathers, here! Yet 25,000 is a small number to be murdered in "a famous victory;" a trifle for a whole "glorious campaign" in a great war. The men of Boston are no better loved than the men of Tamaulipas. There is scarce an old family, of the middle class, in all New England, which did not thus smart in the Revolution; many, which have not, to this day, recovered from the bloody blow then falling on them. Think, wives, of the butchery of your husbands; think, mothers, of the murder of your sons!

Here, too, the burden of battle falls mainly on the humble class. They pay the great tribute of money; they pay also the horrid tax of blood. It was not your rich men who fought even the Revolution; not they. Your men of property and standing were leaguing with the British, or fitting out privateers when that offered a good investment, or buying up the estates of more consistent tories; making money out of the nation's dire distress! True, there were most honorable exceptions; but such, I think, was the general rule. Let this be distinctly remembered, that the burden of battle is borne by the humble classes of men; they pay the vast tribute of money; the [Pg 87] awful tax of blood! The "glory" is got by a few; poverty, wounds, death, are for the people!

Military glory is the poorest kind of distinction, but the most dangerous passion. It is an honor to man to be able to mould iron; to be skilful at working in cloth, wood, clay, leather. It is man's vocation to raise corn, to subdue the rebellious fibre of cotton and convert it into beautiful robes, full of comfort for the body. They are the heroes of the race who abridge the time of human toil and multiply its results; they who win great truths from God, and send them to a people's heart; they who balance the many and the one into harmonious action, so that all are united and yet each left free. But the glory which comes of epaulets and feathers; that strutting glory which is dyed in blood—what shall we say of it? In this day it is not heroism; it is an imitation of barbarism long ago passed by. Yet it is marvellous how many men are taken with a red coat! You expect it in Europe, a land of soldiers and blood. You are disappointed to find that here the champions of force should be held in honor, and that even the lowest should voluntarily enroll themselves as butchers of men!

Yet more: aggressive war is a sin; a corruption of the public morals. It is a practical denial of Christianity; a violation of God's eternal law of love. This is so plain that I shall say little upon it [Pg 88] to-day. Your savagest and most vulgar captain would confess he does not fight as a Christian—but as a soldier; your magistrate calls for volunteers—not as a man loving Christianity, and loyal to God; only as Governor, under oath to keep the Constitution, the tradition of the elders; not under oath to keep the commandment of God! In war the laws are suspended, violence and cunning rule everywhere. The battle of Yorktown was gained by a lie, though a Washington told it. As a soldier it was his duty. Men "emulate the tiger;" the hand is bloody, and the heart hard. Robbery and murder are the rule, the glory of men. "Good men look sad, but ruffians dance and leap." Men are systematically trained to burn towns, to murder fathers and sons; taught to consider it "glory" to do so. The Government collects ruffians and cut-throats. It compels better men to serve with these and become cut-throats. It appoints chaplains to blaspheme Christianity; teaching the ruffians how to pray for the destruction of the enemy, the burning of his towns; to do this in the name of Christ and God. I do not censure all the men who serve: some of them know no better; they have heard that a man would "perish everlastingly" if he did not believe the Athanasian creed; that if he questioned the story of Jonah, or the miraculous birth of Jesus, he was in danger of hell-fire, and if he doubted damnation was sure to be damned. They never heard [Pg 89] that such a war was a sin; that to create a war was treason, and to fight in it wrong. They never thought of thinking for themselves; their thinking was to read a newspaper, or sleep through a sermon. They counted it their duty to obey the Government without thinking if that Government be right or wrong. I deny not the noble, manly character of many a soldier, his heroism, self-denial and personal sacrifice.

Still, after all proper allowance is made for a few individuals, the whole system of war is unchristian and sinful. It lives only by evil passions. It can be defended only by what is low, selfish, and animal. It absorbs the scum of the cities, pirates, robbers, murderers. It makes them worse, and better men like them. To take one man's life is murder; what is it to practise killing as an art, a trade; to do it by thousands? Yet I think better of the hands that do the butchering than of the ambitious heads, the cold, remorseless hearts, which plunge the nation into war.

In war the State teaches men to lie, to steal, to kill. It calls for privateers, who are commonly pirates with a national charter, and pirates are privateers with only a personal charter. Every camp is a school of profanity, violence, licentiousness, and crimes too foul to name. It is so without sixty-five thousand gallons of whiskey. This is unavoidable. It was so with Washington's army, with Cornwallis's, with that of Gustavus Adolphus, perhaps the most moral army the world [Pg 90] ever saw. The soldier's life generally unfits a man for the citizen's! When he returns from a camp, from a war, back to his native village, he becomes a curse to society and a shame to the mother that bore him. Even the soldiers of the Revolution, who survived the war, were mostly ruined for life, debauched, intemperate, vicious and vile. What loathsome creatures so many of them were! They bore our burden, for such were the real martyrs of that war, not the men who fell under the shot! How many men of the rank and file in the late war have since become respectable citizens?

To show how incompatible are War and Christianity, suppose that he who is deemed the most Christian of Christ's disciples, the well-beloved John, were made a navy-chaplain, and some morning, when a battle is daily looked for, should stand on the gun-deck, amid lockers of shot, his Bible resting on a cannon, and expound Christianity to men with cutlasses by their side! Let him read for the morning lesson the Sermon on the Mount, and for text take words from his own Epistle, so sweet, so beautiful, so true: "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God, for God is love." Suppose he tells his strange audience that all men are brothers; that God is their common father; that Christ loved us all, showing us how to live the life of love; and then, when he [Pg 91] had melted all those savage hearts by words so winsome and so true, let him conclude, "Blessed are the men-slayers! Seek first the glory which cometh of battle. Be fierce as tigers. Mar God's

image in which your brothers are made. Be not like Christ, but Cain who slew his brother! When you meet the enemy, fire into their bosoms; kill them in the dear name of Christ; butcher them in the spirit of God. Give them no quarter, for we ought not to lay down our lives for the brethren; only the murderer hath eternal life!"

Yet great as are these three-fold evils, there are times when the soberest men and the best men have welcomed war, coolly and in their better moments. Sometimes a people, long oppressed, has "petitioned, remonstrated, cast itself at the feet of the throne," with only insult for answer to its prayer. Sometimes there is a contest between a falsehood and a great truth; a self-protecting war for freedom of mind, heart and soul; yes, a war for a man's body, his wife's and children's body, for what is dearer to men than life itself, for the unalienable rights of man, for the idea that all are born free and equal. It was so in the American Revolution; in the English, in the French Revolution. In such cases men say, "Let it come." They take down the firelock in sorrow; with a prayer they go forth to battle, asking that the Right may triumph. Much as I hate war I cannot [Pg 92] but honor such men. Were they better, yet more heroic, even war of that character might be avoided. Still it is a colder heart than mine which does not honor such men, though it believes them mistaken. Especially do we honor them, when it is the few, the scattered, the feeble, contending with the many and the mighty; the noble fighting for a great idea, and against the base and tyrannical. Then most men think the gain, the triumph of a great idea, is worth the price it costs, the price of blood.

I will not stop to touch that question, If man may ever shed the blood of man. But it is plain that an aggressive war like this is wholly unchristian, and a reproach to the nation and the age.

Now, to make the evils of war still clearer, and to bring them home to your door, let us suppose there was war between the counties of Suffolk, on the one side, and Middlesex on the other—this army at Boston, that at Cambridge. Suppose the subject in dispute was the boundary line between the two, Boston claiming a pitiful acre of flat land, which the ocean at low tide disdained to cover. To make sure of this, Boston seizes whole miles of flats, unquestionably not its own. The rulers on one side are fools, and traitors on the other. The two commanders have issued their proclamations; the money is borrowed; the whiskey provided; the soldiers—Americans, Negroes, [Pg 93] Irishmen, all the able-bodied men—are enlisted. Prayers are offered in all the churches, and sermons preached, showing that God is a man of war, and Cain his first saint, an early Christian, a Christian before Christ. The Bostonians wish to seize Cambridge, burn the houses, churches, college-halls, and plunder the library. The men of Cambridge wish to seize Boston, burn its houses and ships, plundering its wares and its goods. Martial law is proclaimed on both sides. The men of Cambridge cut asunder the bridges, and make a huge breach in the mill-dam, planting cannon to enfilade all those avenues. Forts crown the hilltops, else so green. Men, madder than lunatics, are crowded into the Asylum. The Bostonians rebuild the old fortifications on the Neck; replace the forts on Beacon-hill, Fort-hill, Copps-hill, levelling houses to make room for redoubts and bastions. The batteries are planted, the mortars got ready; the furnaces and magazines are all prepared. The three hills are grim with war. From Copps-hill men look anxious to that memorable height the other side of the water. Provisions are cut off in Boston; no man may pass the lines; the aqueduct refuses its genial supply; children cry for their expected food. The soldiers parade, looking somewhat tremulous and pale; all the able-bodied have come, the vilest most willingly; some are brought by force of drink, some by force of arms. Some are in [Pg 94] brilliant dresses, some in their working frocks. The banners are consecrated by solemn words.[6] Your church-towers are military posts of observation. There are Old Testament prayers to the "God of Hosts" in all the churches of Boston; prayers that God would curse the men of Cambridge, make their wives widows, their children fatherless, their houses a ruin, the men corpses, meat for the beast of the field and the bird of the air. Last night the Bostonians made a feint of attacking Charlestown, raining bombs and red-hot cannon-balls from Copps-hill, till they have burnt a thousand houses, where the British burnt not half so many. Women and children fled screaming from the blazing rafters of their homes. The men of Middlesex crowd into Charlestown.

In the mean time the Bostonians hastily repair a bridge or two; some pass that way, some over the Neck; all stealthily by night, and while the foe expect them at Bunker's, amid the blazing town, they have stolen a march and rush upon Cambridge itself. The Cambridge men turn back. The battle is fiercely joined. You hear the cannon, the sharp report of musketry. You crowd the hills, the house-tops; you line the Common, you cover the shore, yet you see but little in the [Pg 95] sulphurous cloud. Now the Bostonians yield a little, a reinforcement goes over. All the men are gone; even the gray-headed who can shoulder a firelock. They plunge into battle mad with rage, madder with rum. The chaplains loiter behind.

> "Pious men, whom duty brought,
> To dubious verge of battle fought,
> To shrive the dying, bless the dead!"

The battle hangs long in even scale. At length it turns. The Cambridge men retreat, they run,

they fly. The houses burn. You see the churches and the colleges go up, a stream of fire. That library—founded amid want and war and sad sectarian strife, slowly gathered by the saving of two centuries, the hope of the poor scholar, the boast of the rich one—is scattered to the winds and burnt with fire, for the solid granite is blasted by powder, and the turrets fall. Victory is ours. Ten thousand men of Cambridge lie dead; eight thousand of Boston. There writhe the wounded; men who but few hours before were poured over the battle-field a lava flood of fiery valor—fathers, brothers, husbands, sons. There they lie, torn and mangled; black with powder; red with blood; parched with thirst; cursing the load of life they now must bear with bruised frames and mutilated limbs. Gather them into hasty hospitals—let this man's daughter come to-morrow and sit by him, fanning away the flies; he shall linger out a life of wretched anguish unspoken and [Pg 96] unspeakable, and when he dies his wife religiously will keep the shot which tore his limbs. There is the battle-field! Here the horse charged; there the howitzers scattered their shells, pregnant with death; here the murderous canister and grape mowed down the crowded ranks; there the huge artillery, teeming with murder, was dragged o'er heaps of men—wounded friends who just now held its ropes, men yet curling with anguish, like worms in the fire. Hostile and friendly, head and trunk are crushed beneath those dreadful wheels. Here the infantry showered their murdering shot. That ghastly face was beautiful the day before—a sabre hewed its half away.

"The earth is covered thick with other clay,
Which her own clay must cover, heaped and pent,
Rider and horse, friend, foe, in one red burial blent."

Again it is night. Oh, what a night, and after what a day! Yet the pure tide of woman's love, which never ebbs since earth began, flows on in spite of war and battle. Stealthily, by the pale moonlight, a mother of Boston treads the weary miles to reach that bloody spot; a widow she—seeking among the slain her only son. The arm of power drove him forth reluctant to the fight. A [Pg 97] friendly soldier guides her way. Now she turns over this face, whose mouth is full of purple dust, bit out of the ground in his extremest agony, the last sacrament offered him by Earth herself; now she raises that form, cold, stiff, stony and ghastly as a dream of hell. But, lo! another comes, she too a woman, younger and fairer, yet not less bold, a maiden from the hostile town to seek her lover. They meet, two women among the corpses; two angels come to Golgotha, seeking to raise a man. There he lies before them; they look. Yes it is he you seek; the same dress, form, features too; it is he, the son, the lover. Maid and mother could tell that face in any light. The grass is wet with his blood. The ground is muddy with the life of men. The mother's innocent robe is drabbled in the blood her bosom bore. Their kisses, groans, and tears, recall the wounded man. He knows the mother's voice; that voice yet more beloved. His lips move only, for they cannot speak. He dies! The waxing moon moves high in heaven, walking in beauty amid the clouds, and murmurs soft her cradle song unto the slumbering earth. The broken sword reflects her placid beams. A star looks down and is imaged back in a pool of blood. The cool night wind plays in the branches of the trees shivered with shot. Nature is beautiful—that lovely grass underneath their feet; those pendulous branches of the leafy elm; the stars and that romantic moon lining the [Pg 98] clouds with silver light! A groan of agony, hopeless and prolonged, wails out from that bloody ground. But in yonder farm the whippoorwill sings to her lover all night long; the rising tide ripples melodious against the shores. So wears the night away,—Nature, all sinless, round that field of woe.

"The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
With breath all incense and with cheek all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
And living as if earth contained no tomb,
And glowing into day."

What a scene that morning looks upon! I will not turn again. Let the dead bury their dead. But their blood cries out of the ground against the rulers who shed it,—"Cain! where are thy brothers?" What shall the fool answer; what the traitor say?

Then comes thanksgiving in all the churches of Boston. The consecrated banners, stiff with blood and "glory," are hung over the altar. The minister preaches and the singer sings: "The Lord hath been on our side. He treadeth the people under me. He teacheth my hands to war, my fingers to fight. Yea, He giveth me the necks of mine enemies; for the Lord is his name;" and "It was a famous victory!" Boston seizes miles square of land; but her houses are empty; her wives widows; her children fatherless. Rachel weeps for the murder of her innocents, yet dares not rebuke the rod. [Pg 99]

I know there is no fighting across Charles River, as in this poor fiction; but there was once, and instead of Charles say Rio Grande; for Cambridge read Metamoras, and it is what your President recommended; what your Congress enacted; what your Governor issued his proclamation for; what your volunteers go to accomplish: yes, what they fired cannon for on Boston Common the other day. I wish that were a fiction of mine!

We are waging a most iniquitous war—so it seems to me. I know I may be wrong, but I am no partisan, and if I err, it is not wilfully, not rashly. I know the Mexicans are a wretched people; wretched in their origin, history, and character. I know but two good things of them as a people—

they abolished negro slavery, not long ago; they do not covet the lands of their neighbors. True, they have not paid all their debts, but it is scarcely decent in a nation, with any repudiating States, to throw the first stone at Mexico for that!

I know the Mexicans cannot stand before this terrible Anglo-Saxon race, the most formidable and powerful the world ever saw; a race which has never turned back; which, though it number less than forty millions, yet holds the Indies, almost the whole of North America; which rules the commerce of the world; clutches at New Holland, China, New Zealand, Borneo, and seizes island after island in the furthest seas; the race which invented steam as its awful type. The poor, [Pg 100] wretched Mexicans can never stand before us. How they perished in battle! They must melt away as the Indians before the white man. Considering how we acquired Louisiana, Florida, Oregon, I cannot forbear thinking that this people will possess the whole of the continent before many years; perhaps before the century ends. But this may be had fairly; with no injustice to any one; by the steady advance of a superior race, with superior ideas and a better civilization; by commerce, trade, arts, by being better than Mexico, wiser, humaner, more free and manly. Is it not better to acquire it by the schoolmaster than the cannon; by peddling cloth, tin, any thing rather than bullets? It may not all belong to this Government, and yet to this race. It would be a gain to mankind if we could spread over that country the Idea of America—that all men are born free and equal in rights, and establish there political, social, and individual freedom. But to do that, we must first make real these ideas at home.

In the general issue between this race and that, we are in the right. But in this special issue, and this particular war, it seems to me that we are wholly in the wrong; that our invasion of Mexico is as bad as the partition of Poland in the last century and in this. If I understand the matter, the whole movement, the settlement of Texas, the Texan revolution, the annexation of Texas, the [Pg 101] invasion of Mexico, has been a movement hostile to the American idea, a movement to extend slavery. I do not say such was the design on the part of the people, but on the part of the politicians who pulled the strings. I think the papers of the Government and the debates of Congress prove that. The annexation has been declared unconstitutional in its mode, a virtual dissolution of the Union, and that by very high and well-known authority. It was expressly brought about for the purpose of extending slavery. An attempt is now made to throw the shame of this on the democrats. I think the democrats deserve the shame; but I could never see that the whigs, on the whole, deserved it any less; only they were not quite so open. Certainly, their leaders did not take ground against it, never as against a modification of the tariff! When we annexed Texas we of course took her for better or worse, debts and all, and annexed her war along with her. I take it everybody knew that; though now some seem to pretend a decent astonishment at the result. Now one party is ready to fight for it as the other! The North did not oppose the annexation of Texas. Why not? They knew they could make money by it. The eyes of the North are full of cotton; they see nothing else, for a web is before them; their ears are full of cotton, and they hear nothing but the buzz of their mills; their mouth is full of cotton, and they [Pg 102] can speak audibly but two words—Tariff, Tariff, Dividends, Dividends. The talent of the North is blinded, deafened, gagged with its own cotton. The North clamored loudly when the nation's treasure was removed from the United States Bank; it is almost silent at the annexation of a slave territory big as the kingdom of France, encumbered with debts, loaded with the entailment of war! Northern Governors call for soldiers; our men volunteer to fight in a most infamous war for the extension of slavery! Tell it not in Boston, whisper it not in Faneuil Hall, lest you weaken the slumbers of your fathers, and they curse you as cowards and traitors unto men! Not satisfied with annexing Texas and a war, we next invaded a territory which did not belong to Texas, and built a fort on the Rio Grande, where, I take it, we had no more right than the British, in 1841, had on the Penobscot or the Saco. Now the Government and its Congress would throw the blame on the innocent, and say war exists "by the act of Mexico!" If a lie was ever told, I think this is one. Then the "dear people" must be called on for money and men, for "the soil of this free republic is invaded," and the Governor of Massachusetts, one of the men who declared the annexation of Texas unconstitutional, recommends the war he just now told us to pray against, and appeals to our "patriotism," and "humanity," as arguments for butchering the Mexicans, when they are in the right and we in the wrong! The maxim is held up, "Our country, right or wrong;" "Our [Pg 103] country, howsoever bounded;" and it might as well be, "Our country, howsoever governed." It seems popularly and politically forgotten that there is such a thing as Right. The nation's neck invites a tyrant. I am not at all astonished that northern representatives voted for all this work of crime. They are no better than southern representatives; scarcely less in favor of slavery, and not half so open. They say: Let the North make money, and you may do what you please with the nation; and we will choose governors that dare not oppose you, for, though we are descended from the Puritans we have but one article in our creed we never flinch from following, and that is —to make money; honestly, if we can; if not, as we can!

Look through the action of your Government, and your Congress. You see that no reference has been had in this affair to Christian ideas; none to justice and the eternal right. Nay, none at all! In the churches, and among the people, how feeble has been the protest against this great wrong. How tamely the people yield their necks—and say: "Take our sons for the war—we care not, right or wrong." England butchers the Sikhs in India—her generals are elevated to the peerage, and the head of her church writes a form of thanksgiving for the victory, to be read in all the churches of that Christian land.[7] To make it still more abominable, the blasphemy is [Pg 104] enacted on Easter Sunday, the great holiday of men who serve the Prince of Peace. We have not had prayers in the churches, for we have no political Archbishop. But we fired cannon in joy that we had butchered a few wretched men—half starved, and forced into the ranks by fear of death!

Your peace societies, and your churches, what can they do? What dare they? Verily, we are a faithless and perverse generation. God be merciful to us, sinners as we are!

[Pg 105]

But why talk for ever? What shall we do? In regard to this present war, we can refuse to take any part in it; we can encourage others to do the same; we can aid men, if need be, who suffer because they refuse. Men will call us traitors: what then? That hurt nobody in '76! We are a rebellious nation; our whole history is treason; our blood was attainted before we were born; our creeds are infidelity to the mother-church; our Constitution treason to our father-land. What of that? Though all the governors in the world bid us commit treason against man, and set the example, let us never submit. Let God only be a master to control our conscience! [Pg 106]

We can hold public meetings in favor of peace, in which what is wrong shall be exposed and condemned. It is proof of our cowardice that this has not been done before now. We can show in what the infamy of a nation consists; in what its real glory. One of your own men, the last summer, startled the churches out of their sleep,[8] by his manly trumpet, talking with us, and telling that the true grandeur of a nation was justice, not glory; peace, not war.

We can work now for future times, by taking pains to spread abroad the sentiments of peace, the ideas of peace, among the people in schools, churches—everywhere. At length we can diminish the power of the national Government, so that the people alone shall have the power to declare war, by a direct vote, the Congress only to recommend it. We can take from the Government the means of war by raising only revenue enough for the nation's actual wants, and raising that directly, so that each man knows what he pays, and when he pays it, and then he will take care that it is not paid to make him poor and keep him so. We can diffuse a real practical Christianity among the people, till the mass of men have courage enough to overcome evil with good, and look at aggressive war as the worst of treason and the foulest infidelity! [Pg 107]

Now is the time to push and be active. War itself gives weight to words of peace. There will never be a better time till we make the times better. It is not a day for cowardice, but for heroism. Fear not that the "honor of the nation" will suffer from Christian movements for peace. What if your men of low degree are a vanity, and your men of high degree are a lie? That is no new thing. Let true men do their duty, and the lie and the vanity will pass each to its reward. Wait not for the churches to move, or the State to become Christian. Let us bear our testimony like men, not fearing to be called traitors, infidels; fearing only to be such.

I would call on Americans, by their love of our country, its great ideas, its real grandeur, its hopes, and the memory of its fathers—to come and help save that country from infamy and ruin. I would call on Christians, who believe that Christianity is a truth, to lift up their voice, public and private, against the foulest violation of God's law, this blasphemy of the Holy Spirit of Christ, this worst form of infidelity to man and God. I would call on all men, by the one nature that is in you, by the great human heart beating alike in all your bosoms, to protest manfully against this desecration of the earth, this high treason against both man and God. Teach your rulers that you are Americans, not slaves; Christians, not heathen; men, not murderers, to kill for hire! You may effect little in this generation, for its head seems crazed and its heart rotten. But there will be a day after to-day. It is for you and me to make it better; a day of peace, when nation shall no longer lift up sword against nation; when all shall indeed be brothers, and all blest. Do this, you shall be worthy to dwell in this beautiful land; Christ will be near you; God work with you, and bless you for ever! [Pg 108]

This present trouble with Mexico may be very brief; surely it might be even now brought to an end with no unusual manhood in your rulers. Can we say we have not deserved it? Let it end, but let us remember that war, horrid as it is, is not the worst calamity which ever befalls a people. It is far worse for a people to lose all reverence for right, for truth, all respect for man and God; to care more for the freedom of trade than the freedom of men; more for a tariff than millions of souls. This calamity came upon us gradually, long before the present war, and will last long after that has died away. Like people like ruler, is a true word. Look at your rulers, representatives, and see our own likeness! We reverence force, and have forgot there is any right beyond the vote of a Congress or a people; any good beside dollars; any God but majorities and force, I think the present war, though it should cost 50,000 men and $50,000,000, the smallest part of our misfortune. Abroad we are looked on as a nation of swindlers and men-stealers! What can we say in our defence? Alas, the nation is a traitor to its great idea,—that all men are born equal, each with the same unalienable rights. We are infidels to Christianity. We have paid the price of our shame. [Pg 109]

There have been dark days in this nation before now. It was gloomy when Washington with his little army fled through the Jerseys. It was a long dark day from '83 to '89. It was not so dark as now; the nation never so false. There was never a time when resistance to tyrants was so rare a virtue; when the people so tamely submitted to a wrong. Now you can feel the darkness. The sack of this city and the butchery of its people were a far less evil than the moral deadness of the nation. Men spring up again like the mown grass; but to raise up saints and heroes in a dead nation corrupting beside its golden tomb, what shall do that for us? We must look not to the many for that, but to the few who are faithful unto God and man. [Pg 110]

I know the hardy vigor of our men, the stalwart intellect of this people. Would to God they could

learn to love the right and true. Then what a people should we be, spreading from the Madawaska to the Sacramento, diffusing our great idea, and living our religion, the Christianity of Christ! Oh, Lord! make the vision true; waken thy prophets and stir thy people till righteousness exalt us! No wonders will be wrought for that. But the voice of conscience speaks to you and me, and all of us: The right shall prosper; the wicked States shall die, and History responds her long amen.

What lessons come to us from the past! The Genius of the old civilization, solemn and sad, sits there on the Alps, his classic beard descending o'er his breast. Behind him arise the new nations, bustling with romantic life. He bends down over the midland sea, and counts up his children—Assyria, Egypt, Tyre, Carthage, Troy, Etruria, Corinth, Athens, Rome—once so renowned, now gathered with the dead, their giant ghosts still lingering pensive o'er the spot. He turns westward his face, too sad to weep, and raising from his palsied knee his trembling hand, looks on his brother genius of the new civilization. That young giant, strong and mocking, sits there on the Alleghanies. Before him lie the waters, covered with ships; behind him he hears the roar of the [Pg 111] Mississippi and the far distant Oregon—rolling their riches to the sea. He bends down, and that far ocean murmurs pacific in his ear. On his left, are the harbors, shops and mills of the East, and a five-fold gleam of light goes up from Northern lakes. On his right, spread out the broad savannahs of the South, waiting to be blessed; and far off that Mexique bay bends round her tropic shores. A crown of stars is on that giant's head, some glorious with flashing, many-colored light; some bloody red; some pale and faint, of most uncertain hue. His right hand lies folded in his robe; the left rests on the Bible's opened page, and holds these sacred words—All men are equal, born with equal rights from God. The old says to the young: "Brother, beware!" and Alps and Rocky Mountains say "Beware!" That stripling giant, ill-bred and scoffing, shouts amain: "My feet are red with the Indians' blood; my hand has forged the negro's chain. I am strong; who dares assail me? I will drink his blood, for I have made my covenant of lies, and leagued with hell for my support. There is no right, no truth; Christianity is false, and God a name." His left hand rends those sacred scrolls, casting his Bibles underneath his feet, and in his right he brandishes the negro-driver's whip, crying again—"Say, who is God, and what is Right." And all his mountains echo—Right. But the old genius sadly says again: "Though hand join in hand, the [Pg 112] wicked shall not prosper." The hollow tomb of Egypt, Athens, Rome, of every ancient State, with all their wandering ghosts, replies, "AMEN."

FOOTNOTES:

[3] Isaiah lxiii. 1-6. *Noyes's* Version.

The People.

1. Who is this that cometh from Edom?
In scarlet garments from Bozrah?
This, that is glorious in his apparel,
Proud in the greatness of his strength?

Jehovah.

I, that proclaim deliverance,
And am mighty to save.

The People.

2. Wherefore is thine apparel red,
And thy garments like those of one that treadeth the wine-vat?

Jehovah.

3. I have trodden the wine-vat alone,
And of the nations there was none with me.
And I trod them in mine anger,
And I trampled them in my fury,
So that their life-blood was sprinkled upon my garments,
And I have stained all my apparel.
4. For the day of vengeance was in my heart,
And the year of my deliverance was come.
5. And I looked, and there was none to help,
And I wondered, that there was none to uphold,
Therefore my own arm wrought salvation for me,
And my fury, it sustained me.
6. I trod down the nations in my anger;
I crushed them in my fury,
And spilled their blood upon the ground.

[4] To show the differences between the Old and New Testament, and to serve as introduction to this discourse, the following passages were read as the morning lesson: Exodus, xv. 1-6; 2 Sam. xxii. 32, 35-43, 48; xlv. 3-5; Isa. lxvi. 15, 16; Joel, iii. 9-17, and Matt. v. 3-11, 38-39, 43-45.

[5] Such was the price offered, and such the number of soldiers then called for.

[6] See the appropriate forms of prayer for that service by the present Bishop of Oxford, in

Jay's Address before the American Peace Society, in 1845.

[7] *Form of Prayer and Thanksgiving to Almighty God.*

"O Lord God of Hosts, in whose hand is power and might irresistible, we, thine unworthy servants, most humbly acknowledge thy goodness in the victories lately vouchsafed to the armies of our Sovereign over a host of barbarous invaders, who sought to spread desolation over fruitful and populous provinces, enjoying the blessings of peace, under the protection of the British Crown. We bless Thee, O merciful Lord, for having brought to a speedy and prosperous issue a war to which no occasion had been given by injustice on our part, or apprehension of injury at our hands! To Thee, O Lord, we ascribe the glory! It was Thy wisdom which guided the counsel! Thy power which strengthened the hands of those whom it pleased Thee to use as Thy instruments in the discomfiture of the lawless aggressor, and the frustration of his ambitious designs! From Thee, alone, cometh the victory, and the spirit of moderation and mercy in the day of success. Continue, we beseech Thee, to go forth with our armies, whensoever they are called into battle in a righteous cause; and dispose the hearts of their leaders to exact nothing more from the vanquished than is necessary for the maintenance of peace and security against violence and rapine.

"Above all, give Thy grace to those who preside in the councils of our Sovereign, and administer the concerns of her widely extended dominions, that they may apply all their endeavors to the purposes designed by Thy good Providence, in committing such power to their hands, the temporal and spiritual benefit of the nations intrusted to their care.

"And whilst Thou preservest our distant possessions from the horrors of war, give us peace and plenty at home, that the earth may yield her increase, and that we, Thy servants, receiving Thy blessings with thankfulness and gladness of heart, may dwell together in unity, and faithfully serve Thee, to Thy honor and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, belong all dominion and power, both in heaven and earth, now and for ever. Amen."—See a defence of this prayer, in the London "Christian Observer" for May, p. 319, *et seq.*, and for June, p. 346, *et seq.*

Would you know what he gave thanks for on Easter Sunday? Here is the history of the battle:

"This battle had begun at six, and was over at eleven o'clock; the hand-to-hand combat commenced at nine, and lasted scarcely two hours. The river was full of sinking men. For two hours, volley after volley was poured in upon the human mass—the stream being literally red with blood, and covered with the bodies of the slain. At last, the musket ammunition becoming exhausted, the infantry fell to the rear, the horse artillery plying grape till not a man was visible within range. No compassion was felt or mercy shown." But "'twas a famous victory!"

[8] Mr. Charles Sumner.

IV.

[Pg 113]

SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE ANTI-WAR MEETING IN FANEUIL HALL, FEBRUARY 4, 1847.

Mr. Chairman,—We have come here to consult for the honor of our country. The honor and dignity of the United States are in danger. I love my country; I love her honor. It is dear to me almost as my own. I have seen stormy meetings in Faneuil Hall before now, and am not easily disturbed by a popular tumult. But never before did I see a body of armed soldiers attempting to overawe the majesty of the people, when met to deliberate on the people's affairs. Yet the meetings of the people of Boston have been disturbed by soldiers before now, by British bayonets; but never since the Boston massacre on the 5th of March, 1770! Our fathers hated a standing army. This is a new one, but behold the effect! Here are soldiers with bayonets to overawe the majesty of the people! They went to our meeting last Monday night, the hireling soldiers of President Polk, to overawe and disturb the meetings of honest men. Here they are [Pg 114] now, and in arms!

We are in a war; the signs of war are seen here in Boston. Men, needed to hew wood and honestly serve society, are marching about your streets; they are learning to kill men, men who never harmed us, nor them; learning to kill their brothers. It is a mean and infamous war we are fighting. It is a great boy fighting a little one, and that little one feeble and sick. What makes it worse is, the little boy is in the right, and the big boy is in the wrong, and tells solemn lies to make his side seem right. He wants, besides, to make the small boy pay the expenses of the quarrel.

The friends of the war say "Mexico has invaded our territory!" When it is shown that it is we who have invaded hers, then it is said, "Ay, but she owes us money." Better say outright, "Mexico has land, and we want to steal it!"

This war is waged for a mean and infamous purpose, for the extension of slavery. It is not enough that there are fifteen Slave States, and 3,000,000 men here who have no legal rights—not so much as the horse and the ox have in Boston: it is not enough that the slaveholders annexed Texas, and made slavery perpetual therein, extending even north of Mason and Dixon's line,

covering a territory forty-five times as large as the State of Massachusetts. Oh, no; we must have yet more land to whip negroes in! [Pg 115]

The war had a mean and infamous beginning. It began illegally, unconstitutionally. The Whigs say, "the President made the war." Mr. Webster says so! It went on meanly and infamously. Your Congress lied about it. Do not lay the blame on the democrats; the whigs lied just as badly. Your Congress has seldom been so single-mouthed before. Why, only sixteen voted against the war, or the lie. I say this war is mean and infamous all the more, because waged by a people calling itself democratic and Christian. I know but one war so bad in modern times, between civilized nations, and that was the war for the partition of Poland. Even for that there was more excuse.

We have come to Faneuil Hall to talk about the war; to work against the war. It is rather late, but "better late than never." We have let two opportunities for work pass unemployed. One came while the annexation of Texas was pending. Then was the time to push and be active. Then was the time for Massachusetts and all the North, to protest as one man against the extension of slavery. Everybody knew all about the matter, the democrats and the whigs. But how few worked against that gross mischief! One noble man lifted up his warning voice;[9] a man noble in his father,—and there he stands in marble; noble in himself—and there he stands yet higher up—and [Pg 116] I hope time will show him yet nobler in his son, and there he stands, not in marble, but in man! He talked against it, worked against it, fought against it. But Massachusetts did little. Her tonguey men said little; her handymen did little. Too little could not be done or said. True, we came here to Faneuil Hall and passed resolutions; good resolutions they were, too. Daniel Webster wrote them, it is said. They did the same in the State House; but nothing came of them. They say "Hell is paved with resolutions;" these were of that sort of resolutions; which resolve nothing because they are of words, not works!

Well, we passed the resolutions; you know who opposed them; who hung back and did nothing, nothing good I mean; quite enough not good. Then we thought all the danger was over; that the resolutions settled the matter. But then was the time to confound at once the enemies of your country; to show an even front hostile to slavery.

But the chosen time passed over, and nothing was done. Do not lay the blame on the democrats; a whig Senate annexed Texas, and so annexed a war. We ought to have told our delegation in Congress, if Texas were annexed, to come home, and we would breathe upon it and sleep upon it, and then see what to do next. Had our resolutions, taken so warmly here in Faneuil Hall in 1845, been but as warmly worked out, we had now been as terrible to the slave power as the slave [Pg 117] power, since extended, now is to us!

Why was it that we did nothing? That is a public secret. Perhaps I ought not to tell it to the people. (Cries of "Tell it.")

The annexation of Texas, a slave territory big as the kingdom of France, would not furl a sail on the ocean; would not stop a mill-wheel at Lowell! Men thought so.

That time passed by, and there came another. The Government had made war; the Congress voted the dollars, voted the men, voted a lie. Your representative, men of Boston, voted for all three; the lie, the dollars, and the men; all three, in obedience to the slave power! Let him excuse that to the conscience of his party; it is an easy matter. I do not believe he can excuse it to his own conscience. To the conscience of the world it admits of no excuse. Your President called for volunteers, 50,000 of them. Then came an opportunity such as offers not once in one hundred years, an opportunity to speak for freedom and the rights of mankind! Then was the time for Massachusetts to stand up in the spirit of '76, and say, "We won't send a man, from Cape Ann to Williamstown—not one Yankee man, for this wicked war." Then was the time for your Governor to say, "Not a volunteer for this wicked war." Then was the time for your merchants to say, "Not a [Pg 118] ship, not a dollar for this wicked war;" for your manufacturers to say, "We will not make you a cannon, nor a sword, nor a kernel of powder, nor a soldier's shirt, for this wicked war." Then was the time for all good men to say, "This is a war for slavery, a mean and infamous war; an aristocratic war, a war against the best interests of mankind. If God please, we will die a thousand times, but never draw blade in this wicked war." (Cries of "Throw him over," etc.) Throw him over, what good would that do? What would you do next, after you have thrown him over? ("Drag you out of the hall!") What good would that do? It would not wipe off the infamy of this war! would not make it less wicked!

That is what a democratic nation, a Christian people ought to have said, ought to have done. But we did not say so; the Bay State did not say so, nor your Governor, nor your merchants, nor your manufacturers, nor your good men; the Governor accepted the President's decree, issued his proclamation calling for soldiers, recommended men to enlist, appealing to their "patriotism" and "humanity."

Governor Briggs is a good man, and so far I honor him. He is a temperance man, strong and consistent; I honor him for that. He is a friend of education; a friend of the people. I wish there were more such. Like many other New England men, he started from humble beginnings; but unlike many such successful men of New England, he is not ashamed of the lowest round he ever [Pg 119] trod on. I honor him for all this. But that was a time which tried men's souls, and his soul could not stand the rack. I am sorry for him. He did as the President told him.

What was the reason for all this? Massachusetts did not like the war, even then; yet she gave her consent to it. Why so? There are two words which can drive the blood out of the cheeks of

cowardly men in Massachusetts any time. They are "Federalism" and "Hartford Convention!" The fear of those words palsied the conscience of Massachusetts, and so her Governor did as he was told. I feel no fear of either. The Federalists did not see all things; who ever did? They had not the ideas which were destined to rule this nation; they looked back when the age looked forward. But to their own ideas they were true; and if ever a nobler body of men held state in any nation, I have yet to learn when or where. If we had had the shadow of Caleb Strong in the Governor's chair, not a volunteer for this war had gone out of Massachusetts.

I have not told quite all the reasons why Massachusetts did nothing. Men knew the war would cost money; that the dollars would in the end be raised, not by a direct tax, of which the poor man paid according to his little, and the rich man in proportion to his much, but by a tariff which [Pg 120] presses light on property, and hard on the person; by a tax on the backs and mouths of the people. Some of the Whigs were glad last Spring, when the war came, for they hoped thereby to save the child of their old age, the tariff of '42. There are always some rich men, who say "No matter what sort of a Government we have, so long as we get our dividends;" always some poor men, who say "No matter how much the nation suffers, if we fill our hungry purses thereby." Well, they lost their virtue, lost their tariff, and gained just nothing; what they deserved to gain.

Now a third opportunity has come; no, it has not come; we have brought it. The President wants a war tax on tea and coffee. Is that democratic, to tax every man's breakfast and supper, for the sake of getting more territory to whip negroes in? (Numerous cries of "Yes.") Then what do you think despotism would be? He asks a loan of $28,000,000 for this war. He wants $3,000,000 to spend privately for this war. In eight months past, he has asked I am told for $74,000,000. Seventy-four millions of dollars to conquer slave territory! Is that democratic too? He wants to increase the standing army, to have ten regiments more! A pretty business that. Ten regiments to gag the people in Faneuil Hall. Do you think that is democratic? Some men have just asked [Pg 121] Massachusetts for $20,000 for the volunteers! It is time for the people to rebuke all this wickedness.

I think there is a good deal to excuse the volunteers. I blame them, for some of them know what they are about. Yet I pity them more, for most of them, I am told, are low, ignorant men; some of them drunken and brutal. From the uproar they make here to-night, arms in their hands, I think what was told me is true! I say I pity them! They are my brothers; not the less brothers because low and misguided. If they are so needy that they are forced to enlist by poverty, surely I pity them. If they are of good families, and know better, I pity them still more! I blame most the men that have duped the rank and file! I blame the captains and colonels, who will have least of the hardships, most of the pay, and all of the "glory." I blame the men that made the war; the men that make money out of it. I blame the great party men of the land. Did not Mr. Clay say he hoped he could slay a Mexican? (Cries, "No, he didn't.") Yes, he did; said it on Forefather's day! Did not Mr. Webster, in the streets of Philadelphia, bid the volunteers, misguided young men, go and uphold the stars of their country? (Voices, "He did right!") No, he should have said the stripes of his country, for every volunteer to this wicked war is a stripe on the nation's back! Did not he [Pg 122] declare this war unconstitutional, and threaten to impeach the President who made it, and then go and invest a son in it? Has it not been said here, "Our country, howsoever bounded," bounded by robbery or bounded by right lines! Has it not been said, all round, "Our country, right or wrong!"

I say I blame not so much the volunteers as the famous men who deceive the nation! (Cries of "Throw him over, kill him, kill him," and a flourish of bayonets.) Throw him over! you will not throw him over. Kill him! I shall walk home unarmed and unattended, and not a man of you will hurt one hair of my head.

I say again it is time for the people to take up this matter. Your Congress will do nothing till you tell them what and how! Your 29th Congress can do little good. Its sands are nearly run, God be thanked! It is the most infamous Congress we ever had. We began with the Congress that declared Independence, and swore by the Eternal Justice of God. We have come down to the 29th Congress, which declared war existed by the act of Mexico, declared a lie; the Congress that swore by the Baltimore Convention! We began with George Washington, and have got down to James K. Polk.

It is time for the people of Massachusetts to instruct their servants in Congress to oppose this war; to refuse all supplies for it; to ask for the recall of the army into our own land. It is time for us to tell them that not an inch of slave territory shall ever be added to the realm. Let us [Pg 123] remonstrate; let us petition; let us command. If any class of men have hitherto been remiss, let them come forward now and give us their names—the merchants, the manufacturers, the whigs and the democrats. If men love their country better than their party or their purse, now let them show it.

Let us ask the General Court of Massachusetts to cancel every commission which the Governor has given to the officers of the volunteers. Let us ask them to disband the companies not yet mustered into actual service; and then, if you like that, ask them to call a convention of the people of Massachusetts, to see what we shall do in reference to the war; in reference to the annexation of more territory; in reference to the violation of the Constitution! (Loud groans from crowds of rude fellows in several parts of the hall.) That was a tory groan; they never dared

groan so in Faneuil Hall before; not even the British tories, when they had no bayonets to back them up! I say, let us ask for these things!

Your President tells us it is treason to talk so! Treason is it? treason to discuss a war which the government made, and which the people are made to pay for? If it be treason to speak against the war, what was it to make the war, to ask for 50,000 men and $74,000,000 for the war? Why, if the people cannot discuss the war they have got to fight and to pay for, who under heaven can? [Pg 124] Whose business is it, if it is not yours and mine? If my country is in the wrong, and I know it, and hold my peace, then I am guilty of treason, moral treason. Why, a wrong,—it is only the threshold of ruin. I would not have my country take the next step. Treason is it, to show that this war is wrong and wicked! Why, what if George III., any time from '75 to '83, had gone down to Parliament and told them it was treason to discuss the war then waging against these colonies! What do you think the Commons would have said? What would the Lords say? Why, that King, foolish as he was, would have been lucky, if he had not learned there was a joint in his neck, and, stiff as he bore him, that the people knew how to find it.

I do not believe in killing kings, or any other men; but I do say, in a time when the nation was not in danger, that no British king, for two hundred years past, would have dared call it treason to discuss the war—its cause, its progress, or its termination!

Now is the time to act! Twice we have let the occasion slip; beware of the third time! Let it be infamous for a New England man to enlist; for a New-England merchant to loan his dollars, or to let his ships in aid of this wicked war; let it be infamous for a manufacturer to make a cannon, a sword, or a kernel of powder, to kill our brothers with, while we all know that they are in the [Pg 125] right, and we in the wrong.

I know my voice is a feeble one in Massachusetts. I have no mountainous position from whence to look down and overawe the multitude; I have no back-ground of political reputation to echo my words; I am but a plain humble man; but I have a back-ground of Truth to sustain me, and the Justice of Heaven arches over my head! For your sakes, I wish I had that oceanic eloquence whose tidal flow should bear on its bosom the drift-weed which politicians have piled together, and sap and sweep away the sand hillocks of soldiery blown together by the idle wind; that oceanic eloquence which sweeps all before it, and leaves the shore hard, smooth and clean! But feeble as I am, let me beg of you, fellow-citizens of Boston, men and brothers, to come forward and protest against this wicked war, and the end for which it is waged. I call on the whigs, who love their country better than they love the tariff of '42; I call on the democrats, who think Justice is greater than the Baltimore Convention,—I call on the whigs and democrats to come forward and join with me in opposing this wicked war! I call on the men of Boston, on the men of the old Bay State, to act worthy of their fathers, worthy of their country, worthy of themselves! Men and brothers, I call on you all to protest against this most infamous war, in the name of the State, in the name of the country, in the name of man, yes, in the name of God: Leave not your children [Pg 126] saddled with a war debt, to cripple the nation's commerce for years to come. Leave not your land cursed with slavery, extended and extending, palsying the nation's arm and corrupting the nation's heart. Leave not your memory infamous among the nations, because you feared men, feared the Government; because you loved money got by crime, land plundered in war, loved land unjustly bounded; because you debased your country by defending the wrong she dared to do; because you loved slavery; loved war, but loved not the Eternal Justice of all-judging God. If my counsel is weak and poor, follow one stronger and more manly. I am speaking to men; think of these things, and then act like men.

FOOTNOTES:

[9] John Quincy Adams.

V.

[Pg 127]

A SERMON OF THE MEXICAN WAR.—PREACHED AT THE MELODEON, ON SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 1848.

Soon after the commencement of the war against Mexico, I said something respecting it in this place. But while I was printing the sermon, I was advised to hasten the compositors in their work, or the war would be over before the sermon was out. The advice was like a good deal of the counsel that is given to a man who thinks for himself, and honestly speaks what he unavoidably thinks. It is now more than two years since the war began; I have hoped to live long enough to see it ended, and hoped to say a word about it when over. A month ago, this day, the 25th of May, the treaty of peace, so much talked of, was ratified by the Mexican Congress. A few days ago, it was officially announced by telegraph to your collector in Boston, that the war with Mexico was at an end.

There are two things about this war quite remarkable. The first is, the manner of its commencement. It was begun illegally, without the action of the constitutional authorities; begun [Pg 128] by the command of the President of the United States, who ordered the American army into a

territory which the Mexicans claimed as their own. The President says "It is ours," but the Mexicans also claimed it, and were in possession thereof until forcibly expelled. This is a plain case, and as I have elsewhere treated at length of this matter,[10] I will not dwell upon it again, except to mention a single fact but recently divulged. It is well known that Mr. Polk claimed the territory west of the Nueces and east of the Rio Grande, as forming a part of Texas, and therefore as forming part of the United States after the annexation of Texas. He contends that Mexico began the war by attacking the American army while in that territory and near the Rio Grande. But, from the correspondence laid before the American Senate, in its secret session for considering the treaty, it now appears that on the 10th of November, 1845, Mr. Polk instructed Mr. Slidell to offer a relinquishment of American claims against Mexico, amounting to $5,000,000 or $6,000,000, for the sake of having the Rio Grande as the western boundary of Texas; yes, for that very territory which he says was ours without paying a cent. When it was conquered, a [Pg 129] military government was established there, as in other places in Mexico.

The other remarkable thing about the war is, the manner of its conclusion. The treaty of peace which has just been ratified by the Mexican authorities, and which puts an end to the war, was negotiated by a man who had no more legal authority than any one of us has to do it. Mr. Polk made the war, without consulting Congress, and that body adopted the war by a vote almost unanimous. Mr. Nicholas P. Trist made the treaty, without consulting the President; yes, even after the President had ordered him to return home. As the Congress adopted Mr. Polk's war, so Mr. Polk adopted Mr. Trist's treaty, and the war illegally begun is brought informally to a close. Mr. Polk is now in the President's chair, seated on the throne of the Union, although he made the war; and Mr. Trist, it is said, is under arrest for making the treaty, meddling with what was none of his business.

When the war began, there was a good deal of talk about it here; talk against it. But, as things often go in Boston, it ended in talk. The news-boys made money out of the war. Political parties were true to their wonted principles, or their wonted prejudices. The friends of the party in power could see no informality in the beginning of hostilities; no injustice in the war itself; not [Pg 130] even an impolicy. They were offended if an obscure man preached against it of a Sunday. The political opponents of the party in power talked against the war, as a matter of course; but, when the elections came, supported the men that made it with unusual alacrity—their deeds serving as commentary upon their words, and making further remark thereon, in this place, quite superfluous. Many men,—who, whatever other parts of Scripture they may forget, never cease to remember that "Money answereth all things,"—diligently set themselves to make money out of the war and the new turn it gave to national affairs. Others thought that "glory" was a good thing, and so engaged in the war itself, hoping to return, in due time, all glittering with its honors.

So what with the one political party that really praised the war, and the other who affected to oppose it, and with the commercial party, who looked only for a market—this for merchandise and that for "patriotism"—the friends of peace, who seriously and heartily opposed the war, were very few in number. True, the "sober second thought" of the people has somewhat increased their number; but they are still few, mostly obscure men.

Now peace has come, nobody talks much about it; the news-boys have scarce made a cent by the news. They fired cannons, a hundred guns on the Common, for joy at the victory of Monterey; at [Pg 131] Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, New York, men illuminated their houses in honor of the battle of Buena Vista, I think it was; the custom-house was officially illuminated at Boston for that occasion. But we hear of no cannons to welcome the peace. Thus far, it does not seem that a single candle has been burnt in rejoicing for that. The newspapers are full of talk, as usual; flags are flying in the streets; the air is a little noisy with hurrahs, but it is all talk about the conventions at Baltimore and Philadelphia; hurrahs for Taylor and Cass. Nobody talks of the peace. Flags enough flap in the wind, with the names of rival candidates; but nowhere do the stripes and stars bear Peace as their motto. The peace now secured is purchased with such conditions imposed on Mexico, that while every one will be glad of it, no man, that loves justice, can be proud of it. Very little is said about the treaty. The distinguished senator from Massachusetts did himself honor, it seems to me, in voting against it on the ground that it enabled us to plunder Mexico of her land. But the treaty contains some things highly honorable to the character of the nation, of which we may well enough be proud, if ever of any thing. I refer to the twenty-second and twenty-third articles, which provide for arbitration between the nations, if future difficulties should occur; and to the pains taken, in case of actual hostilities, for the security of all unarmed persons, for the protection of private property, and for the humane [Pg 132] treatment of all prisoners taken in war. These ideas, and the language of these articles, are copied from the celebrated treaty between the United States and Prussia, the treaty of 1785. It is scarcely needful to add, that they were then introduced by that great and good man, Benjamin Franklin, one of the negotiators of the treaty. They made a new epoch in diplomacy, and introduced a principle previously unknown in the law of nations. The insertion of these articles in the new treaty is, perhaps, the only thing connected with the war, which an American can look upon with satisfaction. Yet this fact excites no attention.[11]

Still, while so little notice is taken of this matter, in public and private, it may be worth while for a minister, on Sunday, to say a word about the peace; and, now the war is over, to look back upon it, to see what it has cost, in money and in men, and what we have got by it; what its

consequences have been, thus far, and are likely to be for the future; what new dangers and duties come from this cause interpolated into our nation. We have been long promised "indemnity for the past, and security for the future:" let us see what we are to be indemnified for, and what secured against. The natural justice of the war I will not look at now. [Pg 133]

First, then, of the cost of the war. Money is the first thing with a good many men; the only thing with some; and an important thing with all. So, first of all, let me speak of the cost of the war in dollars. It is a little difficult to determine the actual cost of the war, thus far—even its direct cost; for the bills are not all in the hands of Government; and then, as a matter of political party-craft, the Government, of course, is unwilling to let the full cost become known before the next election is over. So it is to be expected that the Government will keep the facts from the people as long as possible. Most Governments would do the same. But Truth has a right of way everywhere, and will recover it at last, spite of the adverse possession of a political party. The indirect cost of the war must be still more difficult to come at, and will long remain a matter of calculation, in which it is impossible to reach certainty. We do not know yet the entire cost of the Florida war, or the late war with England; the complete cost of the Revolutionary war must forever be unknown.

It is natural for most men to exaggerate what favors their argument; but when I cannot obtain the exact figures, I will come a good deal within the probable amount. The military and naval [Pg 134] appropriations for the year ending in June, 1847, were $40,865,155.96; for the next year, $31,377,679.92; the sum asked for the present year, till next June, $42,224,000; making a whole of $114,466,835.88. It is true that all this appropriation is not for the Mexican war, but it is also true that this sum does not include all the appropriations for the war. Estimating the sums already paid by the Government, the private claims presented and to be presented, the $15,000,000 to be paid Mexico as purchase-money for the territory we take from her, the $5,000,000 or $6,000,000 to be paid our own citizens for their claims against her,—I think I am a good deal within the mark when I say the war will have cost $150,000,000 before the soldiers are at home, discharged, and out of the pay of the state. In this sum I do not include the bounty-lands to be given to the soldiers and officers, nor the pensions to be paid them, their widows and orphans, for years to come. I will estimate that at $50,000,000 more, making a whole of $200,000,000 which has been paid or must be. This is the direct cost to the Federal Government, and of course does not include the sums paid by individual States, or bestowed by private generosity, to feed and clothe the volunteers before they were mustered into service. This may seem extravagant; but, fifty years hence, when party spirit no longer blinds men's eyes, and when the whole is a matter of history, I think it will be thought moderate, and be found a good deal [Pg 135] within the actual and direct cost. Some of this cost will appear as a public debt. Statements recently made respecting it can hardly be trusted, notwithstanding the authority on which they rest. Part of this war debt is funded already, part not yet funded. When the outstanding demands are all settled, and the treasury notes redeemed, there will probably be a war debt of not less than $125,000,000. At least, such is the estimate of an impartial and thoroughly competent judge. But, not to exaggerate, let us call it only $100,000,000.

It will, perhaps, be said: Part of this money, all that is paid in pensions, is a charity, and therefore no loss. But it is a charity paid to men who, except for the war, would have needed no such aid; and, therefore, a waste. Of the actual cost of the war, some three or four millions have been spent in extravagant prices for hiring or purchasing ships, in buying provisions and various things needed by the army, and supplied by political favorites at exorbitant rates. This is the only portion of the cost which is not a sheer waste; here the money has only changed hands; nothing has been destroyed, except the honesty of the parties concerned in such transactions. If a farmer hires men to help him till the soil, the men earn their subsistence and their wages, and leave, besides, a profit to their employer; when the season is over, he has his crops and his [Pg 136] improvements as the return for their pay and subsistence. But for all that the soldier has consumed, for his wages, his clothes, his food and drink, the fighting tools he has worn out, and the ammunition he has expended, there is no available return to show; all that is a clear waste. The beef is eaten up, the cloth worn away, the powder is burnt, and what is there to show for it all? Nothing but the "glory." You sent out sound men, and they come back, many of them, sick and maimed; some of them are slain.

The indirect pecuniary cost of the war is caused, first, by diverting some 150,000 men, engaged in the war directly or remotely, from the works of productive industry, to the labors of war, which produce nothing; and, secondly, by disturbing the regular business of the country, first by the withdrawal of men from their natural work; then, by withdrawing large quantities of money from the active capital of the nation; and, finally, by the general uncertainty which it causes all over the land, thus hindering men from undertaking or prosecuting successfully their various productive enterprises. If 150,000 men earn on the average but $200 apiece, that alone amounts to $30,000,000. The withdrawal of such an amount of labor from the common industry of the country must be seriously felt. At any rate, the nation has earned $30,000,000 less than it would [Pg 137] have done, if these men had kept about their common work.

But the diversion of capital from its natural and pacific direction is a greater evil in this case. America is rich, but her wealth consists mainly in land, in houses, cattle, ships, and various things needed for human comfort and industry. In money, we are poor. The amount of money is small in proportion to the actual wealth of the nation, and also in proportion to its activity which is indicated by the business of the nation. In actual wealth, the free States of America are probably

the richest people in the world; but in money we are poorer than many other nations. This is plain enough, though perhaps not very well known, and is shown by the fact that interest, in European States, is from two to four per cent. a year, and in America from six to nine. The active capital of America is small. Now in this war, a national debt has accumulated, which probably is or will soon be $100,000,000 or $125,000,000. All this great sum of money has, of course, been taken from the active capital of the country, and there has been so much less for the use of the farmer, the manufacturer, and the merchant. But for this war, these 150,000 men and these $100,000,000 would have been devoted to productive industry; and the result would have been shown by the increase of our annual earnings, in increased wealth and comfort. [Pg 138]

Then war produced uncertainty, and that distrust amongst men. Therefore many were hindered from undertaking new works, and others found their old enterprises ruined at once. In this way there has been a great loss, which cannot be accurately estimated. I think no man, familiar with American industry, would rate this indirect loss lower than $100,000,000; some, perhaps, at twice as much; but to avoid all possibility of exaggeration, let us call it half the smallest of these sums, or $50,000,000, as the complete pecuniary cost of the Mexican war, direct and indirect.

What have we got to show for all this money? We have a large tract of territory, containing, in all, both east and west of the Rio Grande, I am told, between 700,000 and 800,000 square miles. Accounts differ as to its value. But it appears, from the recent correspondence of Mr. Slidell, that in 1845 the President offered Mexico, in money, $25,000,000 for that territory which we now acquire under this new treaty. Suppose it is worth more, suppose it is worth twice as much, or all the indirect cost of the war ($50,000,000), then the $200,000,000 are thrown away.

Now, for this last sum, we could have built a sufficient railroad across the Isthmus of Panama, and another across the continent, from the Mississippi to the Pacific. If such a road, with its suitable equipment, cost $100,000 a mile, and the distance should amount to 2,000 miles, then [Pg 139] the $200,000,000 would just pay the bills. That would have been the greatest national work of productive industry in the world. In comparison with it, the Lake Mœris and the Pyramids of Egypt, and the Wall of China seem but the works of a child. It might be a work to be proud of till the world ends; one, too, which would advance the industry, the welfare, and general civilization of mankind to a great degree, diminishing, by half, the distance round the globe; saving millions of property and many lives each year; besides furnishing, it is thought, a handsome income from the original outlay. But, perhaps, that would not be the best use which might be made of the money; perhaps it would not have been wise to undertake that work. I do not pretend to judge of such matters, only to show what might be done with that sum of money, if we were disposed to construct works of such a character. At any rate, two Pacific railroads would be better than one Mexican war. We are seldom aware of the cost of war. If a single regiment of dragoons cost only $700,000 a year, which is a good deal less than the actual cost, that is considerably more than the cost of twelve colleges like Harvard University, with its schools for theology, law, and medicine; its scientific school, observatory, and all. We are, taken as a whole, a very ignorant people; and while we waste our school-money and school-time, must continue so. [Pg 140]

A great man, who towers far above the common heads, full of creative thought, of the ideas which move the world, able to organize that thought into institutions, laws, practical works; a man of a million, a million-minded man, at the head of a nation, putting his thought into them; ruling not barely by virtue of his position, but by the intellectual and moral power to fill it; ruling not over men's heads, but in their minds and hearts, and leading them to new fields of toil, increasing their numbers, wealth, intelligence, comfort, morals, piety—such a man is a noble sight; a Charlemagne, or a Genghis Khan, a Moses leading his nation up from Egyptian bondage to freedom and the promised land. How have the eyes of the world been fixed on Washington! In darker days than ours, when all was violence, it is easy to excuse such men if they were warriors also, and made, for the time, their nation but a camp. There have been ages when the most lasting ink was human blood. In our day, when war is the exception, and that commonly needless, such a man, so getting the start of the majestic world, were a far grander sight. And with such a man at the head of this nation, a great man at the head of a free nation, able and energetic, and enterprising as we are, what were too much to hope? As it is, we have wasted our money, and got, the honor of fighting such a war.

Let me next speak of the direct cost of the war in men. In April, 1846, the entire army of the [Pg 141] United States, consisted of 7,244 men; the naval force of about 7,500. We presented the gratifying spectacle of a nation 20,000,000 strong, with a sea-coast of 3,000 or 4,000 miles, and only 7,000 or 8,000 soldiers, and as many armed men on the sea, or less than 15,000 in all! Few things were more grateful to an American than this thought, that his country was so nearly free from the terrible curse of a standing army. At that time, the standing army of France was about 480,000 men; that of Russia nearly 800,000 it is said. Most of the officers in the American army and navy, and most of the rank and file, had probably entered the service with no expectation of ever shedding the blood of men. The navy and army were looked on as instruments of peace; as much so as the police of a city.

The first of last January, there was, in Mexico, an American army of 23,695 regular soldiers, and a little more than 50,000 volunteers, the number cannot now be exactly determined, making an army of invasion of about 75,000 men. The naval forces, also, had been increased to 10,000. Estimating all the men engaged in the service of the army and navy; in making weapons of war

and ammunition; in preparing food and clothing; in transporting those things and the soldiers from place to place, by land or sea, and in performing the various other works incident to military operations, it is within bounds to say that there were 80,000 or 90,000 men engaged indirectly in [Pg 142] the works of war. But not to exaggerate, it is safe to say that 150,000 men were directly or indirectly engaged in the Mexican war. This estimate will seem moderate, when you remember that there were about 5,000 teamsters connected with the army in Mexico.

Here, then, were 150,000 men whose attention and toil were diverted from the great business of productive industry to merely military operations, or preparations for them. Of course, all the labor of these men was of no direct value to the human race. The food and clothing and labor of a man who earns nothing by productive work of hand or head, is food, clothing, and labor thrown away; labor in vain. There is nothing to show for the things he has consumed. So all the work spent in preparing ammunition and weapons of war is labor thrown away, an absolute loss, as much as if it had been spent in making earthen pitchers and then in dashing them to pieces. A country is the richer for every serviceable plough and spade made in it, and the world the richer; they are to be used in productive work, and when worn out, there is the improved soil and the crops that have been gathered, to show for the wear and tear of the tools. So a country is the richer for every industrious shoemaker and blacksmith it contains; for his time and toil go to increase the sum of human comfort, creating actual wealth. The world also is better off, and [Pg 143] becomes better through their influence. But a country is the poorer for every soldier it maintains, and the world poorer, as he adds nothing to the actual wealth of mankind; so is it the poorer for each sword and cannon made within its borders, and the world poorer, for these instruments cannot be used in any productive work, only for works of destruction.

So much for the labor of these 150,000 men; labor wasted in vain. Let us now look at the cost of life. It is not possible to ascertain the exact loss suffered up to this time, in killed, deceased by ordinary diseases, and in wounded; for some die before they are mustered into the service of the United States, and parts of the army are so far distant from the seat of Government that their recent losses are still unknown. I rely for information on the last report of the Secretary of War, read before the Senate, April 10, 1848, and recently printed. That gives the losses of parts of the army up to December last; other accounts are made up only till October, or till August. Recent losses will of course swell the amount of destruction. According to that report, on the American side there had been killed in battle, or died of wounds received therein, 1,689 persons; there had died of diseases and accidents, 6,173; 3,743 have been wounded in battle, who were not known to be dead at the date of the report.

This does not include the deaths in the navy, nor the destruction of men connected with the army [Pg 144] in various ways, as furnishing supplies and the like. Considering the sickness and accidents that have happened in the present year, and others which may be expected before the troops reach home, I may set down the total number of deaths on the American side, caused by the war, at 15,000, and the number of wounded men at 4,000. Suppose the army on the average to have consisted of 50,000 men for two years, this gives a mortality of fifteen per cent. each year, which is an enormous loss even for times of war, and one seldom equalled in modern warfare.

Now, most of the men who have thus died or been maimed were in the prime of life, able-bodied and hearty men. Had they remained at home in the works of peace, it is not likely that more than 500 of the number would have died. So then 14,500 lives may be set down at once to the account of the war. The wounded men are of course to thank the war, and that alone, for their smart and the life-long agony which they are called on to endure.

Such is the American loss. The loss of the Mexicans we cannot now determine. But they have been many times more numerous than the Americans; have been badly armed, badly commanded, badly trained, and besides have been beaten in every battle; their number seemed often the cause of their ruin, making them confident before battle and hindering their retreat after they were beaten. Still more, they have been ill provided with surgeons and nurses to care [Pg 145] for the wounded, and were destitute of medicines. They must have lost in battle five or six times more than we have done, and have had a proportionate number of wounded. To "lie like a military bulletin" is a European proverb; and it is not necessary to trust reports which tell of 600 or 900 Mexicans left dead on the ground, while the Americans lost but five or six. But when we remember that only twelve Americans were killed during the bombardment of Vera Cruz, which lasted five days; that the citadel contained more than 5,000 soldiers and over 400 pieces of cannon, we may easily believe the Mexican losses on the whole have been 10,000 men killed and perished of their wounds. Their loss by sickness would probably be smaller than our own, for the Mexicans were in their native climate, though often ill furnished with clothes, with shelter and provisions: so I will put down their loss by ordinary diseases at only 5,000, making a total of 15,000 deaths. Suppose their number of wounded was four times as great as our own, or 20,000. I should not be surprised if this were only half the number.

Put all together and we have in total, Americans and Mexicans, 24,000 men wounded, more or less, and the greater part maimed for life; and we have 30,000 men killed on the field of battle, or perished by the slow torture of their wounds, or deceased of diseases caused by extraordinary [Pg 146] exposures; 24,000 men maimed; 30,000 dead!

You all remember the bill which so hastily passed Congress in May, 1846, and authorized the war

previously begun. You perhaps have not forgot the preamble, "Whereas war exists by the act of Mexico." Well, that bill authorized the waste of $200,000,000 of American treasure, money enough to have built a railroad across the Isthmus of Panama, and another to connect the Mississippi and the Pacific ocean; it demanded the disturbance of industry and commerce all over the land, caused by withdrawing $100,000,000 from peaceful investments, and diverting 150,000 Americans from their productive and peaceful works; it demanded a loss yet greater of the treasure of Mexicans; it commanded the maiming of 24,000 men for life, and the death of 30,000 men in the prime and vigor of manhood. Yet such was the state of feeling, I will not say of thought, in the Congress, that out of both houses only sixteen men voted against it. If a prophet had stood there he might have said to the representative of Boston, "You have just voted for the wasting of 200,000,000 of the very dollars you were sent there to represent; for the maiming of 24,000 men and the killing of 30,000 more—part by disease, part by the sword, part by the slow and awful lingerings of a wounded frame! Sir, that is the English of your vote." Suppose the [Pg 147] prophet, before the vote was taken, could have gone round and told each member of Congress, "If there comes a war, you will perish in it;" perhaps the vote would have been a little different. It is easy to vote away blood, if it is not your own!

Such is the cost of the war in money and in men. Yet it has not been a very cruel war. It has been conducted with as much gentleness as a war of invasion can be. There is no agreeable way of butchering men. You cannot make it a pastime. The Americans have always been a brave people; they were never cruel. They always treated their prisoners kindly—in the Revolutionary war, in the late war with England. True, they have seized the Mexican ports, taken military possession of the custom-houses, and collected such duties as they saw fit; true, they sometimes made the army of invasion self-subsisting, and to that end have levied contributions on the towns they have taken; true, they have seized provisions which were private property, snatching them out of the hands of men who needed them; true, they have robbed the rich and the poor; true, they have burned and bombarded towns, have murdered men and violated women. All this must of course take place in any war. There will be the general murder and robbery committed on account of the nation, and the particular murder and robbery on account of the special individual. This also is to [Pg 148] be expected. You cannot set a town on fire and burn down just half of it, making the flames stop exactly where you will. You cannot take the most idle, ignorant, drunken, and vicious men out of the low population in our cities and large towns, get them drunk enough or foolish enough to enlist, train them to violence, theft, robbery, murder, and then stop the man from exercising his rage or lust on his own private account. If it is hard to make a dog understand that he must kill a hare for his master, but never for himself, it is not much easier to teach a volunteer that it is a duty, a distinction, and a glory to rob and murder the Mexican people for the nation's sake, but a wrong, a shame, and a crime to rob or murder a single Mexican for his own sake. There have been instances of wanton cruelty, occasioned by private licentiousness and individual barbarity. Of these I shall take no further notice, but come to such as have been commanded by the American authorities, and which were the official acts of the nation.

One was the capture of Tabasco. Tabasco is a small town several hundred miles from the theatre of war, situated on a river about eighty miles from the sea, in the midst of a fertile province. The army did not need it, nor the navy. It did not lie in the way of the American operations; its possession would be wholly useless. But one Sunday afternoon, while the streets were full of [Pg 149] men, women, and children, engaged in their Sunday business, a part of the naval force of America swept by; the streets running at right angles with the river, were enfiladed by the hostile cannon, and men, women, and children, unarmed and unresisting, were mowed down by the merciless shot. The city was taken, but soon abandoned, for its possession was of no use. The killing of those men, women, and children was as much a piece of murder, as it would be to come and shoot us to-day, and in this house. No valid excuse has been given for this cold-blooded massacre; none can be given. It was not battle, but wanton butchery. None but a Pequod Indian could excuse it. The theological newspapers in New England thought it a wicked thing in Dr. Palfrey to write a letter on Sunday, though he hoped thereby to help end the war. How many of them had any fault to find with this national butchery on the Lord's day? Fighting is bad enough any day; fighting for mere pay, or glory, or the love of fighting, is a wicked thing; but to fight on that day when the whole Christian world kneels to pray in the name of the Peacemaker; to butcher men and women and children, when they are coming home from church, with prayer-books in their hands, seems an aggravation even of murder; a cowardly murder, which a Hessian would have been ashamed of. "But 'twas a famous victory."

One other instance, of at least apparent wantonness, took place at the bombardment of Vera [Pg 150] Cruz. After the siege had gone on for a while, the foreign consuls in the town, "moved," as they say, "by the feeling of humanity excited in their hearts by the frightful results of the bombardment of the city," requested that the women and children might be allowed to leave the city, and not stay to be shot. The American General refused; they must stay and be shot.

Perhaps you have not an adequate conception of the effect produced by bombarding a town. Let me interest you a little in the details thereof. Vera Cruz is about as large as Boston was in 1810; it contains about 30,000 inhabitants. In addition it is protected by a castle, the celebrated fortress of St. Juan d' Ulloa, furnished with more than 5,000 soldiers and over 400 cannons. Imagine to yourself Boston as it was forty years ago, invested with a fleet on one side, and an army of 15,000 men on the land, both raining cannon-balls and bomb-shells upon your houses;

shattering them to fragments, exploding in your streets, churches, houses, cellars, mingling men, women, and children in one promiscuous murder. Suppose this to continue five days and nights; imagine the condition of the city; the ruins, the flames; the dead, the wounded, the widows, the orphans; think of the fears of the men anticipating the city would be sacked by a merciless soldiery; think of the women! Thus you will have a faint notion of the picture of Vera Cruz at the [Pg 151] end of March, 1847. Do you know the meaning of the name of the city? Vera Cruz is the True Cross. "See how these Christians love one another." The Americans are followers of the Prince of Peace; they have more missionaries amongst the "heathen" than any other nation, and the President, in his last message, says, "No country has been so much favored, or should acknowledge with deeper reverence the manifestations of the Divine protection." The Americans were fighting Mexico to dismember her territory, to plunder her soil, and plant thereon the institution of slavery, "the necessary back-ground of freedom."

Few of us have ever seen a battle, and without that none can have a complete notion of the ferocious passions which it excites. Let me help your fancy a little by relating an anecdote which seems to be very well authenticated, and requires but little external testimony to render it credible. At any rate, it was abundantly believed a year ago; but times change, and what was then believed all round may now be "the most improbable thing in the world." At the battle of Buena Vista, a Kentucky regiment began to stagger under the heavy charge of the Mexicans. The American commander-in-chief turned to one who stood near him, and exclaimed, "By God, this will not do. This is not the way for Kentuckians to behave when called on to make good a battle. It will not answer, sir." So the General clenched his fist, knit his brows, and set his teeth hard [Pg 152] together. However, the Kentuckians presently formed in good order and gave a deadly fire, which altered the battle. Then the old General broke out with a loud hurrah. "Hurrah for old Kentuck," he exclaimed, rising in his stirrups; "that's the way to do it. Give 'em hell, damn 'em," and tears of exultation rolled down his cheeks as he said it. You find the name of this General at the head of most of the whig newspapers in the United States. He is one of the most popular candidates for the Presidency. Cannons were fired for him, a hundred guns on Boston Common, not long ago, in honor of his nomination for the highest office in the gift of a free and Christian people. Soon we shall probably have clerical certificates, setting forth, to the people of the North, that he is an exemplary Christian. You know how Faneuil Hall, the old "Cradle of Liberty," rang with "Hurrah for Taylor," but a few days ago. The seven wise men of Greece were famous in their day; but now nothing is known of them except a single pungent aphorism from each, "Know thyself," and the like. The time may come when our great men shall have suffered this same reduction descending, all their robes of glory having vanished save a single thread. Then shall Franklin be known only as having said, "Don't give too much for the Whistle;" Patrick Henry for his "Give me Liberty or give me Death;" Washington for his "In Peace prepare for War;" Jefferson for his "All men are [Pg 153] created equal;" and General Taylor shall be known only by his attributes rough and ready, and for his aphorism, "Give 'em hell, damn 'em." Yet he does not seem to be a ferocious man, but generous and kindly, it is said, and strongly opposed to this particular war, whose "natural justice" it seems he looked at, and which he thought was wicked at the beginning, though, on that account, he was none the less ready to fight it.

One thing more I must mention in speaking of the cost of men. According to the Report quoted just now, 4,966 American soldiers had deserted in Mexico. Some of them had joined the Mexican army. When the American commissioners, who were sent to secure the ratification of the treaty, went to Queretaro, they found there a body of 200 American soldiers, and 800 more were at no great distance, mustered into the Mexican service. These men, it seems, had served out their time in the American camp, and notwithstanding they had, as the President says in his message, "covered themselves with imperishable honors," by fighting men who never injured them, they were willing to go and seek a yet thicker mantle of this imperishable honor, by fighting against their own country! Why should they not? If it were right to kill Mexicans for a few dollars a month, why was it not also right to kill Americans, especially when it pays the most? Perhaps it is [Pg 154] not an American habit to inquire into the justice of a war, only into the profit which it may bring. If the Mexicans pay best, in money, these 1,000 soldiers made a good speculation. No doubt in Mexico military glory is at a premium, though it could hardly command a greater price just now than in America, where, however, the supply seems equal to the demand.

The numerous desertions and the readiness with which the soldiers joined the "foe," show plainly the moral character of the men, and the degree of "patriotism" and "humanity" which animated them in going to war. You know the severity of military discipline; the terrible beatings men are subjected to before they can become perfect in the soldier's art; the horrible and revolting punishments imposed on them for drunkenness, though little pains were taken to keep the temptation from their eyes, and for disobedience of general orders. You have read enough of this in the newspapers. The officers of the volunteers, I am told, have generally been men of little education, men of strong passions and bad habits; many of them abandoned men, who belonged to the refuse of society. Such men run into an army as the wash of the street runs into the sewers. When such a man gets clothed with a little authority, in time of peace, you know what use he makes of it; but when he covers himself with the "imperishable honors" of his official coat, gets an epaulette on his shoulder, a sword by his side, a commission in his pocket, and visions of [Pg 155] "glory" in his head, you may easily judge how he will use his authority, or may read in the newspapers how he has used it. When there are brutal soldiers, commanded by brutal captains, it is to be supposed that much brutality is to be suffered.

Now desertion is a great offence in a soldier; in this army it is one of the most common; for nearly ten per cent of the American army has deserted in Mexico, not to mention the desertions before

the army reached that country. It is related that forty-eight men were hanged at once for desertion; not hanged as you judicially murder men in time of peace, privately, as if ashamed of the deed, in the corner of a jail, and by a contrivance which shortens the agony, and makes death humane as possible. These forty-eight men were hanged slowly; put to death with painful procrastinations, their agony wilfully prolonged, and death embittered by needless ferocity. But that is not all: it is related, that these men were doomed to be thus murdered on the day when the battle of Churubusco took place. These men, awaiting their death, were told they should not suffer till the American flag should wave its stripes over the hostile walls. So they were kept in suspense an hour, and then slowly hanged one by one. You know the name of the officer on whom this barbarity rests: it was Colonel Harney, a man whose reputation was black enough and base [Pg 156] enough before. His previous deeds, however, require no mention here. But this man is now a General, and so on the high road to the Presidency, whenever it shall please our Southern masters to say the word. Some accounts say there were more than forty-eight who thus were hanged. I only give the number of those whose names lie printed before me as I write. Perhaps the number was less; it is impossible to obtain exact information in respect to the matter, for the Government has not yet published an account of the punishments inflicted in this war. The information can only be obtained by a "Resolution" of either house of Congress, and so is not likely to be had before the election. But at the same time with the execution, other deserters were scourged with fifty lashes each, branded with a letter D, a perpetual mark of infamy on their cheek, compelled to wear an iron yoke, weighing eight pounds, about their neck. Six men were made to dig the grave of their companions, and were then flogged with two hundred lashes each.

I wish this hanging of forty-eight men could have taken place in State street, and the respectable citizens of Boston, who like this war, had been made to look on and see it all; that they had seen those poor culprits bid farewell to father, mother, wife, or child, looking wistfully for the hour which was to end their torment, and then, one by one, have seen them slowly hanged to death; [Pg 157] that your representative, ye men of Boston, had put on all the halters! He did help put them on; that infamous vote, I speak not of the motive, it may have been as honorable as the vote itself was infamous, doomed these eight and forty men to be thus murdered.

Yes, I wish all this killing of the 2,000 Americans on the field of battle, and the 10,000 Mexicans; all this slashing of the bodies of 24,000 wounded men; all the agony of the other 18,000 that have died of disease, could have taken place in some spot where the President of the United States and his Cabinet, where all the Congress who voted for the war, with the Baltimore conventions of '44 and '48, and the Whig convention of Philadelphia, and the controlling men of both political parties, who care nothing for this bloodshed and misery they have idly caused, could have stood and seen it all; and then that the voice of the whole nation had come up to them and said, "This is your work, not ours. Certainly we will not shed our blood, nor our brothers' blood, to get never so much slave territory. It was bad enough to fight in the cause of freedom. In the cause of slavery—God forgive us for that! We have trusted you thus far, but please God we never will trust you again."

Let us now look at the effect of this war on the morals of the nation. The Revolutionary war was [Pg 158] the contest for a great idea. If there were ever a just war it was that, a contest for national existence. Yet it brought out many of the worst qualities of human nature on both sides, as well as some of the best. It helped make a Washington, it is true, but a Benedict Arnold likewise. A war with a powerful nation, terrible as it must be, yet develops the energy of the people, promotes self-denial, and helps the growth of some qualities of a high order. It had this effect in England from 1798 to 1815. True, England for that time became a despotism, but the self-consciousness of the nation, its self-denial and energy were amazingly stimulated; the moral effect of that series of wars was doubtless far better than of the infamous contest which she has kept up against Ireland for many years. Let us give even war its due: when a great boy fights with an equal, it may develop his animal courage and strength—for he gets as bad as he gives, but when he only beats a little boy that cannot pay back his blows, it is cowardly as well as cruel, and doubly debasing to the conqueror. Mexico was no match for America. We all knew that very well before the war begun. When a nation numbering 8,000,000 or 9,000,000 of people can be successfully invaded by an army of 75,000 men, two thirds of them volunteers, raw, and undisciplined; when the invaders with less than 15,000 can march two hundred miles into the very heart of the hostile country, and with less than 6,000 can take and hold the capital of the [Pg 159] nation, a city of 100,000 or 200,000 inhabitants, and dictate a peace, taking as much territory as they will—it is hardly fair to dignify such operations with the name of war. The little good which a long contest with an equal might produce in the conqueror, is wholly lost. Had Mexico been a strong nation we should never have had this conflict. A few years ago, when General Cass wanted a war with England, "an old-fashioned war," and declared it "unavoidable," all the men of property trembled. The northern men thought of their mills and their ships; they thought how Boston and New York would look after a war with our sturdy old father over the sea; they thought we should lose many millions of dollars and gain nothing. The men of the South, who have no mills and no ships and no large cities to be destroyed, thought of their "peculiar institution;" they thought of a servile war; they thought what might become of their slaves, if a nation which gave $100,000,000 to emancipate her bondmen should send a large army with a few black soldiers from Jamaica; should offer money, arms, and freedom to all who would leave their masters and claim their unalienable rights. They knew the southern towns would be burnt to ashes, and the

whole South, from Virginia to the Gulf, would be swept with fire, and they said, "Don't." The North said so, and the South; they feared such a war, with such a foe. Everybody knows the [Pg 160] effect which this fear had on southern politicians, in the beginning of this century, and how gladly they made peace with England soon as she was at liberty to turn her fleet and her army against the most vulnerable part of the nation. I am not blind to the wickedness of England more than ignorant of the good things she has done and is doing; a Paradise for the rich and strong, she is still a Purgatory for the wise and the good, and the Hell of the poor and the weak. I have no fondness for war anywhere, and believe it needless and wanton in this age of the world, surely needless and wicked between Father England and Daughter America; but I do solemnly believe that the moral effect of such an old-fashioned war as Mr. Cass in 1845 thought unavoidable, would have been better than that of this Mexican war. It would have ended slavery; ended it in blood no doubt, the worst thing to blot out an evil with, but ended it and for ever. God grant it may yet have a more peaceful termination. We should have lost millions of property and thousands of men, and then, when peace came, we should know what it was worth; and as the burnt child dreads the fire, no future President, or Congress, or Convention, or Party would talk much in favor of war for some years to come.

The moral effect of this war is thoroughly bad. It was unjust in the beginning. Mexico did not pay her debts; but though the United States, in 1783, acknowledged the British claims against [Pg 161] ourselves, they were not paid till 1803. Our claims against England, for her depredations in 1793, were not paid till 1804; our claims against France, for her depredations in 1806-13, were not paid us till 1834. The fact that Mexico refused to receive the resident Minister which the United States sent to settle the disputes, when a commissioner was expected—this was no ground of war. We have lately seen a British ambassador ordered to leave Spain within eight and forty hours, and yet the English Minister of foreign affairs, Lord Palmerston, no new hand at diplomacy, declares that this does not interrupt the concord of the two nations! We treated Mexico contemptuously before hostilities began; and when she sent troops into a territory which she had always possessed, though Texas had claimed it, we declared that that was an act of war, and ourselves sent an army to invade her soil, to capture her cities, and seize her territory. It has been a war of plunder, undertaken for the purpose of seizing Mexican territory, and extending over it that dismal curse which blackens, impoverishes, and barbarizes half the Union now, and swiftly corrupts the other half. It was not enough to have Louisiana a slave territory; not enough to make that institution perpetual in Florida; not enough to extend this blight over Texas—we must have yet more slave soil, one day to be carved into Slave States, to bind the Southern yoke [Pg 162] yet more securely on the Northern neck; to corrupt yet more the politics, literature, and morals of the North. The war was unjust at its beginning; mean in its motives, a war without honorable cause; a war for plunder; a quarrel between a great boy and a little puny weakling who could not walk alone, and could hardly stand. We have treated Mexico as the three Northern powers treated Poland in the last century—stooped to conquer. Nay, our contest has been like the English seizure of Ireland. All the justice was on one side, the force, skill, and wealth on the other.

I know men say the war has shown us that Americans could fight. Could fight!—almost every male beast will fight, the more brutal the better. The long war of the Revolution, when Connecticut, for seven years, kept 5,000 men in the field, showed that Americans could fight; Bunker Hill and Lexington showed that they could fight, even without previous discipline. If such valor be a merit, I am ready to believe that the Americans, in a great cause like that of Mexico, to resist wicked invasion, would fight as men never fought before. A republic like our own, where every free man feels an interest in the welfare of the nation, is full of the elements that make soldiers. Is that a praise? Most men think so, but it is the smallest honor of a nation. Of all glories, military glory, at its best estate, seems the poorest.

Men tell us it shows the strength of the nation and some writers quote the opinions of European [Pg 163] kings who, when hearing of the battles of Monterey, Buena Vista, and Vera Cruz, became convinced that we were "a great people." Remembering the character of these kings, one can easily believe that such was their judgment, and will not sigh many times at their fate, but will hope to see the day when the last king who can estimate a nation's strength only by its battles, has passed on to impotence and oblivion. The power of America—do we need proof of that? I see it in the streets of Boston and New York; in Lowell and in Lawrence; I see it in our mills and our ships; I read it in those letters of iron written all over the North, where he may read that runs; I see it in the unconquered energy which tames the forest, the rivers, and the ocean; in the school-houses which lift their modest roof in every village of the North; in the churches that rise all over the freeman's land: would God that they rose higher, pointing down to man and to human duties, and up to God and immortal life! I see the strength of America in that tide of population which spreads over the prairies of the West, and, beating on the Rocky Mountains, dashes its peaceful spray to the very shores of the Pacific sea. Had we taken 150,000 men and $200,000,000, and built two railroads across the continent, that would have been a worthy sign of the nation's strength. Perhaps those kings could not see it; but sensible men could see it and be glad. This [Pg 164] waste of treasure and this waste of blood is only a proof of weakness. War is a transient weakness of the nation, but slavery a permanent imbecility.

What falsehood has this war produced in the executive and legislative power; in both parties, whigs and democrats! I always thought that here in Massachusetts the whigs were the most to blame; they tried to put the disgrace of the war on the others, while the democratic party coolly faced the wickedness. Did far-sighted men know that there would be a war on Mexico, or else on the tariff or the currency, and prefer the first as the least evil?

See to what the war has driven two of the most famous men of the nation: one wished to "capture or slay a Mexican;"[12] the other could encourage the volunteers to fight a war which he had denounced as needless, "a war of pretexts," and place the men of Monterey before the men of Bunker Hill;[13] each could invest a son in that unholy cause. You know the rest: the fathers ate sour grapes, and the children's teeth were set on edge. When a man goes on board an emigrant ship, reeking with filth and fever, not for gain, not for "glory," but in brotherly love, catches the contagion, and dies a martyr to his heroic benevolence, men speak of it in corners, and it is soon [Pg 165] forgot; there is no parade in the streets; society takes little pains to do honor to the man. How rarely is a pension given to his widow or his child; only once in the whole land, and then but a small sum.[14] But when a volunteer officer—for of the humbler and more excusable men that fall we take no heed, war may mow that crop of "vulgar deaths" with what scythe he will—falls or dies in the quarrel which he had no concern in, falls in a broil between the two nations, your newspapers extol the man, and with martial pomp, "sonorous metal blowing martial sounds," with all the honors of the most honored dead, you lay away his body in the tomb. Thus is it that the nation teaches these little ones, that it is better to kill than to make alive.

I know there are men in the army, honorable and high-minded men, Christian men, who dislike war in general, and this war in special, but such is their view of official duty, that they obeyed the summons of battle, though with pain and reluctance. They knew not how to avoid obedience. I am willing to believe there are many such. But with volunteers, who, of their own accord, came forth to enlist, men not blinded by ignorance, not driven by poverty to the field, but only by hope of reward—what shall be said of them! Much may be said to excuse the rank and file, ignorant men, [Pg 166] many of them in want—but for the leaders, what can be said? Had I a brother who, in the day of the nation's extremity, came forward with a good conscience, and perilled his life on the battle field, and lost it "in the sacred cause of God and his country," I would honor the man, and when his dust came home, I would lay it away with his fathers'; with sorrow indeed, but with thankfulness of heart, that for conscience' sake he was ready even to die. But had I a brother who, merely for his pay, or hope of fame, had voluntarily gone down to fight innocent men, to plunder their territory, and lost his life in that felonious essay—in sorrow and in silence, and in secrecy would I lay down his body in the grave; I would not court display, nor mark it with a single stone.

See how this war has affected public opinion. How many of your newspapers have shown its true atrocity; how many of the pulpits? Yet, if any one is appointed to tell of public wrongs, it is the minister of religion. The Governor of Massachusetts[15] is an officer of a Christian church; a man distinguished for many excellences, some of them by no means common: it is said, he is opposed to the war in private, and thinks it wicked; but no man has lent himself as a readier tool to promote it. The Christian and the man seem lost in the office, in the Governor! What a lesson of [Pg 167] falseness does all this teach to that large class of persons who look no higher than the example of eminent men for their instruction. You know what complaints have been made, by the highest authority in the nation, because a few men dared to speak against the war. It was "affording aid and comfort to the enemy." If the war-party had been stronger, and feared no public opinion, we should have had men hanged for treason, because they spoke of this national iniquity! Nothing would have been easier. A "gag law" is not wholly unknown in America.

If you will take all the theft, all the assaults, all the cases of arson, ever committed in time of peace in the United States since the settlement of Jamestown in 1608, and add to them all the cases of violence offered to woman, with all the murders, they will not amount to half the wrongs committed in this war for the plunder of Mexico. Yet the cry has been and still is, "You must not say a word against it; if you do, you 'afford aid and comfort to the enemy.'" Not tell the nation that she is doing wrong? What a miserable saying is that; let it come from what high authority it may, it is a miserable saying. Make the case your own. Suppose the United States were invaded by a nation ten times abler for war than we are, with a cause no more just, intentions equally bad; invaded for the purpose of dismembering our territory and making our own New England [Pg 168] the soil of slaves; would you be still? would you stand and look on tamely while the hostile hosts, strangers in language, manners, and religion, crossed your rivers, seized your ports, burnt your towns? No, surely not. Though the men of New England would not be able to resist with most celestial love, they would contend with most manly vigor; and I should rather see every house swept clean off the land, and the ground sheeted with our own dead; rather see every man, woman, and child in the land slain, than see them tamely submit to such a wrong: and so would you. No, sacred as life is and dear as it is, better let it be trodden out by the hoof of war, rather than yield tamely to a wrong. But while you were doing your utmost to repel such formidable injustice, if in the midst of your invaders men rose up and said, "America is in the right, and brothers, you are wrong, you should not thus kill men to steal their land; shame on you!" how should you feel towards such? Nay, in the struggle with England, when our fathers perilled every thing but honor, and fought for the unalienable rights of man, you all remember, how in England herself there stood up noble men, and with a voice that was heard above the roar of the populace, and an authority higher than the majesty of the throne they said, "You do a wrong; you may ravage, but you cannot conquer. If I were an American, while a foreign troop remained in my [Pg 169] land, I would never lay down my arms; no, never, never, never!"

But I wander a little from my theme, the effect of the war on the morals of the nation. Here are 50,000 or 75,000 men trained to kill. Hereafter they will be of little service in any good work. Many of them were the off-scouring of the people at first. Now these men have tasted the idleness, the intemperance, the debauchery of a camp; tasted of its riot, tasted of its blood! They

will come home before long, hirelings of murder. What will their influence be as fathers, husbands? The nation taught them to fight and plunder the Mexicans for the nation's sake; the Governor of Massachusetts called on them in the name of "patriotism" and "humanity" to enlist for that work: but if, with no justice on our side, it is humane and patriotic to fight and plunder the Mexicans on the nation's account, why not for the soldier to fight and plunder an American on his own account? Ay, why not?—that is a distinction too nice for common minds; by far too nice for mine.

See the effect on the nation. We have just plundered Mexico; taken a piece of her territory larger than the thirteen states which fought the Revolution, a hundred times as large as Massachusetts; we have burnt her cities, have butchered her men, have been victorious in every contest. The Mexicans were as unprotected women, we, armed men. See how the lust of conquest will [Pg 170] increase. Soon it will be the ambition of the next President to extend the "area of freedom" a little further south; the lust of conquest will increase. Soon we must have Yucatan, Central America, all of Mexico, Cuba, Porto Rico, Hayti, Jamaica,—all the islands of the Gulf. Many men would gladly, I doubt not, extend the "area of freedom" so as to include the free blacks of those islands. We have long looked with jealous eyes on West Indian emancipation—hoping the scheme would not succeed. How pleasant it would be to reëstablish slavery in Hayti and Jamaica, in all the islands whence the gold of England or the ideas of France have driven it out. If the South wants this, would the North object? The possession of the West Indies would bring much money to New England, and what is the value of freedom compared to coffee and sugar and cotton?

I must say one word of the effect this war has had on political parties. By the parties I mean the leaders thereof, the men that control the parties. The effect on the democratic party, on the majority of Congress, on the most prominent men of the nation, has been mentioned before. It has shut their eyes to truth and justice; it has filled their mouths with injustice and falsehood. It has made one man "available" for the Presidency who was only known before as a sagacious general, that fought against the Indians in Florida, and acquired a certain reputation by the use [Pg 171] of bloodhounds, a reputation which was rather unenviable even in America. The battles in northern Mexico made him conspicuous, and now he is seized on as an engine to thrust one corrupt party out of power, and to lift in another party, I will not say less corrupt, I wish I could; it were difficult to think it more so. This latter party has been conspicuous for its opposition to a military man as ruler of a free people; recently it has been smitten with sudden admiration for military men, and military success, and tells the people, without a blush, that a military man fresh from a fight which he disapproved of, is most likely to restore peace, "because most familiar with the evils of war!" In Massachusetts the prevalent political party, as such, for some years seems to have had no moral principle; however, it had a prejudice in favor of decency: now it has thrown that overboard, and has not even its respectability left. Where are its "Resolutions?" Some men knew what they were worth long ago; now all men can see what they are worth.

The cost of the war in money and men I have tried to calculate, but the effect on the morals of the people, on the press, the pulpit, and the parties, and through them on the rising generation, it is impossible to tell. I have only faintly sketched the outline of that. The effect of the war on Mexico herself, we can dimly see in the distance. The Government of the United States has wilfully, wantonly broken the peace of the continent. The Revolutionary war was unavoidable; but for this [Pg 172] invasion there is no excuse. That God, whose providence watches over the falling nation as the falling sparrow, and whose comprehensive plans are now advanced by the righteousness and now by the wrath of man, He who stilleth the waves of the sea and the tumult of the people, will turn all this wickedness to account in the history of man,—of that I have no doubt. But that is no excuse for American crime. A greater good lay within our grasp, and we spurned it away.

Well, before long the soldiers will come back, such as shall ever come—the regulars and volunteers, the husbands of the women whom your charity fed last winter, housed and clad and warmed. They will come back. Come, New England, with your posterity of States, go forth to meet your sons returning all "covered with imperishable honors." Come, men, to meet your fathers, brothers. Come, women, to your husbands and your lovers; come. But what! is that the body of men who a year or two ago went forth, so full of valor and of rum? Are these rags the imperishable honors that cover them? Here is not half the whole. Where is the wealth they hoped from the spoil of churches? But the men—"Where is my husband?" says one; "And my son?" says another. "They fell at Jalapa, one, and one at Cerro Gordo; but they fell covered with imperishable honor, for 'twas a famous victory." "Where is my lover?" screams a woman whom [Pg 173] anguish makes respectable spite of her filth and ignorance;—"And our father, where is he?" scream a troop of half-starved children, staring through their dirt and rags. "One died of the vomit at Vera Cruz. Your father, little ones, we scourged the naked man to death at Mixcoac."

But that troop which is left, who are in the arms of wife and child, they are the best sermon against war; this has lost an arm and that a leg; half are maimed in battle, or sickened with the fever; all polluted with the drunkenness, idleness, debauchery, lust, and murder of a camp. Strip off this man's coat, and count the stripes welted into his flesh, stripes laid on by demagogues that love the people, "the dear people!" See how affectionately the war-makers branded the "dear soldiers" with a letter D, with a red-hot iron, in the cheek. The flesh will quiver as the irons burn; no matter: it is only for love of the people that all this is done, and we are all of us covered with imperishable honors! D stands for deserter,—aye, and for demagogue—yes, and for demon too. Many a man shall come home with but half of himself, half his body, less than half his soul.

> "Alas, the mother that him bare,
> If she could stand in presence there,

In that wan cheek and wasted air,
She would not know her child."

[Pg 174]

"Better," you say, "for us better, and for themselves better by far, if they had left that remnant of a body in the common ditch where the soldier finds his 'bed of honor;' better have fed therewith the vultures of a foreign soil, than thus come back." No, better come back, and live here, mutilated, scourged, branded, a cripple, a pauper, a drunkard, and a felon; better darken the windows of the jail and blot the gallows with unusual shame, to teach us all that such is war, and such the results of every "famous victory," such the imperishable honors that it brings, and how the war-makers love the men they rule!

O Christian America! O New England, child of the Puritans! Cradled in the wilderness, thy swaddling garments stained with martyrs' blood, hearing in thy youth the warwhoop of the savage and thy mother's sweet and soul-composing hymn:

"Hush, my child, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed;
Heavenly blessings, without number,
Rest upon thine infant head:"

Come, New England, take the old banners of thy conquering host, the standards borne at Monterey, Palo Alto, Buena Vista, Vera Cruz, the "glorious stripes and stars" that waved over the walls of Churubusco, Contreras, Puebla, Mexico herself, flags blackened with battle and stiffened with blood, pierced by the lances and torn with the shot; bring them into thy churches, hang them up over altar and pulpit, and let little children, clad in white raiment and crowned with flowers, come and chant their lessons for the day:

[Pg 175]

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Then let the priest say, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach unto any people. Blessed is the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight. Happy is that people that is in such a case. Yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord, and Jesus Christ their Saviour."

Then let the soldiers who lost their limbs and the women who lost their husbands and their lovers in the strife, and the men—wiser than the children of light—who made money out of the war; let all the people, like people and like priest, say "Amen."

But suppose these men were to come back to Boston on a day when, in civil style, as having never sinned yourself, and never left a man in ignorance and want to be goaded into crime, you were about to hang three men—one for murder, one for robbery with the armed hand, and one for burning down a house. Suppose, after the fashion of "the good old times," you were to hang those men in public, and lead them in long procession through your streets, and while you were welcoming these returned soldiers and taking their officers to feast in "the Cradle of Liberty," they should meet the sheriff's procession escorting those culprits to the gallows. Suppose the warriors should ask, "Why, what is that?" What would you say? Why, this: "These men, they broke the law of God, by violence, by fire and blood, and we shall hang them for the public good, and especially for the example, to teach the ignorant, the low, and the weak." Suppose those three felons, the halters round their neck, should ask also, "Why, what is that?" You would say, "They are the soldiers just come back from war. For two long years they have been hard at work, burning cities, plundering a nation, and butchering whole armies of men. Sometimes they killed a thousand in a day. By their help, the nation has stolen seven hundred thousand square miles of land!" Suppose the culprits ask, "Where will you hang so many?" "Hang them!" is the answer, "we shall only hang you. It is written in our Bible that one murder makes a villain, millions a hero. We shall feast these men full of bread and wine; shall take their leader, a rough man and a ready, one who by perpetual robbery holds a hundred slaves and more, and make him a king over all the land. But as you only burnt, robbed, and murdered on so small a scale, and without the command of the President or the Congress, we shall hang you by the neck. Our Governor ordered these men to go and burn and rob and kill; now he orders you to be hanged, and you must not ask any more questions, for the hour is already come."

[Pg 176]

[Pg 177]

To make the whole more perfect—suppose a native of Loo-Choo, converted to Christianity by your missionaries in his native land, had come hither to have "the way of God" "expounded unto him more perfectly," that he might see how these Christians love one another. Suppose he should be witness to a scene like this!

To men who know the facts of war, the wickedness of this particular invasion and its wide-extending consequences, I fear that my words will seem poor and cold and tame. I have purposely mastered my emotion, telling only my thought. I have uttered no denunciation against the men who caused this destruction of treasure, this massacre of men, this awful degradation of

the moral sense. The respectable men of Boston—"the men of property and standing" all over the State, the men that commonly control the politics of New England, tell you that they dislike the war. But they reëlect the men who made it. Has a single man in all New England lost his seat in any office because he favored the war? Not a man. Have you ever known a northern merchant [Pg 178] who would not let his ship for the war, because the war was wicked and he a Christian? Have you ever known a northern manufacturer who would not sell a kernel of powder, nor a cannon-ball, nor a coat, nor a shirt for the war? Have you ever known a capitalist, a man who lives by letting money, refuse to lend money for the war because the war was wicked? Not a merchant, not a manufacturer, not a capitalist. A little money—it can buy up whole hosts of men. Virginia sells her negroes; what does New England sell? There was once a man in Boston, a rich man too, not a very great man, only a good one who loved his country, and there was another poor man here, in the times that tried men's souls,—but there was not money enough in all England, not enough promise of honors, to make Hancock and Adams false to their sense of right. Is our soil degenerate, and have we lost the breed of noble men?

No, I have not denounced the men who directly made the war, or indirectly edged the people on. Pardon me, thou prostrate Mexico, robbed of more than half thy soil, that America may have more slaves; thy cities burned, thy children slain, the streets of thy capital trodden by the alien foot, but still smoking with thy children's blood: pardon me if I seem to have forgotten thee! And you, ye butchered Americans, slain by the vomito, the gallows, and the sword; you, ye maimed and mutilated men, who shall never again join hands in prayer, never kneel to God once more [Pg 179] upon the limbs he made you; you, ye widows, orphans of these butchered men, far off in that more sunny South, here in our own fair land, pardon me that I seem to forget your wrongs! And thou, my Country, my own, my loved, my native land, thou child of great ideas and mother of many a noble son, dishonored now, thy treasure wasted, thy children killed or else made murderers, thy peaceful glory gone, thy Government made to pimp and pander for lust of crime, forgive me that I seem over-gentle to the men who did and do the damning deed which wastes thy treasure, spills thy blood, and stains thine honor's sacred fold! And you, ye sons of men everywhere, thou child of God, Mankind, whose latest, fairest hope is planted here in this new world,—forgive me if I seem gentle to thy enemies, and to forget the crime that so dishonors man, and makes this ground a slaughter-yard of men—slain, too, in furtherance of the basest wish! I have no words to tell the pity that I feel for them that did the deed. I only say, "Father, forgive them, for they know full well the sin they do!"

A sectarian church could censure a General for holding his candle in a Catholic cathedral; it was "a candle to the Pope"; yet never dared to blame the war. While we loaded a ship of war with corn and sent off the Macedonian to Cork, freighted by private bounty to feed the starving [Pg 180] Irishman, the State sent her ships to Vera Cruz, in a cause most unholy, to bombard, to smite, and to kill. Father! forgive the State; forgive the church. It was an ignorant State. It was a silent church—a poor, dumb dog, that dared not bark at the wolf who prowls about the fold, but only at the lamb.

Yet ye leaders of the land, know this,—that the blood of thirty thousand men cries out of the ground against you. Be it your folly or your crime, still cries the voice, "Where is thy brother?" That thirty thousand—in the name of humanity I ask, "Where are they?" In the name of justice I answer, "You slew them!"

It was not the people who made this war. They have often enough done a foolish thing. But it was not they who did this wrong. It was they who led the people; it was demagogues that did it. Whig demagogues and demagogues of the democrats; men that flatter the ignorance, the folly, or the sin of the people, that they might satisfy their own base purposes. In May, 1846, if the facts of the case could have been stated to the voters, and the question put to the whole mass of the people, "Shall we go down and fight Mexico, spending two hundred million of dollars, maiming four and twenty thousand men, and butchering thirty thousand; shall we rob her of half her territory?"—the lowest and most miserable part of the nation would have said as they did say, [Pg 181] "Yes;" the demagogues of the nation would have said as they did say, "Yes;" perhaps a majority of the men of the South would have said so, for the humanity of the nation lies not there; but if it had been brought to the great mass of the people at the North,—whose industry and skill so increase the national wealth, whose intelligence and morals have given the nation its character abroad,—then they, the great majority of the land, would have said "No. We will have no war! If we want more land, we will buy it in the open market, and pay for it honestly. But we are not thieves, nor murderers, thank God, and will not butcher a nation to make a slave-field out of her soil." The people would not have made this war.

Well, we have got a new territory, enough to make one hundred States of the size of Massachusetts. That is not all. We have beaten the armies of Mexico, destroyed the little strength she had left, the little self-respect, else she would not so have yielded and given up half her soil for a few miserable dollars. Soon we shall take the rest of her possessions. How can Mexico hold them now—weakened, humiliated, divided worse than ever within herself. Before many years, all of this northern continent will doubtless be in the hands of the Anglo Saxon race. That of itself is not a thing to mourn at. Could we have extended our empire there by trade, by the Christian arts [Pg 182] of peace, it would be a blessing to us and to Mexico; a blessing to the world. But we have done it in the worst way, by fraud and blood; for the worst purpose, to steal soil and convert the cities of men into the shambles for human flesh; have done it at the bidding of men whose counsels long

have been a scourge and a curse—at the bidding of slaveholders. They it is that rule the land, fill the offices, buy up the North with the crumbs that fall from their political table, make the laws, declare hostilities, and leave the North to pay the bill. Shall we ever waken out of our sleep; shall we ever remember the duties we owe to the world and to God, who put us here on this new continent? Let us not despair.

Soon we shall have all the southern part of the continent, perhaps half the islands of the Gulf. One thing remains to do—that is, with the new soil we have taken, to extend order, peace, education, religion; to keep it from the blight, the crime, and the sin of slavery. That is for the nation to do; for the North to do. God knows the South will never do it. Is there manliness enough left in the North to do that? Has the soil forgot its wonted faith, and borne a different race of men from those who struggled eight long years for freedom? Do we forget our sires, forget our God? In the day when the monarchs of Europe are shaken from their thrones; when the Russian and the Turk abolish slavery; when cowardly Naples awakes from her centuries of sleep, and will [Pg 183] have freedom; when France prays to become a Republic, and in her agony sweats great drops of blood; while the Tories of the world look on and mock and wag their heads; and while the Angel of Hope descends with trusting words to comfort her,—shall America extend slavery? butcher a nation to get soil to make a field for slaves? I know how easily the South can buy office-hunters; whig or democrat, the price is still the same. The same golden eagle blinds the eyes of each. But can she buy the people of the North? Is honesty gone, and honor gone, your love of country gone, religion gone, and nothing manly left; not even shame? Then let us perish; let the Union perish! No, let that stand firm, and let the Northern men themselves be slaves; and let us go to our masters and say, "You are very few, we are very many; we have the wealth, the numbers, the intelligence, the religion of the land; but you have the power, do not be hard upon us; pray give us a little something, some humble offices, or if not these at least a tariff, and we will be content."

Slavery has already been the blight of this nation, the curse of the North and the curse of the South. It has hindered commerce, manufactures, agriculture. It confounds your politics. It has silenced your ablest men. It has muzzled the pulpit, and stifled the better life out of the press. It has robbed three million men of what is dearer than life; it has kept back the welfare of [Pg 184] seventeen millions more. You ask, O Americans, where is the harmony of the Union? It was broken by slavery. Where is the treasure we have wasted? It was squandered by slavery. Where are the men we sent to Mexico? They were murdered by slavery; and now the slave power comes forward to put her new minions, her thirteenth President, upon the nation's neck! Will the North say "Yes?"

But there is a Providence which rules the world,—a plan in His affairs. Shall all this war, this aggression of the slave power be for nothing? Surely not. Let it teach us two things: Everlasting hostility to slavery; everlasting love of Justice and of its Eternal Right. Then, dear as we may pay for it, it may be worth what it has cost—the money and the men. I call on you, ye men—fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, to learn this lesson, and, when duty calls, to show that you know it—know it by heart and at your fingers' ends! And you, ye women—mothers, sisters, daughters, wives, I call on you to teach this lesson to your children, and let them know that such a war is sin, and slavery sin, and, while you teach them to hate both, teach them to be men, and do the duties of noble, Christian, and manly men! Behind injustice there is ruin, and above man there is the everlasting God.

FOOTNOTES:

[10] In the Massachusetts Quarterly Review, Vol. I. Article I. See also the paper on the administration of Mr. Polk, in Vol. III. Art. VIII.

[11] Mr. Trist introduced these articles into the treaty, without having instructions from the American Government to do so; the honor, therefore, is wholly due to him. There were some in the Senate who opposed these articles.

[12] See Mr. Clay's speech at the dinner in New Orleans on Forefathers' day.

[13] See Mr. Webster's speech to the volunteers at Philadelphia.

[14] A case of this sort had just occurred in Boston.

[15] Mr. George N. Briggs.

VI. [Pg 185]

A SERMON OF THE PERISHING CLASSES IN BOSTON.—PREACHED AT THE MELODEON, ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 30, 1846.

MATTHEW XVIII. 14.

It is not the will of our Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

There are two classes of men who are weak and little: one is little by nature, consisting of such as are born with feeble powers, not strongly capable of self-help; the other is little by position, comprising men that are permanently poor and ignorant. When Jesus said, It is not God's will that one of these little ones should perish, I take it he included both these classes—men little by nature, and men little by position. Furthermore, I take it he said what is true, that it is not God's will one of these little ones should perish. Now, a man may be said to perish when he is ruined, or even when he fails to attain the degree of manhood he might attain under the average circumstances of this present age, and these present men. In a society like ours, and that of all [Pg 186] nations at this time, as hitherto, with such a history, a history of blood and violence, cunning and fraud; resting on such a basis—a basis of selfishness; a society wherein there is a preference of the mighty, and a postponement of the righteous, where power is worshipped and justice little honored, though much talked of, it comes to pass that a great many little ones from both these classes actually perish. If Jesus spoke the truth, then they perish contrary to the will of God, and, of course, by some other will adverse to the will of God. In a society where the natural laws of the body are constantly violated, where many men are obliged by circumstances to violate them, it follows unavoidably that many are born little by nature, and they transmit their feebleness to their issue. The other class, men little by position, are often so hedged about with difficulties, so neglected, that they cannot change their condition; they bequeath also their littleness to their children. Thus the number of little ones enlarges with the increase of society. This class becomes perpetual; a class of men mainly abandoned by the Christians.

In all forms of social life hitherto devised these classes have appeared, and it has been a serious question, What shall be done with them? Seldom has it been the question, What shall be done for them? In olden time the Spartans took children born with a weak or imperfect body, children who [Pg 187] would probably be a hinderance to the nation, and threw them into a desert place to be devoured by the wild beasts, and so settled that question. At this day, the Chinese, I am told, expose such children in the streets and beside the rivers, to the humanity of passers by; and not only such, but sound, healthy children, none the less, who, though strong by nature, are born into a weak position. Many of them are left to die, especially the boys. But some are saved, those mainly girls. I will not say they are saved by the humanity of wealthier men. They become slaves, devoted by their masters to a most base and infamous purpose. With the exception of criminals, these abandoned daughters of the poor, form, it is said, the only class of slaves in that great country.

Neither the Chinese nor the Spartan method is manly or human. It does with the little ones, not for them. It does away with them, and that is all. I will not decide which is the worst of the two modes, the Chinese or the Spartan. We are accustomed to call both these nations heathen, and take it for granted they do not know it is God's will that not one of these little ones should perish. Be that as it may, we do not call ourselves heathen; we pretend to know the will of God in this particular. Let us look, therefore, and see how we have disposed of the little ones in Boston, what we are doing for them or with them. [Pg 188]

Let me begin with neglected and abandoned children. We all know how large and beautiful a provision is made for the public education of the people. About a fourth part of the city taxes are for the public schools. Yet one not familiar with this place is astonished at the number of idle, vagrant boys and girls in the streets. It appears from the late census of Boston, that there are 4,948 children between four and fifteen who attend no school. I am not speaking of truants, occasional absentees, but of children whose names are not registered at school, permanent absentees. If we allow that 1,948 of these are kept in some sort of restraint by their parents, and have, or have had, some little pains taken with their culture at home; that they are feeble and do not begin to attend school so early as most, or that they are precocious, and complete their studies before fifteen, or for some other good reason are taken from school, and put to some useful business, there still remain 3,000 children who never attend any school, turned loose into your streets! Suppose there is some error in the counting, that the number is overstated one third, still there are left 2,000 young vagrants in the streets of Boston!

What will be the fate of these 2,000 children? Some men are superior to circumstances; so well born they defy ill breeding. There may be children so excellent and strong they cannot be spoiled. Surely there are some who will learn with no school; boys of vast genius, whom you cannot keep [Pg 189] from learning. Others there are of wonderful moral gifts, whom no circumstances can make vulgar; they will live in the midst of corruption and keep clean through the innate refinement of a wondrous soul. Out of these 2,000 children there may be two of this sort; it were foolish to look for more than one in a thousand. The 1,997 depend mainly on circumstances to help them; yes, to make their character. Send them to school and they will learn. Give them good precepts, good examples, they will also become good. Give them bad precepts, bad examples, and they become wicked. Send them half clad and uncared for into your streets, and they grow up hungry savages greedy for crime.

What have these abandoned children to help them? Nothing, literally nothing! They are idle, though their bodies crave activity. They are poor, ill-clad, and ill-fed. There is nothing about them to foster self-respect; nothing to call forth their conscience, to awaken and cultivate their sense of religion. They find themselves beggars in the wealth of a city; idlers in the midst of its work. Yes, savages in the midst of civilization. Their consciousness is that of an outcast, one abandoned and forsaken of men. In cities, life is intense amongst all classes. So the passions and appetites of

such children are strong and violent. Their taste is low; their wants clamorous. Are religion and conscience there to abate the fever of passion and regulate desire? The moral class and the [Pg 190] cultivated shun these poor wretches, or look on with stupid wonder. Our rule is that the whole need the physician, not the sick. They are left almost entirely to herd and consort with the basest of men; they are exposed early and late to the worst influences, and their only comrades are men whom the children of the rich are taught to shun as the pestilence. To be poor is hard enough in the country, where artificial wants are few, and those easily met, where all classes are humbly clad, and none fare sumptuously every day. But to be poor in the city, where a hundred artificial desires daily claim satisfaction, and where, too, it is difficult for the poor to satisfy the natural and unavoidable wants of food and raiment; to be hungry, ragged, dirty, amid luxury, wantonness and refinement; to be miserable in the midst of abundance, that is hard beyond all power of speech. Look, I will not say at the squalid dress of these children, as you see them prowling about the markets and wharves, or contending in the dirty lanes and by-places into which the pride of Boston has elbowed so much of her misery; look at their faces! Haggard as they are, meagre and pale and wan, want is not the worst thing written there, but cunning, fraud, violence and obscenity, and worst of all, fear!

Amid all the science and refined culture of the nineteenth century, these children learn little; little that is good, much that is bad. In the intense life around them, they unavoidably become [Pg 191] vicious, obscene, deceitful and violent. They will lie, steal, be drunk. How can it be otherwise?

If you could know the life of one of those poor lepers of Boston, you would wonder, and weep. Let me take one of them at random out of the mass. He was born, unwelcome, amid wretchedness and want. His coming increased both. Miserably he struggles through his infancy, less tended than the lion's whelp. He becomes a boy. He is covered only with rags, and those squalid with long accumulated filth. He wanders about your streets, too low even to seek employment, now snatching from a gutter half rotten fruit which the owner flings away. He is ignorant; he has never entered a school-house; to him even the alphabet is a mystery. He is young in years, yet old in misery. There is no hope in his face. He herds with others like himself, low, ragged, hungry and idle. If misery loves company, he finds that satisfaction. Follow him to his home at night; he herds in a cellar; in the same sty with father, mother, brothers, sisters, and perhaps yet other families of like degree. What served him for dress by day, is his only bed by night.

Well, this boy steals some trifle, a biscuit, a bit of rope, or a knife from a shop-window; he is seized and carried to jail. The day comes for trial. He is marched through the streets in handcuffs, the companion of drunkards and thieves, thus deadening the little self-respect which [Pg 192] Nature left even in an outcast's bosom. He sits there chained like a beast; a boy in irons! the sport and mockery of men vulgar as the common sewer. His trial comes. Of course he is convicted. The show of his countenance is witness against him. His rags and dirt, his ignorance, his vagrant habits, his idleness, all testify against him. That face so young, and yet so impudent, so sly, so writ all over with embryo villany, is evidence enough. The jury are soon convinced, for they see his temptations in his look, and surely know that in such a condition men will steal: yes, they themselves would steal. The judge represents the law, and that practically regards it a crime even for a boy to be weak and poor. Much of our common law, it seems to me, is based on might, not right. So he is hurried off to jail at a tender age, and made legally the companion of felons. Now the State has him wholly in her power; by that rough adoption, has made him her own child, and sealed the indenture with the jailer's key. His handcuffs are the symbol of his sonship to the State. She shuts him in her college for the Little. What does that teach him; science, letters; even morals and religion? Little enough of this, even in Boston, and in most counties of Massachusetts, I think, nothing at all, not even a trade which he can practise when his term expires! I have been told a story, and I wish it might be falsely told, of a boy, in this city, of sixteen, sent to the house [Pg 193] of correction for five years because he stole a bunch of keys, and coming out of that jail at twenty-one, unable to write, or read, or calculate, and with no trade but that of picking oakum. Yet he had been five years the child of the State, and in that college for the poor! Who would employ such a youth; with such a reputation; with the smell of the jail in his very breath? Not your shrewd men of business, they know the risk; not your respectable men, members of churches and all that; not they! Why it would hurt a man's reputation for piety to do good in that way. Besides, the risk is great, and it argues a great deal more Christianity than it is popular to have, for a respectable man to employ such a youth. He is forced back into crime again. I say, forced, for honest men will not employ him when the State shoves him out of the jail. Soon you will have him in the court again, to be punished more severely. Then he goes to the State Prison, and then again, and again, till death mercifully ends his career!

Who is to blame for all that? I will ask the best man among the best of you, what he would have become, if thus abandoned, turned out in childhood, and with no culture, into the streets, to herd with the wickedest of men! Somebody says, there are "organic sins" in society which nobody is to blame for. But by this sin organized in society, these vagrant children are training up to become [Pg 194] thieves, pirates and murderers. I cannot blame them. But there is a terrible blame somewhere, for it is not the will of God that one of these little ones should perish. Who is it that organizes the sin of society?

Let us next look at the parents of these vagrants, at the adult poor. It is not easy or needed for this purpose, to define very nicely the limits of a class, and tell where the rich end, and the poor begin. However, men may, in reference to this matter, be divided into three classes. The first acts

on society mainly by their capital; the second mainly by their skill, mental and manual, by educated labor; and the third by their muscles, by brute force with little or no skill, uneducated labor. The poor, I take it, come mainly from this latter class. Education of head or hand, a profession or a trade, is wealth in possibility; yes, wealth in prospect, wealth in its process of accumulation, for wealth itself is only accumulated labor, as learning is accumulated thought. Most of our rich men have come out of this class which acts by its skill, and their children in a few years will return to it. I am not now to speak of men transiently poor, who mend their condition as the hours go by, who may gain enough, and perhaps become rich; but of men permanently poor, whom one year finds wanting, and the next leaves no better off; men that live, as we say, from hand to mouth, but whose hand and mouth are often empty. Even here in Boston, [Pg 195] there is little of the justice that removes causes of poverty, though so much of the charity which alleviates its effects. Those men live, if you can call it life, crowded together more densely, I am told, than in Naples or Paris, in London or Liverpool. Boston has its ghetto, not for the Jews as at Prague and at Rome, but for brother Christians. In the quarters inhabited mainly by the poor, you find a filthiness and squalor which would astonish a stranger. The want of comfort, of air, of water, is terrible. Cold is a stern foe in our winters, but in these places, I am told that men suffer more from want of water in summer, than want of fire in winter.[16] If your bills of mortality were made out so as to show the deaths in each ward of the city, I think all would be astonished at the results. Disease and death are the result of causes, causes too that may for a long time be avoided, and in the more favored classes are avoided. It is not God's will that the rich be spared and the poor die. Yet the greatest mortality is always among the poor. Out of each hundred Catholics who died in Boston, from 1833 to 1838, more than sixty-one were less than five years of age. The result for the last six years is no better. Of one hundred children born amongst them, only thirty-eight live five years; only eleven become fifty! Gray-haired Irishmen we seldom see. [Pg 196] Yet they are not worse off than others equally poor, only we can more distinctly get at the facts. In the war with disease which mankind is waging, the poor stand in front of the fire, and are mowed down without pity!

Of late years, in Boston, there has been a gradual increase in the mortality of children.[17] I think we shall find the increase only among the children of the poor. Of course it depends on causes which may be removed, at least modified, for the average life of mankind is on the increase. I am told, I know not if the authority be good, that mortality among the poor is greater in Boston than in any city of Europe.

Of old times the rich man rode into battle, shirted with mail, covered and shielded with iron from head to foot. Arrows glanced from him as from a stone. He came home unhurt and covered with "glory." But the poor, in his leathern jerkin or his linen frock, confronted the war, where every weapon tore his unprotected flesh. In the modern, perennial battle with disease, the same thing takes place; the poor fall and die.

The destruction of the poor is their poverty. They are ignorant, not from choice but necessity. They cannot, therefore, look round and see the best way of doing things, of saving their strength, [Pg 197] and sparing their means. They can have little of what we call thrift, the brain in the hand for which our people are so remarkable. Some of them are also little by nature, ill-born; others well born enough, were abandoned in childhood, and have not since been able to make up the arrears of a neglected youth. They are to fight the great battle of life, for battle it is to them, with feeble arms. Look at the houses they live in, without comfort or convenience, without sun, or air, or water; damp, cold, filthy and crowded to excess. In one section of the city there are thirty-seven persons on an average in each house.

Consider the rents paid by this class of our brothers. It is they who pay the highest rate for their dwellings. The worth of the house is often little more than nothing, the ground it covers making the only value. I am told that twelve or fifteen per cent a year on a large valuation is quite commonly paid, and over thirty per cent on the actual value, is not a strange thing. I wish this might not prove true.

But the misery of the poor does not end with their wretched houses and exorbitant rent. Having neither capital nor store-room, they must purchase articles of daily need in the smallest quantities. They buy, therefore, at the greatest disadvantage, and yet at the dearest rates. I am told it is not a rare thing for them to buy inferior qualities of flour at six cents a pound, or $11.88 [Pg 198] a barrel, while another man buys a month's supply at a time for $4 or $5 a barrel. This may be an extreme case, but I know that in some places in this city, an inferior article is now retailed to them at $7.92 the barrel. So it is with all kinds of food; they are bought in the smallest quantities, and at a rate which a rich man would think ruinous. Is not the poor man, too, most often cheated in the weight and the measure? So it is whispered. "He has no friends," says the sharper; "others have broken him to fragments, I will grind him to powder!" And the grinding comes.

Such being the case, the poor man finds it difficult to get a cent beforehand. I know rich men tell us that capital is at the mercy of labor. That may be prophecy; it is not history; not fact. Uneducated labor, brute force without skill, is wholly at the mercy of capital. The capitalist can control the market for labor, which is all the poor man has to part with. The poor cannot combine as the rich. True, a mistake is sometimes made, and the demand for labor is greater than the supply, and the poor man's wages are increased. This result was doubtless God's design, but was it man's intention? The condition of the poor has hitherto been bettered, not so much by the design of the strong, as by God making their wrath and cupidity serve the weak.

Under such circumstances, what marvel that the poor man becomes unthrifty, reckless and

desperate? I know how common it is to complain of the extravagance of the poor. Often there is [Pg 199]
reason for the complaint. It is a wrong thing, and immoral, for a man with a dependent family to spend all his earnings, if it be possible to live with less. I think many young men are much to be blamed, for squandering all their wages to please a dainty palate, or to dress as fine as a richer man, making only the heart of their tailor foolishly glad. Such men may not be poor now, but destine themselves to be the fathers of poor children. After making due allowance, it must be confessed that much of the recklessness of the poor comes unavoidably from their circumstances; from their despair of ever being comfortable, except for a moment at a time. Every one knows that unmerited wealth tempts a man to squander, while few men know, what is just as true, that hopeless poverty does the same thing. As the tortured Indian will sleep, if his tormentor pause but a moment, so the poor man, grown reckless and desperate, forgets the future storms, and wastes in revel the solitary gleam of sunlight which falls on him. It is nature speaking through his soul.

Now consider the moral temptations before such men. Here is wealth, food, clothing, comfort, luxury, gold, the great enchanter of this age, and but a plank betwixt it and them. Nay, they are shut from it only by a pane of glass thin as popular justice, and scarcely less brittle! They feel the natural wants of man; the artificial wants of men in cities. They are indignant at their social [Pg 200]
position, thrust into the mews and the kennels of the land. They think some one is to blame for it. A man in New England does not believe it God's will he should toil for ever, stinting and sparing only to starve the more slowly to death, overloaded with work, with no breathing time but the blessed Sunday. They see others doing nothing, idle as Solomon's lilies, yet wasting the unearned bread God made to feed the children of the poor. They see crowds of idle women elegantly clad, a show of loveliness, a rainbow in the streets, and think of the rag which does not hide their daughter's shame. They hear of thousands of baskets of costly wine imported in a single ship, not brought to recruit the feeble, but to poison the palate of the strong. They begin to ask if wealthy men and wise men have not forgotten their brothers, in thinking of their own pleasure! It is not the poor alone who ask that. In the midst of all this, what wonder is it if they feel desirous of revenge; what wonder that stores and houses are broken into, and stables set afire! Such is the natural effect of misery like that; it is but the voice of our brother's blood crying to God against us all. I wonder not that it cries in robbery and fire. The jail and the gallows will not still that voice, nor silence the answer. I wonder at the fewness of crimes, not their multitude. I must say that, if goodness and piety did not bear a greater proportion to the whole development of the [Pg 201]
poor than the rich, their crimes would be tenfold. The nation sets the poor an example of fraud, by making them pay highest on all local taxes; of theft, by levying the national revenue on persons, not property. Our navy and army set them the lesson of violence; and, to complete their schooling, at this very moment we are robbing another people of cities and lands, stealing, burning, and murdering, for lust of power and gold. Everybody knows that the political action of a nation is the mightiest educational influence in that nation. But such is the doctrine the State preaches to them, a constant lesson of fraud, theft, violence and crime. The literature of the nation mocks at the poor, laughing in the popular journals at the poor man's inevitable crime. Our trade deals with the poor as tools, not men. What wonder they feel wronged! Some city missionary may dawdle the matter as he will; tell them it is God's will they should be dirty and ignorant, hungry, cold and naked. Now and then a poor woman starving with cold and hunger may think it true. But the poor know better; ignorant as they are, they know better. Great Nature speaks when you and I are still. They feel neglected, wronged, and oppressed. What hinders them from following the example set by the nation, by society, by the strong? Their inertness, their cowardice, and, what does not always restrain abler men, their fear of God! With cultivated men, [Pg 202]
the intellect is often developed at the expense of conscience and religion. With the poor this is more seldom the case.

The misfortunes of the poor do not end here. To make their degradation total, their name infamous, we have shut them out of our churches. Once in our Puritan meeting-houses, there were "body seats" for the poor; for a long time free galleries, where men sat and were not ashamed. Now it is not so. A Christian society about to build a church, and having $50,000, does not spend $40,000 for that, making it a church for all, and keep $10,000 as a fund for the poor. No, it borrows $30,000 more, and then shuts the poor out of its bankrupt aisles. A high tower, or a fine-toned bell, yes, marble and mahogany, are thought better than the presence of these little ones whom God wills not to perish. I have heard ministers boast of the great men, and famous, who sat under their preaching; never one who boasted that the poor came into his church, and were fed, body and soul! You go to our churches—the poor are not in them. They are idling and lounging away their day of rest, like the horse and the ox. Alas me, that the apostles, that the Christ himself could not worship in our churches, till he sold his garment and bought a pew! Many of our houses of public worship would be well named, "Churches for the affluent." Yet religion is more to the poor man than to the rich. What wonder then, if the poor lose self-respect, [Pg 203]
when driven from the only churches where it is thought respectable to pray!

This class of men are perishing; yes, perishing in the nineteenth century; perishing in Boston, wealthy, charitable Boston; perishing soul and body, contrary to God's will; and perishing all the worse because they die slow, and corrupt by inches. As things now are, their mortality is hardly a curse. The Methodists are right in telling them this world is a valley of tears; it is almost wholly so to them; and Heaven a long June day, full of rest and plenty. To die is their only gain; their only hope. Think of that, you who murmur because money is "tight," because your investment gives only twenty per cent. a year, or because you are taxed for half your property, meaning to move off next season; think of that, you who complain because the democrats are in power to-day, and you who tremble lest the whigs shall be in '49; think of that, you who were never

hungry, nor athirst; who are sick, because you have nothing else to do, and grumble against God, from mere emptiness of soul, and for amusement's sake; think of men, who, if wise, do not dare to raise the human prayer for life, but for death, as the only gain, the only hope, and you will give over your complaint, your hands stopping your mouth.

What shall become of the children of such men? They stand in the fore-front of the battle, all unprotected as they are; a people scattered and peeled, only a miserable remnant reaches the age of ten! Look about your streets, and see what does become of such as live, vagrant and idle boys. Ask the police, the constables, the jails; they shall tell you what becomes of the sons. Will a white lily grow in a common sewer; can you bleach linen in a tan-pit? Yes, as soon as you can rear a virtuous population, under such circumstances. Go to any State Prison in the land, and you shall find that seven-eighths of the convicts came from this class, brought there by crimes over which they had no control; crimes which would have made you and me thieves and pirates. The characters of such men are made for them, far more than by them. There is no more vice, perhaps, born into that class; they have no more "inherited sin" than any other class in the land; all the difference, then, between the morals and manners of rich and poor, is the result of education and circumstances. [Pg 204]

The fate of the daughters of the poor is yet worse. Many of them are doomed to destruction by the lust of men, their natural guardians and protectors. Think of an able, "respectable" man, comfortable, educated and "Christian," helping debase a woman, degrade her in his eyes, her eyes, the eyes of the world! Why it is bad enough to enslave a man, but thus to enslave a woman —I have no words to speak of that. The crime and sin, foul, polluting and debasing all it touches, has come here to curse man and woman, the married and the single, and the babe unborn! It seems to me as if I saw the Genius of this city stand before God, lifting his hands in agony to heaven, crying for mercy on woman, insulted and trodden down, for vengeance on man, who treads her thus infamously into the dust. The vengeance comes, not the mercy. Misery in woman is the strongest inducement to crime. Where self-respect is not fostered; where severe toil hardly holds her soul and body together amid the temptations of a city, and its heated life, it is no marvel to me that this sin should slay its victims, finding woman an easy prey. [Pg 205]

Let me follow the children of the poor a step further—I mean to the jail. Few men seem aware of the frightful extent of crime amongst us, and the extent of the remedy, more awful yet. In less than one year, namely, from the 9th of June, 1845, to the 2d of June, 1846, there were committed to your House of Correction, in this city, 1,228 persons, a little more than one out of every fifty-six in the whole population that is more than ten years old. Of these 377 were women; 851 men. Five were sentenced for an indefinite period, and forty-seven for an additional period of solitary imprisonment. In what follows, I make no account of that. But the whole remaining period of their sentences amounts to more than 544 years, or 198,568 days. In addition to this, in the year ending with June 9, 1846, we sent from Boston to the State Prison, thirty-five more, and for a period of 18,595 days, of which 205 were solitary. Thus it appears that the illegal and convicted crime of Boston, in one year, was punished by imprisonment for 217,163 days. Now as Boston contains but 114,366 persons of all ages, and only 69,112 that are over ten years of age, it follows that the imprisonment of citizens of Boston for crime in one year, amounts to more than one day and twenty-one hours, for each man, woman, and child, or to more than three days and three hours, for each one over ten years of age. This seems beyond belief, yet in making the estimate, I have not included the time spent in jail before sentence; I have left out the solitary imprisonment in the House of Correction; I have said nothing of the 169 children, sentenced for crime to the House of Reformation in the same period. [Pg 206]

What is the effect of this punishment on society at large? I will not now attempt to answer that question. What is it on the criminals themselves? Let the jail-books answer. Of the whole number, 202 were sentenced for the second time; 131 for the third; 101 for the fourth; thirty-eight for the fifth; forty for the sixth; twenty-nine for the seventh; twenty-three for the eighth; twelve for the ninth; fifty for the tenth time, or more; and of the criminals punished for the tenth time, thirty-one were women! Of the thirty-five sent to the State Prison, fourteen had been there before; of the 1,228 sent to the House of Correction, only 626 were sent for the first time. [Pg 207]

There are two classes, the victims of society, and the foes of society, the men that organize its sins, and then tell us nobody is to blame. May God deal mercifully with the foes; I had rather take my part with the victims. Yet is there one who wishes to be a foe to mankind?

Here are the sons of the poor, vagrant in your streets, shut out by their misery from the culture of the age; growing up to fill your jails, to be fathers of a race like themselves, and to be huddled into an infamous grave. Here are the daughters of the poor, cast out and abandoned, the pariahs of our civilization, training up for a life of shame and pollution, and coming early to a miserable end. Here are the poor, daughters and sons, excluded from the refining influences of modern life, shut out of the very churches by that bar of gold, ignorant, squalid, hungry and hopeless, wallowing in their death! Are these the results of modern civilization; this in the midst of the nineteenth century, in a Christian city full of churches and gold; this in Boston, which adds $13,000,000 a year to her actual wealth? Is that the will of God? Tell it not in China; whisper it not in New Holland, lest the heathen turn pale with horror, and send back your missionaries, fearing they shall pollute the land! [Pg 208]

There is yet another class of little ones. I mean the intemperate. Within the last few years it seems that drunkenness has increased. I know this is sometimes doubted. But if this fact is not shown by the increased number of legal convictions for the crime, it is by the sight of drunken men in public and not arrested. I think I have not visited the city five times in the last ten months without seeing more or less men drunk in the streets. The cause of this increase it seems to me is not difficult to discover. All great movements go forward by undulations, as the waves of the rising tide come up the beach. Now comes a great wave reaching far up the shore, and then recedes. The next, and the next, and the next falls short of the highest mark; yet the tide is coming in all the while. You see this same undulation in other popular movements; for example, in politics. Once the great wave of democracy broke over the central power, washing it clean. Now the water lies submissive beneath that rock, and humbly licks its feet. In some other day the popular wave shall break with purifying roar clean over that haughty stone and wash off the lazy barnacles, heaps of corrupting drift-weed, and deadly monsters of the deep. By such seemingly unsteady movements do popular affairs get forward. The reformed drunkards, it is said, were [Pg 209] violent, ill-bred, theatrical, and only touched the surface. Many respectable men withdrew from the work soon as the Washingtonians came to it. It was a pity they did so; but they did. I think the conscience of New England did not trust the reformed men; that also is a pity. They seem now to have relaxed their efforts in a great measure, perhaps discouraged at the coldness with which they have in some quarters been treated. I know not why it is, but they do not continue so ably the work they once begun. Besides, the State, it was thought, favored intemperance. It was for a long time doubted if the license-laws were constitutional; so they were openly set at nought, for wicked men seize on doubtful opportunities. Then, too, temperance had gone, a few years ago, as far as it could be expected to go until certain great obstacles were removed. Many leading men in the land were practically hostile to temperance, and, with some remarkable exceptions, still are. The sons of the pilgrims, last Forefathers' day, could not honor the self-denial of the Puritans without wine! The Alumni of Harvard University could never, till this season, keep their holidays without strong drink.[18] If rich men continue to drink without need, the poor will long continue [Pg 210] to be drunk. Vices, like decayed furniture, go down. They keep their shape, but become more frightful. In this way the refined man who often drinks, but is never drunk, corrupts hundreds of men whom he never saw, and without intending it becomes a foe to society.

Then, too, some of our influential temperance men aid us no longer. Beecher is not here; Channing and Ware have gone to their reward. That other man,[19] benevolent and indefatigable, where is he? He trod the worm of the still under his feet, but the worm of the pulpit stung him, and he too is gone; that champion of temperance, that old man eloquent, driven out of Boston. Why should I not tell an open secret?—driven out by rum and the Unitarian clergy of Boston.

Whatsoever the causes may be, I think you see proofs enough of the fact, that drunkenness has increased within the last few years. You see it in the men drunken in the streets, in the numerous shops built to gratify the intemperate man. Some of these are elegant and costly, only for the rich; others so mean and dirty, that one must be low indeed to wallow therein. But the same thing is there in both, rum, poison-drink. Many of these latter are kept by poor men, and the spider's web of the law now and then catches one of them, though latterly but seldom here. Sometimes [Pg 211] they are kept, and, perhaps, generally owned, by rich men who drive through the net. I know how hard it is to see through a dollar, though misery stand behind it, if the dollar be your own, and the misery belong to your brother. I feel pity for the man who helps ruin his race, who scatters firebrands and death throughout society, scathing the heads of rich and poor, and old and young. I would speak charitably of such an one as of a fellow-sinner. How he can excuse it to his own conscience is his affair, not mine. I speak only of the fact. For a poor man there may be some excuse; he has no other calling whereby to gain his bread; he would not see his own children beg, nor starve, nor steal! To see his neighbor go to ruin and drag thither his children and wife, was not so hard. But it is not the shops of the poor men that do most harm! Had there been none but these, they had long ago been shut, and intemperance done with. It is not poor men that manufacture this poison; nor they who import it, or sell by the wholesale. If there were no rich men in this trade there would soon be no poor ones! But how does the rich man reconcile it to his conscience? I cannot answer that.

It is difficult to find out the number of drink-shops in the city. The assessors say there are eight hundred and fifty; another authority makes the number twelve hundred. Let us suppose there are but one thousand. I think that much below the real number, for the assistant assessors found [Pg 212] three hundred in a single ward! These shops are open morning and night. More is sold on Sunday, it is said, than any other day in the week! While you are here to worship your Father, some of your brothers are making themselves as beasts; yes, lower. You shall probably see them at the doors of these shops as you go home; drunk in the streets this day! To my mind, the retailers are committing a great offence. I am no man's judge, and cannot condemn even them. There is one that judgeth. I cannot stand in the place of any man's conscience. I know well enough what is sin; God, only, who is a sinner. Yet I cannot think the poor man that retails, half so bad as the rich man who distils, imports, or sells by wholesale the infamous drug. He knew better, and cannot plead poverty as the excuse of his crime.

Let me mention some of the statistics of this trade before I speak of its effects. If there are one thousand drink-shops, and each sells liquor to the amount of only six dollars a day, which is the price of only one hundred drams, or two hundred at the lowest shops, then we have the sum of $2,190,000 paid for liquor to be drunk on the spot every year. This sum is considerably more than double the amount paid for the whole public education of the people in the entire State of Massachusetts! In Boston alone, last year, there were distilled, 2,873,623 gallons of spirit. In five

years, from 1840 to 1845, Boston exported 2,156,990, and imported 2,887,993 gallons. They [Pg 213]
burnt up a man the other day, at the distillery in Merrimack street. You read the story in the daily papers, and remember how the by-standers looked on with horror to see the wounded man attempting with his hands to fend off the flames from his naked head! Great Heaven! It was not the first man that distillery has burned up! No, not by thousands. You see men about your streets, all afire; some half-burnt down; some with all the soul burned out, only the cinders left of the man, the shell and wall, and that tumbling and tottering, ready to fall. Who of you has not lost a relative, at least a friend, in that withering flame, that terrible *Auto da fe*, that hell-fire on earth?

Let us look away from that. I wish we could look on something to efface that ghastly sight. But see the results of this trade. Do you wonder at the poverty just now spoken of; at the vagrant children? In the Poor House at Albany, at one time, there were 633 persons, and of them 615 were intemperate! Ask your city authorities how many of the poor are brought to their Almshouse directly or remotely by intemperance! Do you wonder at the crime which fills your jails, and swells the tax of county and city? Three fourths of the petty crime in the State comes from this source directly or remotely. Your jails were never so full before! When the parents are there, what is left for the children? In Prussia, the Government which imprisons the father takes care of [Pg 214]
the children, and sends them to school. Here they are forced into crime.

As I gave some statistics of the cause, let me also give some of the effects. Two years ago your Grand Jury reports that one of the city police, on Sunday morning, between the hours of twelve and two, in walking from Cornhill square to Cambridge street, passed more than one hundred persons more or less drunk! In 1844 there were committed to your House of Correction, for drunkenness, 453 persons; in 1845, 595; in 1846, up to the 24th of August, that is, in seven months and twenty-four days, 446. Besides there have been already in this year, 396 complained of at the Police Court and fined, but not sent to the House of Correction. Thus, in seven months and twenty-four days, 842 persons have been legally punished for public drunkenness. In the last two months and a half 445 persons were thus punished. In the first twenty-four days of this month, ninety-four! In the last year there were 4,643 persons committed to your watch-houses, more than the twenty-fifth of the whole population. The thousand drink-shops levy a direct tax of more than $2,000,000. That is only the first outlay. The whole ultimate cost in idleness, sickness, crime, death and broken hearts—I leave you to calculate that! The men who live in the lower courts, familiar with the sinks of iniquity, speak of this crime as "most awful!" Yet in this month [Pg 215]
and the last, there were but nine persons indicted for the illegal sale of the poison which so wastes the people's life! The head of your Police and the foreman of your last Grand Jury are prominent in that trade.

Does the Government know of these things; know of their cause? One would hope not. The last Grand Jury in their public report, after speaking manfully of some actual evils, instead of pointing at drunkenness and bar-rooms, direct your attention "to the increased number of omnibuses and other large carriages in the streets."

These are sad things to think of in a Christian church. What shall we do for all these little ones that are perishing? "Do nothing," say some. "Am I my brother's keeper?" asked the first Cain, after killing that brother. He thought the answer would be, "No! you are not." But he was his brother's keeper, and Abel's blood cried from the ground for justice, and God heard it. Some say we can do nothing. I will never believe that a city which in twelve years can build near a thousand miles of railroad, hedge up the Merrimack and the lakes of New Hampshire; I will never believe that a city, so full of the hardiest enterprise and the noblest charity, cannot keep these little ones from perishing. Why the nation can annex new States and raise armies at uncounted cost. Can it not extirpate pauperism, prevent intemperance, pluck up the causes of the present [Pg 216]
crime? All that is lacking is the prudent will!

It seems as if something could easily be done to send the vagrant children to school; at least to give them employment, and so teach them some useful art. If some are Catholics, and will not attend the Protestant schools, perhaps it would be as possible to have a special and separate school for the Irish as for the Africans. It was recently proposed in a Protestant assembly to found Sunday Schools, with Catholic teachers for Catholic children. The plan is large and noble, and indicates a liberality which astonishes one even here, where some men are ceasing to be sectarian and becoming human. Much may be done to bring many of the children to our Sunday and week-day schools, as they now are, and so brands be snatched from the burning. The State Farm School for juvenile offenders, which a good man last winter suggested to your Legislature, will doubtless do much for these idle boys, and may be the beginning of a greater and better work. Could the State also take care of the children when it locks the parents in a jail, there would be a nearer approach to justice and greater likelihood of obtaining its end. Still the laws act cumbrously and slow. The great work must be done by good men, acting separately or in concert, in their private way. You are your brother's keeper; God made you so. If you are rich, [Pg 217]
intelligent, refined and religious, why you are all the more a keeper to the poor, the weak, the vulgar and the wicked. In the pauses of your work there will be time to do something. In the unoccupied hours of the Sunday there is yet leisure to help a brother's need. If there are times when you are disposed to murmur at your own hard lot, though it is not hard; or hours when grief presses heavy on your heart, go and look after these children, find them employment, and help them to start in life; you will find your murmurings are ended, and your sorrow forgot.

It does not seem difficult to do something for the poor. It would be easy to provide comfortable and convenient houses and at a reasonable rate. The experiment has been tried by one noble-hearted man, and thus far works well. I trust the same plan, or one better, if possible, will soon be tried on a larger scale, and so repeated, till we are free from that crowding together of miserable persons, which now disgraces our city. It seems to me that a store might be established where articles of good quality should be furnished to the poor at cost. Something has already been done in this way, by the "Trade's Union," who need it much less. A practical man could easily manage the details of such a scheme. All reform and elevation of this class of men must begin by mending their circumstances, though of course it must not end there. Expect no improvement of men that are hungry, naked, and cold. Few men respect themselves in that [Pg 218] condition. Hope not of others what would be impossible for you!

You may give better pay when that is possible. I can hardly think it the boast of a man, that he has paid less for his labor than any other in his calling. But it is a common boast, though to me it seems the glory of a pirate! I cannot believe there is that sharp distinction between week-day religion and Sunday religion, or between justice and charity, that is sometimes pretended. A man both just and charitable would find his charity run over into his justice, and the mixture improve its quality. When I remember that all value is the result of work, and see likewise that no man gets rich by his own work, I cannot help thinking that labor is often wickedly underpaid, and capital sometimes as grossly over-fed. I shall believe that capital is at the mercy of labor, when the two extremes of society change places. Is it Christian or manly to reduce wages in hard times, and not raise them in fair times? and not raise them again in extraordinary times? Is it God's will that large dividends and small wages should be paid at the same time? The duty of the employer is not over, when he has paid "the hands" their wages. Abraham is a special providence for Eliezer, as God, the universal providence, for both. The usages of society make a sharp distinction between the rich and poor; but I cannot believe the churches have done wisely, by [Pg 219] making that distinction appear through separating the two, in their worship. The poor are, undesignedly, driven out of the respectable churches. They lose self-respect; lose religion. Those that remain, what have they gained by this expulsion of their brothers? A beautiful and costly house, but a church without the poor. The Catholics were wiser and more humane than that. I cannot believe the mightiest abilities and most exquisite culture were ever too great to preach and apply Christianity among the poor; and that "the best sermons would be wasted on them." Yet such has not been the practical decision here! I trust we shall yet be able to say of all our churches, however costly, "There the rich and poor meet together." They are now equally losers by the separation. The seventy ministers of Boston—how much they can do for this class of little ones, if they will!

It has been suggested by some kindly and wise men, that there should be a Prisoners' Home established, where the criminal, on being released from jail, could go and find a home and work. As the case now is, there is almost no hope for the poor offender. "Legal justice" proves often legal vengeance, and total ruin to the poor wretch on whom it falls; it grinds him to powder! All reform of criminals, without such a place, seems to me worse than hopeless. If possible, such an institution seems more needed for the women, than even for the men: but I have not now time to [Pg 220] dwell on this theme. You know the efforts of two good men amongst us, who, with slender means, and no great encouragement from the public, are indeed the friends of the prisoner.[20] God bless them in their labors.

We can do something in all these schemes for helping the poor. Each of us can do something in his own sphere, and now and then step out of that sphere to do something more. I know there are many amongst you, who only require a word before they engage in this work, and some who do not require even that, but are more competent than I to speak that word. Your Committee of Benevolent Action have not been idle. Their works speak for them.

For the suppression of intemperance, redoubled efforts must be made. Men of wealth, education and influence must use their strength of nature, or position, to protect their brothers, not drive them down to ruin. Temperance cannot advance much further among the people, until this class of men lend their aid; at least, until they withdraw the obstacles they have hitherto and so often opposed to its progress. They must forbear the use, as well as the traffic. I cannot but think the time is coming, when he who makes or sells this poison as a drink, will be legally ranked with [Pg 221] other poisoners, with thieves, robbers, and house-burners; when a fortune acquired by such means will be thought infamous, as one now would be if acquired by piracy! I know good men have formerly engaged in this trade; they did it ignorantly. Now, we know the unavoidable effects thereof. I trust the excellent example lately set by the Government of the University, will be followed at all public festivals.

We must still have a watchful eye on the sale of this poison. It is not the low shops which do the most harm, but the costly tippling-houses which keep the low ones in countenance, and thus shield them from the law and public feeling. It seems as if a law were needed, making the owner of a tippling-house responsible for the illegal sale of liquors there. Then the real offender might be reached, who now escapes the meshes of the law.

It has long ago been suggested that a Temperance Home was needed for the reformation of the unfortunate drunkard. It is plain that the jail does not reform him. Those sent to jail for drunkenness are, on the average, sentenced no less than five times; some of them, fifteen or

twenty times! Of what use to shut a man in a jail, and release him with the certainty that he will come out no better, and soon return for the same offence? When as much zeal and ability are directed to cure this terrible public malady, as now go to increase it, we shall not thus foolishly [Pg 222] waste our strength. You all know how much has been done by one man in this matter;[21] that in four years he saved three hundred drunkards from the prison, two hundred of whom have since done well! If it be the duty of the State to prevent crime, not avenge it, is it not plain what is the way?

However, a reform in this matter will be permanent only through a deeper and wider reform elsewhere. Drunkenness and theft in its various illegal forms, are confined almost wholly to the poorest class. So long as there is unavoidable misery, like the present, pauperism and popular ignorance; so long as thirty-seven are crowded into one house, and that not large; so long as men are wretched and without hope, there will be drunkenness. I know much has been done already; I think drunkenness will never be respectable again, or common amongst refined and cultivated men; it will be common among the ignorant, the outcast and the miserable, so long as the present causes of poverty, ignorance and misery continue. For that continuance, and the want, the crime, the unimaginable wretchedness and death of heart which comes thereof, it is not these perishing little ones, but the strong that are responsible before God! It will not do for your grand juries to try and hide the matter by indicting "omnibuses and other large carriages;" the voice of God [Pg 223] cries, Where is thy brother?—and that brother's blood answers from the ground.

What I have suggested only palliates effects; it removes no cause;—of that another time. These little ones are perishing here in the midst of us. Society has never seriously sought to prevent it, perhaps has not been conscious of the fact. It has not so much legislated for them as against them. Its spirit is hostile to them. If the mass of able-headed men were in earnest about this, think you they would allow such unthrifty ways, such a waste of man's productive energies? Never! no, never. They would repel the causes of this evil as now an invading army. The removal of these troubles must be brought about by a great change in the spirit of society. Society is not Christian in form or spirit. So there are many who do not love to hear Christianity preached and applied, but to have some halting theology set upon its crutches. They like, on Sundays, to hear of the sacrifice, not to have mercy and goodness demanded of them. A Christian State after the pattern of that divine man, Jesus—how different it would be from this in spirit and in form!

Taking all this whole State into account, things, on the whole, are better here, than in any similar population, after all these evils. I think there can be no doubt of that; better now, on the whole, than ever before. A day's work will produce a greater quantity of needful things than hitherto. So [Pg 224] the number of little ones that perish is smaller than heretofore, in proportion to the whole mass. I do not believe the world can show such examples of public charity as this city has afforded in the last fifty years. Alas! we want the justice which prevents causes no less than the charity which palliates effects. See yet the unnatural disparity in man's condition: bloated opulence and starving penury in the same street! See the pauperism, want, licentiousness, intemperance and crime in the midst of us; see the havoc made of woman; see the poor deserted by their elder brother, while it is their sweat which enriches your ground, builds your railroads, and piles up your costly houses. The tall gallows stands in the back-ground of society, overlooking it all; where it should be the blessed gospel of the living God.

What we want to remove the cause of all this is the application of Christianity to social life. Nothing less will do the work. Each of us can help forward that by doing the part which falls in his way. Christianity, like the eagle's flight, begins at home. We can go further, and do something for each of these classes of little ones. Then we shall help others do the same. Some we may encourage to practical Christianity by our example; some we may perhaps shame. Still more, we can ourselves be pure, manly, Christian; each of us that, in heart and life. We can build up a [Pg 225] company of such, men of perpetual growth. Then we shall be ready not only for this special work now before us, to palliate effects, but for every Christian and manly duty when it comes. Then, if ever some scheme is offered which is nobler and yet more Christian than what we now behold, it will find us booted, and girded, and road-ready.

I look to you to do something in this matter. You are many; most of you are young. I look to you to set an example of a noble life, human, clean and Christian, not debasing these little ones, but lifting them up. Will you cause them to perish; you? I know you will not. Will you let them perish? I cannot believe it. Will you not prevent their perishing? Nothing less is your duty.

Some men say they will do nothing to help liberate the slave, because he is afar off, and "our mission is silence!" Well—here are sufferers in a nearer need. Do you say, I can do but little to Christianize society! Very well, do that little, and see if it does not amount to much, and bring its own blessing—the thought that you have given a cup of cold water to one of the little ones. Did not Jesus say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ye have done it unto me?"

Since last we met, one of our number[22] has taken that step in life commonly called death. He [Pg 226] was deeply interested and active in the movement for the perishing classes of men. After his spirit had passed on, a woman whom he had rescued, and her children with her, from intemperance and ruin, came and laid her hand on that cold forehead whence the kindly soul had fled, and mourning that her failures had often grieved his heart before, vowed solemnly to keep steadfast forever, and go back to evil ways no more! Who would not wish his forehead the altar for such a vow? what nobler monument to a good man's memory! The blessing of those ready to perish fell on him. If his hand cannot help us, his example may.

FOOTNOTES:

[16] This evil is now happily removed, and all men rejoice in a cheap and abundant supply of pure water.

[17] See the valuable tables and remarks, by Mr. Shattuck, in his Census of Boston, pp. 136-177.

[18] For this much needed reform at the academical table, we are indebted to the Hon. Edward Everett, the President of Harvard College. For this he deserves the hearty thanks of the whole community.

[19] Rev. John Pierpont.

[20] The editors of the "Prisoners' Friend."

[21] Mr. John Augustus.

[22] Nathaniel F. Thayer, aged 29.

VII.

[Pg 227]

A SERMON OF MERCHANTS.—PREACHED AT THE MELODEON, ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1846.

ECCLESIASTICUS XXVII. 2.

As a nail sticketh fast between the joinings of the stones; so doth sin stick close between buying and selling.

I ask your attention to a Sermon of Merchants, their Position, Temptations, Opportunities, Influence and Duty. For the present purpose, men may be distributed into four classes.

I. Men who create new material for human use, either by digging it out of mines and quarries, fishing it out of the sea, or raising it out of the land. These are direct producers.

II. Men who apply their head and hands to this material and transform it into other shapes, fitting it for human use; men that make grain into flour and bread, cotton into cloth, iron into needles or knives, and the like. These are indirect producers; they create not the material, but its fitness, use, or beauty. They are manufacturers.

[Pg 228]

III. Men who simply use these things, when thus produced and manufactured. They are consumers.

IV. Men who buy and sell: who buy to sell, and sell to buy the more. They fetch and carry between the other classes. These are distributors; they are the Merchants. Under this name I include the whole class who live by buying and selling, and not merely those conventionally called merchants, to distinguish them from small dealers. This term comprises traders behind counters and traders behind desks; traders neither behind counters nor desks.

There are various grades of merchants. They might be classed and symbolized according as they use a basket, a wheelbarrow, a cart, a stall, a booth, a shop, a warehouse, counting-room, or bank. Still all are the same thing—men who live by buying and selling. A ship is only a large basket, a warehouse, a costly stall. Your peddler is a small merchant going round from house to house with his basket to mediate between persons; your merchant only a great peddler sending round from land to land with his ships to mediate between nations. The Israelitish woman who sits behind a bench in her stall on the Rialto at Venice, changing gold into silver and copper, or loaning money to him who leaves hat, coat, and other collaterals in pledge, is a small banker. The Israelitish man who sits at Frankfort on the Maine, changes drafts into specie, and lends millions to men who leave in pledge a mortgage on the States of the Church, Austria or Russia—is a pawnbroker and money-changer on a large scale. By this arithmetic, for present convenience, all grades of merchants are reduced to one denomination—men who live by buying and selling.

[Pg 229]

All these four classes run into one another. The same man may belong to all at the same time. All are needed. At home a merchant is a mediator to go between the producer and the manufacturer; between both and the consumer. On a large scale he is the mediator who goes between continents, between producing and manufacturing States, between both and consuming countries. The calling is founded in the state of society, as that in a compromise between man's permanent nature and transient condition. So long as there are producers and consumers, there must be distributors. The value of the calling depends on its importance; its usefulness is the measure of its respectability. The most useful calling must be the noblest. If it is difficult, demanding great ability and self-sacrifice, it is yet more noble. A useless calling is disgraceful;

one that injures mankind—infamous. Tried by this standard, the producers seem nobler than the distributors; they than the mere consumers. This may not be the popular judgment now, but must one day become so, for mankind is slowly learning to judge by the natural law published by Jesus —that he who would be greatest of all, must be most effectively the servant of all. [Pg 230]

There are some who do not seem to belong to any of the active classes, who are yet producers, manufacturers, and distributors by their head, more than their hand; men who have fertile heads, producers, manufacturers, and distributors of thought, active in the most creative way. Here, however, the common rule is inverted: the producers are few—men of genius; the manufacturers many—men of talent; the distributors—men of tact, men who remember, and talk with tongue or pen, their name is legion. I will not stop to distribute them into their classes, but return to the merchant.

The calling of the merchant acquires a new importance in modern times. Once nations were cooped up, each in its own country and language. Then war was the only mediator between them. They met but on the battle-field, or in solemn embassies to treat for peace. Now trade is the mediator. They meet on the exchange. To the merchant, no man who can trade is a foreigner. His wares prove him a citizen. Gold and silver are cosmopolitan. Once, in some of the old governments, the magistrates swore, "I will be evil-minded towards the people, and will devise against them the worst thing I can." Now they swear to keep the laws which the people have made. Once the great question was, How large is the standing army? Now, What is the amount of [Pg 231] the national earnings? Statesmen ask less about the ships of the line, than about the ships of trade. They fear an over-importation oftener than a war, and settle their difficulties in gold and silver, not as before with iron. All ancient states were military; the modern mercantile. War is getting out of favor as property increases and men get their eyes open. Once every man feared death, captivity, or at least robbery in war; now the worst fear is of bankruptcy and pauperism.

This is a wonderful change. Look at some of the signs thereof. Once castles and forts were the finest buildings; now exchanges, shops, custom-houses, and banks. Once men built a Chinese wall to keep out the strangers—for stranger and foe were the same; now men build railroads and steamships to bring them in. England was once a strong-hold of robbers, her four seas but so many castle-moats; now she is a great harbor with four ship-channels. Once her chief must be a bold, cunning fighter; now a good steward and financier. Not to strike a hard blow, but to make a good bargain is the thing. Formerly the most enterprising and hopeful young men sought fame and fortune in deeds of arms; now an army is only a common sewer, and most of those who go to the war, if they never return, "have left their country for their country's good." In days gone by, constructive art could build nothing better than hanging gardens, and the pyramids—foolishly [Pg 232] sublime; now it makes docks, canals, iron roads and magnetic telegraphs. Saint Louis, in his old age, got up a crusade, and saw his soldiers die of the fever at Tunis; now the King of the French sets up a factory, and will clothe his people in his own cottons and woollens. The old Douglas and Percy were clad in iron, and harried the land on both sides of the Tweed; their descendants now are civil-suited men who keep the peace. No girl trembles, though "All the blue bonnets are over the border." The warrior has become a shopkeeper.

> "Lord Stafford mines for coal and salt;
> The Duke of Norfolk deals in malt,
> The Douglas in red herrings;
> And noble name and cultured land,
> Palace and park, and vassal band,
> Are powerless to the notes of hand
> Of Rothschild or the Barings."

Of merchants there are three classes.

I. Merchant-producers, who deal in labor applied to the direct creation of new material. They buy labor and land, to sell them in corn, cotton, coal, timber, salt, and iron.

II. Merchant-manufacturers, who deal in labor applied to transforming that material. They buy labor, wool, cotton, silk, water-privileges and steam-power, to sell them all in finished cloth.

III. Merchant-traders, who simply distribute the article raised or manufactured. These three [Pg 233] divisions I shall speak of as one body. Property is accumulated labor; wealth or riches a great deal of accumulated labor. As a general rule, merchants are the only men who become what we call rich. There are exceptions, but they are rare, and do not affect the remarks which are to follow. It is seldom that a man becomes rich by his own labor employed in producing or manufacturing. It is only by using other men's labor that any one becomes rich. A man's hands will give him sustenance, not affluence. In the present condition of society this is unavoidable; I do not say in a normal condition, but in the present condition.

Here in America the position of this class is the most powerful and commanding in society. They own most of the property of the nation. The wealthy men are of this class; in practical skill, administrative talent, in power to make use of the labor of other men, they surpass all others. Now, wealth is power, and skill is power—both to a degree unknown before. This skill and wealth are more powerful with us than any other people, for there is no privileged caste, priest, king, or noble, to balance against them. The strong hand has given way to the able and accomplished

head. Once head armor was worn on the outside, and of brass, now it is internal and of brains. [Pg 234]

To this class belongs the power both of skill and of wealth, and all the advantages which they bring. It was never so before in the whole history of man. It is more so in the United States than in any other place. I know the high position of the merchants in Venice, Pisa, Florence, Nuremberg and Basel, in the middle ages and since. Those cities were gardens in a wilderness, but a fringe of soldiers hung round their turreted walls; the trader was dependent on the fighter, and though their merchants became princes, they were yet indebted to the sword, and not entirely to their calling, for defence. Their palaces were half castles, and their ships full of armed men. Besides those were little States. Here the merchant's power is wholly in his gold and skill. Rome is the city of priests; Vienna for nobles; Berlin for scholars; the American cities for merchants. In Italy the roads are poor, the banking-houses humble; the cots of the laborer mean and bare, but churches and palaces are beautiful and rich. God is painted as a pope. Generally in Europe, the clergy, the soldiers, and the nobles are the controlling class. The finest works of art belong to them, represent them, and have come from the corporation of priests, or the corporation of fighters. Here a new era is getting symbolized in our works of art. They are banks, exchanges, custom-houses, factories, railroads. These come of the corporation of merchants; trade is the great thing. Nobody tries to secure the favor of the army or navy—but of the [Pg 235] merchants.

Once there was a permanent class of fighters. Their influence was supreme. They had the power of strong arms, of disciplined valor, and carried all before them. They made the law and broke it. Men complained, grumbling in their beard, but got no redress. They it was that possessed the wealth of the land. The producer, the manufacturer, the distributor could not get rich: only the soldier, the armed thief, the robber. With wealth they got its power; by practice gained knowledge, and so the power thereof; or, when that failed, bought it of the clergy, the only class possessing literary and scientific skill. They made their calling "noble," and founded the aristocracy of soldiers. Young men of talent took to arms. Trade was despised and labor was menial. Their science is at this day the science of kings. When graziers travel they look at cattle; weavers at factories; philanthropists at hospitals; dandies at their equals and coadjutors; and kings at armies. Those fighters made the world think that soldiers were our first men, and murder of their brothers the noblest craft in the world; the only honorable and manly calling. The butcher of swine and oxen was counted vulgar—the butcher of men and women great and honorable. Foolish men of the past think so now; hence their terror at orations against war; hence their admiration for a red coat; their zeal for some symbol of blood in their family arms; [Pg 236] hence their ambition for military titles when abroad. Most foolish men are more proud of their ambiguous Norman ancestor who fought at the battle of Hastings—or fought not—than of all the honest mechanics and farmers who have since ripened on the family tree. The day of the soldiers is well-nigh over. The calling brings low wages and no honor. It opens with us no field for ambition. A passage of arms is a passage that leads to nothing. That class did their duty at that time. They founded the aristocracy of soldiers—their symbol the sword. Mankind would not stop there. Then came a milder age and established the aristocracy of birth—its symbol the cradle, for the only merit of that sort of nobility, and so its only distinction, is to have been born. But mankind who stopped not at the sword, delays but little longer at the cradle; leaping forward it founds a third order of nobility, the aristocracy of gold, its symbol the purse. We have got no further on. Shall we stop there? There comes a to-morrow after every to-day, and no child of time is just like the last. The aristocracy of gold has faults enough, no doubt, this feudalism of the nineteenth century. But it is the best thing of its kind we have had yet; the wisest, the most human. We are going forward and not back. God only knows when we shall stop, and where. Surely not now, nor here. [Pg 237]

Now the merchants in America occupy the place which was once held by the fighters and next by the nobles. In our country we have balanced into harmony the centripetal power of the government, and the centrifugal power of the people: so have national unity of action, and individual variety of action—personal freedom. Therefore a vast amount of talent is active here which lies latent in other countries, because that harmony is not established there. Here the army and navy offer few inducements to able and aspiring young men. They are fled to as the last resort of the desperate, or else sought for their traditional glory, not their present value. In Europe, the army, the navy, the parliament or the court, the church and the learned professions offer brilliant prizes to ambitious men. Thither flock the able and the daring. Here such men go into trade. It is better for a man to have set up a mill than to have won a battle. I deny not the exceptions. I speak only of the general rule. Commerce and manufactures offer the most brilliant rewards—wealth, and all it brings. Accordingly the ablest men go into the class of merchants. The strongest men in Boston, taken as a body, are not lawyers, doctors, clergymen, book-wrights, but merchants. I deny not the presence of distinguished ability in each of those professions; I am now again only speaking of the general rule. I deny not the presence of very weak men, exceedingly weak in this class; their money their only source of power. [Pg 238]

The merchants then are the prominent class; the most respectable, the most powerful. They know their power, but are not yet fully aware of their formidable and noble position at the head of the nation. Hence they are often ashamed of their calling; while their calling is the source of their wealth, their knowledge, and their power, and should be their boast and their glory. You see signs of this ignorance and this shame: there must not be shops under your Athenæum, it would not be in good taste; you may store tobacco, cider, rum, under the churches, out of sight, you must have no shop there; it would be vulgar. It is not thought needful, perhaps not proper, for the merchant's wife and daughter to understand business, it would not be becoming. Many are

ashamed of their calling, and, becoming rich, paint on the doors of their coach, and engrave on their seal, some lion, griffin, or unicorn, with partisans and maces to suit; arms they have no right to, perhaps have stolen out of some book of heraldry. No man paints thereon a box of sugar, or figs, or candles couchant; a bale of cotton rampant; an axe, a lapstone, or a shoe hammer saltant. Yet these would be noble, and Christian withal. The fighters gloried in their horrid craft, and so made it pass for noble, but with us a great many men would be thought "the tenth transmitter of [Pg 239] a foolish face," rather than honest artists of their own fortune; prouder of being born than of having lived never so manfully.

In virtue of its strength and position, this class is the controlling one in politics. It mainly enacts the laws of this State and the nation; makes them serve its turn. Acting consciously or without consciousness, it buys up legislators when they are in the market; breeds them when the market is bare. It can manufacture governors, senators, judges, to suit its purposes, as easily as it can make cotton cloth. It pays them money and honors; pays them for doing its work, not another's. It is fairly and faithfully represented by them. Our popular legislators are made in its image; represent its wisdom, foresight, patriotism and conscience. Your Congress is its mirror.

This class is the controlling one in the churches, none the less, for with us fortunately the churches have no existence independent of the wealth and knowledge of the people. In the same way it buys up the clergymen, hunting them out all over the land; the clergymen who will do its work, putting them in comfortable places. It drives off such as interfere with its work, saying, "Go starve, you and your children!" It raises or manufactures others to suit its taste.

The merchants build mainly the churches, endow theological schools; they furnish the material sinews of the church. Hence the metropolitan churches are in general as much commercial as the [Pg 240] shops.

Now from this position, there come certain peculiar temptations. One is to an extravagant desire of wealth. They see that money is power, the most condensed and flexible form thereof. It is always ready; it will turn any way. They see that it gives advantages to their children which nothing else will give. The poor man's son, however well born, struggling for a superior education, obtains his culture at a monstrous cost; with the sacrifice of pleasure, comfort, the joys of youth, often of eyesight and health. He must do two men's work at once—learn and teach at the same time. He learns all by his soul, nothing from his circumstances. If he have not an iron body as well as an iron head, he dies in that experiment of the cross. The land is full of poor men who have attained a superior culture, but carry a crippled body through all their life. The rich man's son needs not that terrible trial. He learns from his circumstances, not his soul. The air about him contains a diffused element of thought. He learns without knowing it. Colleges open their doors; accomplished teachers stand ready; science and art, music and literature, come at the rich man's call. All the outward means of educating, refining, elevating a child, are to be had for money, and for money alone. [Pg 241]

Then, too, wealth gives men a social position, which nothing else save the rarest genius can obtain, and which that, in the majority of cases lacking the commercial conscience, is sure not to get. Many men prize this social rank above every thing else, even above justice and a life unstained.

Since it thus gives power, culture for one's children, and a distinguished social position, rank amongst men, for the man and his child after him, there is a temptation to regard money as the great object of life, not a means but an end; the thing a man is to get even at the risk of getting nothing else. It "answereth all things." Here and there you find a man who has got nothing else. Men say of such an one, "He is worth a million!" There is a terrible sarcasm in common speech, which all do not see. He is "worth a million," and that is all; not worth truth, goodness, piety; not worth a man. I must say, I cannot but think there are many such amongst us. Most rich men, I am told, have mainly gained wealth by skill, foresight, industry, economy, by honorable painstaking, not by trick. It may be so. I hope it is. Still there is a temptation to count wealth the object of life —the thing to be had if they have nothing else.

The next temptation is to think any means justifiable which lead to that end,—the temptation to fraud, deceit, to lying in its various forms, active and passive; the temptation to abuse the power [Pg 242] of this natural strength, or acquired position, to tyrannize over the weak, to get and not give an equivalent for what they get. If a man get from the world more than he gives an equivalent for, to that extent he is a beggar and gets charity, or a thief and steals; at any rate, the rest of the world is so much the poorer for him. The temptation to fraud of this sort, in some of its many forms, is very great. I do not believe that all trade must be gambling or trickery, the merchant a knave or a gambler. I know some men say so. But I do not believe it. I know it is not so now; all actual trade, and profitable too, is not knavery. I know some become rich by deceit. I cannot but think these are the exceptions; that the most successful have had the average honesty and benevolence, with more than the average industry, foresight, prudence and skill. A man foresees future wants of his fellows, and provides for them; sees new resources hitherto undeveloped, anticipates new habits and wants; turns wood, stone, iron, coal, rivers and mountains to human use, and honestly earns what he takes. I am told, by some of their number, that the merchants of this place rank high as men of integrity and honor, above mean cunning, but enterprising, industrious and far-sighted. In comparison with some other places, I suppose it is true. Still I must admit the temptation to fraud

is a great one; that it is often yielded to. Few go to a great extreme of deceit—they are known and exposed: but many to a considerable degree. He that makes haste to be rich is seldom innocent. Young men say it is hard to be honest; to do by others as you would wish them to do by you. I know it need not be so. Would not a reputation for uprightness and truth be a good capital for any man, old or young? [Pg 243]

This class owns the machinery of society, in great measure,—the ships, factories, shops, water privileges, houses and the like. This brings into their employment large masses of working men, with no capital but muscles or skill. The law leaves the employed at the employer's mercy. Perhaps this is unavoidable. One wishes to sell his work dear, the other to get it cheap as he can. It seems to me no law can regulate this matter, only conscience, reason, the Christianity of the two parties. One class is strong, the other weak. In all encounters of these two, on the field of battle, or in the market-place, we know the result: the weaker is driven to the wall. When the earthen and iron vessel strike together, we know beforehand which will go to pieces. The weaker class can seldom tell their tale, so their story gets often suppressed in the world's literature, and told only in outbreaks and revolutions. Still the bold men who wrote the Bible, Old Testament and New, have told truths on this theme which others dared not tell—terrible words which it will take ages of Christianity to expunge from the world's memory. [Pg 244]

There is a strong temptation to use one's power of nature or position to the disadvantage of the weak. This may be done consciously or unconsciously. There are examples enough of both. Here the merchant deals in the labor of men. This is a legitimate article of traffic, and dealing in it is quite indispensable in the present condition of affairs. In the Southern States, the merchant, whether producer, manufacturer or trader, owns men and deals in their labor, or their bodies. He uses their labor, giving them just enough of the result of that labor to keep their bodies in the most profitable working state; the rest of that result he steals for his own use, and by that residue becomes rich and famous. He owns their persons and gets their labor by direct violence, though sanctioned by law. That is slavery. He steals the man and his labor. Here it is possible to do a similar thing: I mean it is possible to employ men and give them just enough of the result of their labor to keep up a miserable life, and yourself take all the rest of the result of that labor. This may be done consciously or otherwise, but legally, without direct violence, and without owning the person. This is not slavery, though only one remove from it. This is the tyranny of the strong over the weak; the feudalism of money; stealing a man's work, and not his person. The merchants as a class are exposed to this very temptation. Sometimes it is yielded to. Some large fortunes have been made in this way. Let me mention some extreme cases; one from abroad, one near at home. In Belgium the average wages of men in manufactories is less than twenty-seven cents a day. The most skilful women in that calling can earn only twenty cents a day, and many very much less.[23] In that country almost every seventh man receives charity from the public: the mortality of operatives, in some of the cities, is ten per cent. a year! Perhaps that is the worst case which you can find on a large scale even in Europe. How much better off are many women in Boston who gain their bread by the needle? yes a large class of women in all our great cities? The ministers of the poor can answer that; your police can tell of the direful crime to which necessity sometimes drives women whom honest labor cannot feed! [Pg 245]

I know it will be said, "Buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest; get work at the lowest wages." Still there is another view of the case, and I am speaking to men whose professed religion declares that all are brothers, and demands that the strong help the weak. Oppression of this sort is one fertile source of pauperism and crime. How much there is of it I know not, but I think men seldom cry unless they are hurt. When men are gathered together in large masses, as in the manufacturing towns, if there is any oppression of this sort, it is sure to get told of, especially in New England. But when a small number are employed, and they isolated from one another, the case is much harder. Perhaps no class of laborers in New England is worse treated than the hired help of small proprietors. [Pg 246]

Then, too, there is a temptation to abuse their political power to the injury of the nation, to make laws which seem good for themselves, but are baneful to the people; to control the churches, so that they shall not dare rebuke the actual sins of the nation, or the sins of trade, and so the churches be made apologizers for lowness, practising infidelity as their sacrament, but in the name of Christ and God. The ruling power in England once published a volume of sermons, as well as a book of prayers, which the clergy were commanded to preach. What sort of a gospel got recommended therein, you may easily guess; and what is recommended by the class of merchants in New England, you may as easily hear.

But if their temptations are great, the opportunities of this class for doing good are greater still. Their power is more readily useful for good than ill, as all power is. In their calling they direct and control the machinery, the capital, and thereby the productive labor of the whole community. They can as easily direct that well as ill; for the benefit of all, easier than to the injury of any one. They can discover new sources of wealth for themselves, and so for the nation; they can set on foot new enterprises, which shall increase the comfort and welfare of man to a vast degree, and not only that, but enlarge also the number of men, for that always greatens in a nation, as the means of living are made easy. They can bind the rivers, teaching them to weave and spin. The introduction of manufactures into England, and the application of machinery to that purpose, I doubt not has added some millions of new lives to her population in the present century—millions [Pg 247]

that otherwise would never have lived at all. The introduction of manufactures into the United States, the application of water-power and steam-power to human work, the construction of canals and railroads, has vastly increased the comforts of the living. It helps civilize, educate and refine men; yes, leads to an increase of the number of lives. There are men to whom the public owes a debt which no money could pay, for it is a debt of life. What adequate sum of gold, or what honors could mankind give to Columbus, to Faustus, to Fulton, for their works? He that did the greatest service ever done to mankind got from his age a bad name and a cross for his [Pg 248] reward. There are men whom mankind are to thank for thousands of lives; yet men who hold no lofty niche in the temple of fame.

By their control of the Legislature the merchants can fashion more wisely the institutions of the land, promote the freedom of all, break off traditionary yokes, help forward the public education of the people by the establishment of public schools, public academies, and public colleges. They can frame particular statutes which help and encourage the humble and the weak, laws which prevent the causes of poverty and crime, which facilitate for the poor man the acquisition of property, enabling him to invest his earnings in the most profitable stocks,—laws which bless the living, and so increase the number of lives. They can thus help organize society after the Christian idea, and promote the kingdom of heaven. They can make our jails institutions which really render their inmates better, and send them out whole men, safe and sound. We have seen them do this with lunatics, why not with those poor wretches whom now we murder? They too can found houses of cure for drunkards, and men yet more unfortunate when released from our prisons.

By their control of the churches, and all our seminaries, public and private, they can encourage freedom of thought; can promote the public morals by urging the clergy to point out and rebuke the sins of the nation, of society, the actual sins of men now living; can encourage them to [Pg 249] separate theology from mythology, religion from theology, and then apply that religion to the State, to society and the individual; can urge them to preach both parts of religion—morality, the love of man, and piety, the love of God, setting off both by an appeal to that great soul who was Christianity in one person. In this way they have an opportunity of enlarging tenfold the practical value of the churches, and helping weed licentiousness, intemperance, want, and ignorance and sin, clean out of man's garden here. With their encouragement, the clergy would form a noble army contending for the welfare of men—the church militant, but preparing to be soon triumphant. Thus laboring, they can put an end to slavery, abolish war, and turn all the nation's creative energies to production—their legitimate work.

Then they can promote the advance of science, of literature, of the arts—the useful and the beautiful. We see what their famed progenitors did in this way at Venice, Florence, Genoa. I know men say that art cannot thrive in a republic. An opportunity is offered now to prove the falsehood of that speech, to adorn our strength with beauty. A great amount of creative, artistic talent is rising here and seeks employment.

They can endow hospitals, colleges, normal schools, found libraries and establish lectures for the welfare of all. He that has the wealth of a king may spend it like a king, not for ostentation, but [Pg 250] for use. They can set before men examples of industry, economy, truth, justice, honesty, charity, of religion at her daily work, of manliness in life—all this as no other men. Their charities need not stare you in the face; like violets their fragrance may reach you before you see them. The bare mention of these things recalls the long list of benefactors, names familiar to you all—for there is one thing which this city was once more famous for than her enterprise, and that is her Charity—the charity which flows in public;—the noiseless stream that shows itself only in the greener growth which marks its path.

Such are the position, temptations, opportunities of this class. What is their practical influence on Church and State—on the economy of mankind? what are they doing in the nation? I must judge them by the highest standard that I know, the standard of justice, of absolute religion, not out of my own caprice. Bear with me while I attempt to tell the truth, which I have seen. If I see it not, pity me and seek better instruction where you can find it. But if I see a needed truth, and for my own sake refuse to speak, bear with me no more. Bid me then repent. I am speaking of men, strong men too, and shall not spare the truth.

There is always a conservative element in society; yes, an element which resists the further [Pg 251] application of Christianity to public affairs. Once the fighters and their children were uppermost, and represented that element. Then the merchants were reformatory, radical, in collision with the nobles. They were "Whigs"—the nobles were "Tories." The merchants formed themselves into companies, and got power from the crown to protect themselves against the nobles, whom the crown also feared. It is so in England now. The great revolution in the laws of trade lately effected there, was brought about by the merchants, though opposed by the lords. The anti-corn law league was a trades-union of merchants contending against the owners of the soil. There the lord of land, and by birth, is slowly giving way to the lord of money, who is powerful by his knowledge or his wealth. There will always be such an element in society. Here I think it is represented by the merchants. They are backward in all reforms, excepting such as their own interest demands. Thus they are blind to the evils of slavery, at least silent about them. How few commercial or political newspapers in the land ever seriously oppose this great national wickedness! Nay, how many of them favor its extension and preservation! A few years ago, in this

very city, a mob of men, mainly from this class, it is said, insulted honest women peaceably met to consult for the welfare of Christian slaves in a Christian land—met to pray for them! A [Pg 252] merchant of this city says publicly, that a large majority of his brethren would kidnap a fugitive slave in Boston; says it with no blush and without contradiction.[24] It was men of this class who opposed the abolition of the slave-trade, and had it guaranteed them for twenty years after the formation of the Constitution; through their instigation that this foul blot was left to defile the Republic and gather blackness from age to age; through their means that the nation stands before the world pledged to maintain it. They could end slavery at once, at least could end the national connection with it, but it is through their support that it continues; that it acquires new strength, new boldness, new territory, darkens the nation's fame and hope, delays all other reformations in Church and State and the mass of the people. Yes, it is through their influence that the chivalry, the wisdom, patriotism, eloquence, yea, religion of the free States, are all silent when the word slavery is pronounced.

The Senate of Massachusetts represents this more than any other class. But all last winter it could not say one word against the wickedness of this sin, allowed to live and grow greater in the land.[25] Just before the last election something could be said! Do speech and silence mean the [Pg 253] same thing?

This class opposed abolishing imprisonment for debt, thinking it endangered trade. They now oppose the progress of temperance and the abolition of the gallows. They see the evils of war; they cannot see its sin; will sustain men who help plunge the nation into its present disgraceful and cowardly conflict; will encourage foolish young men to go and fight in this wicked war. A great man said, or is reported to have said, that perhaps it is not an American habit to consider the natural justice of a war, but to count its cost! A terrible saying that! There is a Power which considers its Justice, and will demand of us the blood we have wickedly poured out; blood of Americans, blood of the Mexicans! They favor indirect taxation, which is taxing the poor for the [Pg 254] benefit of the rich; they continue to support the causes of poverty; as a class they are blind to this great evil of popular ignorance—the more terrible evils of licentiousness, drunkenness and crime! They can enrich themselves by demoralizing their brothers. I wish it was an American habit to count the cost of that. Some "fanatic" will consider its justice. If they see these evils they look not for their cause; at least, strive not to remove that cause. They have long known that every year more money is paid in Boston for poison drink to be swallowed on the spot, a drink which does no man any good, which fills your asylums with paupers, your jails with criminals, and houses with unutterable misery in father, mother, wife and child,—more money every year than it would take to build your new aqueduct and bring abundance of water fresh to every house![26] If they have not known it, why it was their fault, for the fact was there crying to Heaven against us all. As they are the most powerful class, the elder brothers, American nobles if you will, it was their duty to look out for their weaker brother. No man has strength for himself alone. To use it for one's self alone, that is a sin. I do not think they are conscious of the evil they do, or the evils they allow. I speak not of motives, only of facts.

This class controls the State. The effects of that control appear in our legislation. I know there [Pg 255] are some noble men in political life, who have gone there with the loftiest motives, men that ask only after what is right. I honor such men—honor them all the more because they seem exceptions to a general rule; men far above the spirit of any class. I must speak of what commonly takes place. Our politics are chiefly mercantile, politics in which money is preferred, and man postponed. When the two come into collision, the man goes to the wall and the street is left clear for the dollars. A few years ago in monarchical France a report was made of the condition of the working population in the large manufacturing towns—a truthful report, but painful to read, for it told of strong men oppressing the weak.[27] I do not believe that such an undisguised statement of the good and ill could be tolerated in democratic America; no, not of the condition of men in New England; and what would be thought of a book setting forth the condition of the laboring men and women of the South? I know very well what is thought of the few men who attempt to tell the truth on this subject. I think there is no nation in Europe, except Russia and Turkey, which cares so little for the class which reaps down its harvests and does the [Pg 256] hard work. When you protect the rights of all, you protect also the property of each and by that very act. To begin the other way is quite contrary to nature. But our politicians cannot say too little for men, nor too much for money. Take the politicians most famous and honored at this day, and what have they done? They have labored for a tariff, or for free trade; but what have they done for man? nay, what have they attempted?—to restore natural rights to men notoriously deprived of them; progressively to elevate their material, moral, social condition? I think no one pretends it. Even in proclamations for Thanksgiving and days of prayer, it is not the most needy we are bid remember. Public sins are not pointed out to be repented of. Slaveholding States shut up in their jails our colored seamen soon as they arrive in a southern port. A few years ago, at a time of considerable excitement here on the slavery question, a petition was sent from this place by some merchants and others, to one of our Senators, praying Congress to abate that evil. For a long time that Senator could find no opportunity to present the petition. You know how much was said and what was done! Had the South demanded every tenth or twentieth bale of "domestics" coming from the North; had a petition relative to that grievance been sent to Congress, and a Senator unreasonably delayed to present it—how much more would have been said and done; [Pg 257] when he came back he would have been hustled out of Boston! When South Carolina and Louisiana sent home our messengers—driving them off with reproach, insult, and danger of their lives—little is said and nothing done. But if the barbarous natives of Sumatra interfere with our commerce, why, we send a ship and lay their towns in ruins and murder the men and women! We

all know that for some years Congress refused to receive petitions relative to slavery; and we know how tamely that was borne by the class who commonly control political affairs! What if Congress had refused to receive petitions relative to a tariff, or free trade, to the shipping interest, or the manufacturing interest? When the rights of men were concerned, three million men, only the "fanatics" complained. The political newspapers said "Hush!"

The merchant-manufacturers want a protective tariff; the merchant-importers, free trade; and so the national politics hinge upon that question. When Massachusetts was a carrying State, she wanted free trade; now a manufacturing State, she desires protection. That is all natural enough; men wish to protect their interests, whatsoever they may be. But no talk is made about protecting the labor of the rude man, who has no capital, nor skill, nothing but his natural force of muscles. The foreigner underbids him, monopolizing most of the brute labor of our large towns and internal improvements. There is no protection, no talk of protection for the carpenter, or the [Pg 258] bricklayer. I do not complain of that. I rejoice to see the poor wretches of the old world finding a home where our fathers found one before. Yet if we cared for men more than for money, and were consistent with our principles of protection, why, we should exclude all foreign workmen, as well as their work, and so raise the wages of the native hands. That would doubtless be very foolish legislation—but perhaps not, on that account, very strange. I know we are told that without protection, our hand-worker, whose capital is his skill, cannot compete with the operative of Manchester and Brussels, because that operative is paid but little. I know not if it be true, or a mistake. But who ever told us such men could not compete with the slave of South Carolina who is paid nothing? We have legislation to protect our own capital against foreign capital; perhaps our own labor against the "pauper of Europe;" why not against the slave labor of the Southern States? Because the controlling class prefers money and postpones man. Yet the slave-breeder is protected. He has, I think, the only real monopoly in the land. No importer can legally spoil his market, for the foreign slave is contraband. If I understand the matter, the importation of slaves was allowed, until such men as pleased could accumulate their stock. The reason why it was afterwards forbidden I think was chiefly a mercantile reason: the slave-breeder wanted a [Pg 259] monopoly, for God knows and you know that it is no worse to steal grown men in Africa than to steal new born babies in Maryland, to have them born for the sake of stealing them. Free labor may be imported, for it helps the merchant-producer and the merchant-manufacturer. Slave labor is declared contraband, for the merchant-slave-breeders want a monopoly.

This same preference of money over men appears in many special statutes. In most of our manufacturing companies the capital is divided into shares so large that a poor man cannot invest therein! This could easily be avoided. A man steals a candlestick out of a church, and goes to the State Prison for a year and a day. Another quarrels with a man, maims him for life, and is sent to the common jail for six months. A bounty is paid, or was until lately, on every gallon of intoxicating drink manufactured here and sent out of the country. If we begin with taking care of the rights of man, it seems easy to take care of the rights of labor and of capital. To begin the other way is quite another thing. A nation making laws for the nation is a noble sight. The Government of all, by all, and for all, is a democracy. When that Government follows the eternal laws of God, it is founding what Christ called the kingdom of heaven. But the predominating class making laws not for the nation's good, but only for its own, is a sad spectacle; no reasoning can [Pg 260] make it other than a sorry sight. To see able men prostituting their talents to such a work, that is one of the saddest sights! I know all other nations have set us the example, yet it is painful to see it followed, and here.

Our politics, being mainly controlled by this class, are chiefly mercantile, the politics of peddlers. So political management often becomes a trick. Hence we have many politicians, and raise a harvest of them every year, that crop never failing, party-men who can legislate for a class; but we have scarce one great statesman who can step before his class, beyond his age, and legislate for a whole nation, leading the people and giving us new ideas to incarnate in the multitude, his word becoming flesh. We have not planters, but trimmers! A great statesman never came of mercantile politics, only of politics considered as the national application of religion to life. Our political morals, you all know what they are, the morals of a huckster. This is no new thing; the same game was played long ago in Venice, Pisa, Florence, and the result is well known. A merely mercantile politician is very sharp-sighted and perhaps far-sighted, but a dollar will cover the whole field of his vision and he can never see through it. The number of slaves in the United States is considerably greater than our whole population when we declared Independence, yet how much talk will a tariff make, or a public dinner; how little the welfare of three million men! [Pg 261] Said I not truly, our most famous politicians are, in the general way, only mercantile party-men? Which of these men has shown the most interest in those three million slaves? The man who in the Senate of a Christian Republic valued them at twelve hundred million dollars! Shall respectable men say, "We do not care what sort of a Government the people have, so long as we get our dividends." Some say so; many men do not say that, but think so and act accordingly! The Government, therefore, must be so arranged that they get their dividends.

This class of men buys up legislators, consciously or not, and pays them, for value received. Yes, so great is its daring and its conscious power, that we have recently seen our most famous politician bought up, the stoutest understanding that one finds now extant in this whole nineteenth century, perhaps the ablest head since Napoleon. None can deny his greatness, his public services in times past, nor his awful power of intellect. I say we have seen him, a Senator of the United States, pensioned by this class, or a portion thereof, and thereby put mainly in their hands! When a whole nation rises up and publicly throws its treasures at the feet of a great man who has stood forth manfully contending for the nation, and bids him take their honors and their

gold as a poor pay for noble works, why that sight is beautiful, the multitude shouting hosanna to [Pg 262]
their King, and spreading their garments underneath his feet! Man is loyal, and such honors so paid, and to such, are doubly gracious; becoming alike to him that takes and those who give. Yes, when a single class, to whom some man has done a great service, goes openly and makes a memorial thereof in gold and honors paid to him, why that also is noble and beautiful. But when a single class, in a country where political doings are more public than elsewhere in the whole world, secretly buys up a man, in high place and world-famous, giving him a retaining fee for life, why the deed is one I do not wish to call by name! Could such men do this without a secret shame? I will never believe it of my countrymen.[28] A gift blinds a wise man's eyes, perverts the words even of the righteous, stopping his mouth with gold so that he cannot reprove a wrong! But there is an absolute justice which is neither bought nor sold! I know other nations have done the same and with like effect. Fight with silver weapons, said the Delphic oracle, and you'll conquer all. It has always been the craft of despots to buy up aspiring talent; some with a title; some with gold. Allegiance to the sovereign is the same thing on both sides of the water, whether the sovereign be an eagle or a guinea. Some American, it is said, wrote the Lord's Prayer on one [Pg 263]
side of a dime, and the Ten Commandments on the other. The Constitution and a considerable commentary might perhaps be written on the two sides of a dollar!

This class controls the Churches, as the State. Let me show the effect of that control. I am not to try men in a narrow way, by my own theological standard, but by the standard of manliness and Christianity. As a general rule, the clergy are on the side of power. All history proves this, our own most abundantly. The clergy also are unconsciously bought up, their speech paid for, or their silence. As a class, did they ever denounce a public sin? a popular sin? Perhaps they have. Do they do it now and here? Take Boston for the last ten years, and I think there has been more clerical preaching against the abolitionists than against slavery; perhaps more preaching against the temperance movement than in its favor. With the exception of disbelieving the popular theology, your evangelical alliance knows no sin but "original sin," unless indeed it be "organic sins," which no one is to blame for; no sinner but Adam and the devil; no saving righteousness but the "imputed." I know there are exceptions, and I would go far to do them honor, pious men who lift up a warning, yes, bear Christian testimony against public sins. I am speaking of the mass of the clergy. Christ said the priests of his time had made a den of thieves out of God's [Pg 264]
house of prayer. Now they conform to the public sins and apologize for popular crime. It is a good thing to forgive an offence: who does not need that favor and often? But to forgive the theory of crime, to have a theory which does that, is quite another thing. Large cities are alike the court and camp of the mercantile class, and what I have just said is more eminently true of the clergy in such towns. Let me give an example. Not long ago the Unitarian clergy published a protest against American slavery. It was moderate, but firm, and manly. Almost all the clergy in the country signed it. In the large towns few: they mainly young men and in the least considerable churches. The young men seemed not to understand their contract, for the essential part of an ecclesiastical contract is sometimes written between the lines and in sympathetic ink. Is a steamboat burned or lost on the waters, how many preach on that affliction! Yet how few preached against the war? A preacher may say he hates it as a man, no words could describe his loathing at it, but as a minister of Christ, he dares not say a word! What clergymen tell of the sins of Boston,—of intemperance, licentiousness; who of the ignorance of the people; who of them lays bare our public sin as Christ of old; who tells the causes of poverty, and thousand-handed crime; who aims to apply Christianity to business, to legislation, politics, to all the nation's life? Once the [Pg 265]
church was the bride of Christ, living by his creative, animating love; her children were apostles, prophets, men by the same spirit, variously inspired with power to heal, to help, to guide mankind. Now she seems the widow of Christ, poorly living on the dower of other times. Nay, the Christ is not dead, and 'tis her alimony, not her dower. Her children—no such heroic sons gather about her table as before. In her dotage she blindly shoves them off, not counting men as sons of Christ. Is her day gone by? The clergy answer the end they were bred for, paid for. Will they say, "We should lose our influence were we to tell of this and do these things?"[29] It is not true. Their ancient influence is already gone! Who asks, "What do the clergy think of the tariff, or free trade, of annexation, or the war, of slavery, or the education movement?" Why no man. It is sad to say [Pg 266]
these things. Would God they were not true. Look round you, and if you can, come tell me they are false.

We are not singular in this. In all lands the clergy favors the controlling class. Bossuet would make the monarchy swallow up all other institutions, as in history he sacrificed all nations to the Jews. In England the established clergy favors the nobility, the crown, not the people; opposes all freedom of trade, all freedom in religion, all generous education of the people: its gospel is the gospel for a class, not Christ's gospel for mankind. Here also the sovereign is the head of the church, it favors the prevailing power, represents the morality, the piety which chances to be popular, nor less nor more; the Christianity of the street, not of Christ.

Here trade takes the place of the army, navy, and court in other lands. That is well, but it takes also the place in great measure of science, art and literature. So we become vulgar, and have little but trade to show. The rich man's son seldom devotes himself to literature, science, or art; only to getting more money, or to living in idleness on what he has inherited. When money is the end, what need to look for any thing more? He degenerates into the class of consumers, and thinks it an honor. He is ashamed of his father's blood, proud of his gold. A good deal of scientific labor meets with no reward, but itself. In our country this falls almost wholly upon poor men. [Pg 267]
Literature, science and art are mainly in their hands, yet are controlled by the prevalent spirit of the nation. Here and there an exceptional man differs from that, but the mass of writers conform.

In England, the national literature favors the church, the crown, the nobility, the prevailing class. Another literature is rising, but is not yet national, still less canonized. We have no American literature which is permanent. Our scholarly books are only an imitation of a foreign type; they do not reflect our morals, manners, politics, or religion, not even our rivers, mountains, sky. They have not the smell of our ground in their breath. The real American literature is found only in newspapers and speeches, perhaps in some novel, hot, passionate, but poor, and extemporaneous. That is our national literature. Does that favor man—represent man? Certainly not. All is the reflection of this most powerful class. The truths that are told are for them, and the lies. Therein the prevailing sentiment is getting into the form of thought. Politics represent the morals of the controlling class, the morals and manners of rich Peter and David on a large scale. Look at that index, you would sometimes think you were not in the Senate of a great nation, but in a board of brokers, angry and higgling about stocks. Once in the nation's loftiest hour, she rose inspired and said: "All men are born equal, each with unalienable rights; that is self-evident." [Pg 268] Now she repents her of the vision and the saying. It does not appear in her literature, nor church, nor state. Instead of that, through this controlling class, the nation says: "All dollars are equal, however got; each has unalienable rights. Let no man question that!" This appears in literature and legislation, church and state. The morals of a nation, of its controlling class, always get summed up in its political action. That is the barometer of the moral weather. The voters are always fairly represented.

The wicked baron, bad of heart, and bloody of hand, has passed off with the ages which gave birth to such a brood, but the bad merchant still lives. He cheats in his trade; sometimes against the law, commonly with it. His truth is never wholly true, nor his lie wholly false. He overreaches the ignorant; makes hard bargains with men in their trouble, for he knows that a falling man will catch at red-hot iron. He takes the pound of flesh, though that bring away all the life-blood with it. He loves private contracts, digging through walls in secret. No interest is illegal if he can get it. He cheats the nation with false invoices, and swears lies at the custom-house; will not pay his taxes, but moves out of town on the last of April.[30] He oppresses the men who sail his ships, [Pg 269] forcing them to be temperate, only that he may consume the value of their drink. He provides for them unsuitable bread and meat. He would not engage in the African slave-trade, for he might lose his ships and perhaps more; but he is always ready to engage in the American slave-trade, and calls you a "fanatic" if you tell him it is the worse of the two. He cares not whether he sells cotton or the man who wears it, if he only gets the money; cotton or negro, it is the same to him. He would not keep a drink-hole in Ann Street, only own and rent it. He will bring or make whole cargoes of the poison that deals "damnation round the land." He thinks it vulgar to carry rum about in a jug, respectable in a ship. He makes paupers, and leaves others to support them. Tell not him of the misery of the poor, he knows better; nor of our paltry way of dealing with public crime, he wants more jails and a speedier gallows. You see his character in letting his houses, his houses for the poor. He is a stone in the lame man's shoe. He is the poor man's devil. The Hebrew devil that so worried Job is gone; so is the brutal devil that awed our fathers. Nobody fears them; they vanish before cock-crowing. But this devil of the nineteenth century is still extant. He has gone into trade, and advertises in the papers; his name is "good" in the street. He "makes [Pg 270] money;" the world is poorer by his wealth. He spends it as he made it, like a devil, on himself, his family alone, or worse yet, for show. He can build a church out of his gains, to have his morality, his Christianity preached in it, and call that the gospel, as Aaron called a calf—God. He sends rum and missionaries to the same barbarians, the one to damn, the other to "save," both for his own advantage, for his patron saint is Judas, the first saint who made money out of Christ. Ask not him to do a good deed in private, "men would not know it," and "the example would be lost;" so he never lets a dollar slip out between his thumb and finger without leaving his mark on both sides of it. He is not forecasting to discern effects in causes, nor skilful to create new wealth, only spry in the scramble for what others have made. It is easy to make a bargain with him, hard to settle. In politics he wants a Government that will insure his dividends; so asks what is good for him, but ill for the rest. He knows no right, only power; no man but self; no God but his calf of gold.

What effect has he on young men? They had better touch poison. If he takes you to his heart, he takes you in. What influence on society? To taint and corrupt it all round. He contaminates trade; corrupts politics, making abusive laws, not asking for justice but only dividends. To the church he [Pg 271] is the Anti-Christ. Yes, the very Devil, and frightens the poor minister into shameful silence, or, more shameless yet, into an apology for crime; makes him pardon the theory of crime! Let us look on that monster—look and pass by, not without prayer.

The good merchant tells the truth and thrives by that; is upright and downright; his word good as his Bible-oath. He pays for all he takes; though never so rich he owns no wicked dollar; all is openly, honestly, manfully earned, and a full equivalent paid for it. He owns money and is worth a man. He is just in business with the strong; charitable in dealing with the weak. His counting-room or his shop is the sanctuary of fairness, justice, a school of uprightness as well as thrift. Industry and honor go hand in hand with him. He gets rich by industry and forecast, not by slight of hand and shuffling his cards to another's loss. No men become the poorer because he is rich. He would sooner hurt himself than wrong another, for he is a man, not a fox. He entraps no man with lies, active or passive. His honesty is better capital than a sharper's cunning. Yet he makes no more talk about justice and honesty than the sun talks of light and heat; they do their own talking. His profession of religion is all practice. He knows that a good man is just as near heaven

in his shop as in his church, at work as at prayer; so he makes all work sacramental; he communes with God and man in buying and selling—communion in both kinds. He consecrates [Pg 272] his week-day and his work. Christianity appears more divine in this man's deeds than in the holiest words of apostle or saint. He treats every man as he wishes all to treat him, and thinks no more of that than of carrying one for every ten. It is the rule of his arithmetic. You know this man is a saint, not by his creed, but by the letting of his houses, his treatment of all that depend on him. He is a father to defend the weak, not a pirate to rob them. He looks out for the welfare of all that he employs; if they are his help he is theirs, and as he is the strongest so the greater help. His private prayer appears in his public work, for in his devotion he does not apologize for his sin, but asking to outgrow that, challenges himself to new worship and more piety. He sets on foot new enterprises which develop the nation's wealth and help others while they help him. He wants laws that take care of man's rights, knowing that then he can take care of himself and of his own, but hurt no man by so doing. He asks laws for the weak, not against them. He would not take vengeance on the wicked, but correct them. His justice tastes of charity. He tries to remove the causes of poverty, licentiousness, of all crime, and thinks that is alike the duty of Church and State. Ask not him to make a statesman a party-man, or the churches an apology for his lowness. He knows better; he calls that infidelity. He helps the weak help themselves. He is a moral [Pg 273] educator, a church of Christ gone into business, a saint in trade. The Catholic saint who stood on a pillar's top, or shut himself into a den and fed on grass, is gone to his place—that Christian Nebuchadnezzar. He got fame in his day. No man honors him now; nobody even imitates him. But the saint of the nineteenth century is the good merchant; he is wisdom for the foolish, strength for the weak, warning to the wicked, and a blessing to all. Build him a shrine in bank and church, in the market and the exchange, or build it not, no saint stands higher than this saint of trade. There are such men, rich and poor, young and old; such men in Boston. I have known more than one such, and far greater and better than I have told of, for I purposely under-color this poor sketch. They need no word of mine for encouragement or sympathy. Have they not Christ and God to aid and bless them? Would that some word of mine might stir the heart of others to be such; your hearts, young men. They rise there clean amid the dust of commerce and the mechanic's busy life, and stand there like great square pyramids in the desert amongst the Arabians' shifting tents. Look at them, ye young men, and be healed of your folly. It is not the calling which corrupts the man, but the men the calling. The most experienced will tell you so. I know it demands manliness to make a man, but God sent you here to do that work. [Pg 274]

The duty of this class is quite plain. They control the wealth, the physical strength, the intellectual vigor of the nation. They now display an energy new and startling. No ocean is safe from their canvas; they fill the valleys; they level the hills; they chain the rivers; they urge the willing soil to double harvests. Nature opens all her stores to them; like the fabled dust of Egypt her fertile bosom teems with new wonders, new forces to toil for man. No race of men in times of peace ever displayed so manly an enterprise, an energy so vigorous as this class here in America. Nothing seems impossible to them. The instinct of production was never so strong and creative before. They are proving that peace can stimulate more than war.

Would that my words could reach all of this class. Think not I love to speak hard words, and so often; say not that I am setting the poor against the rich. It is no such thing. I am trying to set the strong in favor of the weak. I speak for man. Are you not all brothers, rich or poor? I am here to gratify no vulgar ambition, but in Religion's name to tell their duty to the most powerful class in all this land. I must speak the truth I know, though I may recoil with trembling at the words I speak; yes, though their flame should scorch my own lips. Some of the evils I complain of are your misfortune, not your fault. Perhaps the best hearts in the land, no less than the ablest heads, are yours. If the evils be done unconsciously, then it will be greatness to be higher than society, [Pg 275] and with your good overcome its evil. All men see your energy, your honor, your disciplined intellect. Let them see your goodness, justice, Christianity. The age demands of you a development of religion proportionate with the vigor of your mind and arms. Trade is silently making a wonderful revolution. We live in the midst of it, and therefore see it not. All property has become movable, and therefore power departs from the family of the first-born, and comes to the family of mankind. God only controls this revolution, but you can help it forward, or retard it. The freedom of labor, and the freedom of trade, will work wonders little dreamed of yet; one is now uniting all men of the same nation; the other, some day, will weave all tribes together into one mighty family. Then who shall dare break its peace? I cannot now stop to tell half the proud achievements I foresee resulting from the fierce energy that animates your yet unconscious hearts. Men live faster than ever before. Life, like money, like mechanical power, is getting intensified and condensed. The application of science to the arts, the use of wind, water, steam, electricity, for human works, is a wonderful fact, far greater than the fables of old time. The modern Cadmus has yoked fire and water in an iron bond. The new Prometheus sends the fire of heaven from town to town to run his errands. We talk by lightning. Even now these new [Pg 276] achievements have greatly multiplied the powers of men. They belong to no class; like air and water they are the property of mankind. It is for you, who own the machinery of society, to see that no class appropriates to itself what God meant for all. Remember it is as easy to tyrannize by machinery as by armies, and as wicked; that it is greater now to bless mankind thereby, than it was of old to conquer new realms. Let men not curse you, as the old nobility, and shake you off, smeared with blood and dust. Turn your power to goodness, its natural transfiguration, and men shall bless your name, and God bless your soul. If you control the nation's politics, then it is your duty to legislate for the nation,—for man. You may develop the great national idea, the equality of all men; may frame a government which shall secure man's unalienable rights. It is for you to organize the rights of man, thus balancing into harmony the man and the many, to organize the

rights of the hand, the head, and the heart. If this be not done, the fault is yours. If the nation play the tyrant over her weakest child, if she plunder and rob the feeble Indian, the feebler Mexican, the Negro, feebler yet, why the blame is yours. Remember there is a God who deals justly with strong and weak. The poor and the weak have loitered behind in the march of man; our cities yet swarm with men half-savage. It is for you, ye elder brothers, to lead forth the weak [Pg 277] and poor! If you do the national duty that devolves on you, then are you the saviors of your country, and shall bless not that alone, but all the thousand million sons of men. Toil then for that. If the church is in your hands, then make it preach the Christian truth. Let it help the free development of religion in the self-consciousness of man, with Jesus for its pattern. It is for you to watch over this work, promote it, not retard. Help build the American church. The Roman church has been, we know what it was, and what men it bore; the English church yet stands, we know what it is. But the church of America—which shall represent American vigor aspiring to realize the ideas of Christianity, of absolute religion,—that is not yet. No man has come with pious genius fit to conceive its litany, to chant its mighty creed, and sing its beauteous psalm. The church of America, the church of freedom, of absolute religion, the church of mankind, where Truth, Goodness, Piety, form one trinity of beauty, strength, and grace—when shall it come? Soon as we will. It is yours to help it come.

For these great works you may labor; yes, you are laboring, when you help forward justice, industry, when you promote the education of the people; when you practise, public and private, the virtues of a Christian man; when you hinder these seemingly little things, you hinder also the great. You are the nation's head, and if the head be wilful and wicked, what shall its members do [Pg 278] and be? To this class let me say: Remember your Position at the head of the nation; use it not as pirates, but Americans, Christians, men. Remember your Temptations, and be warned in time. Remember your opportunities—such as no men ever had before. God and man alike call on you to do your duty. Elevate your calling still more; let its nobleness appear in you. Scorn a mean thing. Give the world more than you take. You are to serve the nation, not it you; to build the church, not make it a den of thieves, nor allow it to apologize for your crime, or sloth. Try this experiment and see what comes of it. In all things govern yourselves by the eternal law of right. You shall build up not a military despotism, nor a mercantile oligarchy, but a State, where the government is of all, by all, and for all; you shall found not a feudal theocracy, nor a beggarly sect, but the church of mankind, and that Christ which is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, will dwell in it, to guide, to warn, to inspire, and to bless all men. And you, my brothers, what shall you become? Not knaves, higgling rather than earn; not tyrants, to be feared whilst living, and buried at last amid popular hate; but men, who thrive best by justice, reason, conscience, and have now the blessedness of just men making themselves perfect.

FOOTNOTES:

[23] I gather these facts from a Review of Major Poussin's *Belgique et les Belges, depuis 1830*, in a foreign journal. The condition of the merchant manufacturer I know not.

[24] Subsequent events (in 1850 and 1851) show that he was right in his statement. What was thought calumny then has become history since, and is now the glory and boast of Boston.

[25] Mr. *Robert J. Walker* published a letter in favor of the annexation of Texas. In it he said: "Upon the refusal of re-annexation ... THE TARIFF AS A PRACTICAL MEASURE FALLS WHOLLY AND FOR EVER, and we shall thereafter be compelled to resort to direct taxes to support the Government." Notwithstanding this foolish threat, a large number of citizens of Massachusetts remonstrated against annexation. The House of Representatives, by a large majority, passed a resolve declaring that Massachusetts "announces her uncompromising opposition to the further extension of American slavery," and "declares her earnest and unalterable purpose to use every lawful and constitutional measure for its overthrow and entire extinction," etc. But the Senate voted that the resistance of the State was already sufficient! The passage in the text refers to these circumstances.

[26] It was then thought that the aqueduct would cost but $2,000,000.

[27] I refer to the Report of M. Villerme, in the *Mémoires de l'Institut, Tom.* lxxi.

[28] This was printed in 1846. In 1850, and since, these men have publicly gloried in a similar act even more atrocious.

[29] Keble, in one of his poems, represents a mother seeing her sportive son "enacting holy rites," and thus describes her emotions:

> "She sees in heart an empty throne,
> And falling, falling far away,
> Him whom the Lord hath placed thereon:
> She hears the dread Proclaimer say,
> 'Cast ye the lot, in trembling cast,
> The traitor to his place hath past,—
> Strive ye with prayer and fast to guide
> The dangerous glory where it shall abide.'"

[30] It is the custom in Massachusetts to tax men in the place where they reside, on the first day of May; as the taxes differ very much in different towns of the same State, it is easy for a man to escape the burden of taxation.

VIII.

[Pg 279]

A SERMON OF THE DANGEROUS CLASSES IN SOCIETY.—PREACHED AT THE MELODEON, ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 1847.

MATTHEW XVIII. 12.

If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

We are first babies, then children, then youths, then men. It is so with the nation; so with mankind. The human race started with no culture, no religion, no morals, even no manners, having only desires and faculties within, and the world without. Now we have attained much more. But it has taken many centuries for mankind to pass from primeval barbarism to the present stage of comfort, science, civilization, and refinement. It has been the work of two hundred generations; perhaps of more. But each new child is born at the foot of the ladder, as much as the first child; with only desires and faculties. He may have a better physical organization than the first child; he certainly has better teachers; but he, in like manner, is born [Pg 280] with no culture, no religion, no morals, even with no manners; born into them, not with them; born bare of these things and naked as the first child. He must himself toil up the ladder which mankind have been so long in constructing and climbing up. To attain the present civilization he must pass over every point which the race passed through. The child of the civilized man, born with a good organization and under favorable circumstances, can do this rapidly, and in thirty or forty years attains the height of development which it took the whole human race sixty centuries or more to arrive at. He has the aid of past experience and the examples of noble men; he travels a road already smooth and beaten. The world's cultivation, so slowly and painfully achieved, helps civilize him. He may then go further on, and cultivate himself; may transcend the development of mankind, adding new rounds to the ladder. So doing he aids future children, who will one day climb above his head, he possibly crying against them,—that they climb only to fall, and thereby sweep off him and all below; that no new rounds can be added to the old ladder.

Still, after all the helps which our fathers have provided, every future child must go through the same points which we and our predecessors passed through, only more swiftly. Every boy has his animal period, when he can only eat and sleep, intelligence slowly dawning on his mind. Then [Pg 281] comes his savage period, when he knows nothing of rights, when all thine is mine to him, if he can get it. Then comes his barbarous period, when he is ignorant and dislikes to learn; study and restraint are irksome. He hates the school, disobeys his mother; has reverence for nobody. Nothing is sacred to him—no time, nor place, nor person. He would grow up wild. The greater part of children travel beyond this stage. The unbearable boy becomes a tolerable youth; then a powerful man. He loves his duty; outstrips the men that once led him so unwilling and reluctant, and will set hard lessons for his grandsire which that grandsire, perhaps, will not learn. The young learns of the old, mounts the ladder they mounted and the ladder they made. The reverse is seldom true, that the old climbs the ladder which the young have made, and over that storms new heights. Now and then you see it, but such are extraordinary and marvellous men. In the old story Saturn did not take pains to understand his children, nor learn thereof; he only devoured them up, till some outgrew and overmastered him. Did the generation that is passing from the stage ever comprehend and fairly judge the new generation coming on? In the world, the barbarian passes on and becomes the civilized, then the enlightened.

In the physical process of growth from the baby to the man, there is no direct intervention of the [Pg 282] will. Therefore the process goes on regularly, and we do not see abortive men who have advanced in years, but stopped growth in their babyhood, or boyhood. But as the will is the soul of personality, so to say, the heart of intellect, morals and religion, so the force thereof may promote, retard, disturb, and perhaps for a time completely arrest the progress of intellectual, moral and religious growth. Still more, this spiritual development of men is hindered or promoted by subtle causes hitherto little appreciated. Hence, by reason of these outward or internal hinderances, you find persons and classes of men who do not attain the average culture of mankind, but stop at some lower stage of this spiritual development, or else loiter behind the rest. You even find whole nations whose progress is so slow, that they need the continual aid of the more civilized to quicken their growth. Outward circumstances have a powerful influence on this development. If a single class in a nation lingers behind the rest, the cause thereof will commonly be found in some outward hinderance. They move in a resisting medium, and therefore with abated speed. No one expects the same progress from a Russian serf and a free man of New England. I do not deny that in the case of some men personal will is doubtless the disturbing force. I am not now to go beyond that fact, and inquire how the will became as it is. Here is a man who, from whatever cause, is bodily ill-born, with defective organs. He stops in the animal [Pg 283] period; is incapable of any considerable degree of development, intellectual, moral, or religious. The defect is in his body. Others disturbed by more occult causes do not attain their proper growth. This man wishes to stop in his savage period, he would be a freebooter, a privateer against society, having universal letters-of-marque and reprisal; a perpetual Arab, his rule is to

get what he can, as he will and where he pleases, to keep what he gets. Another stops at the barbarous age. He is lazy and will not work, others must bear his share of the general burden of mankind. He claims letters patent to make all men serve him. He is not only indolent, constitutionally lazy, but lazy, consciously and wilfully idle. He will not work, but in one form or another will beg or steal. Yet a fourth stops in the half-civilized period. He will work with his hands, but no more. He cannot discover; he will not study to learn; he will not even be taught what has been invented and taught before. None can teach him. The horse is led to the water, or the water brought to the horse, but the beast will not drink. "The idle fool is whipt at school," but to no purpose. He is always an oaf. No college or tutor mends him. The wild ass will go out free, wild, and an ass.

These four, the idiot, the pirate, the thief, and the clown are exceptional men. They remain stationary. Meanwhile, mankind advances, continually, but not with an even front. The human [Pg 284] race moves not by column or line, but by *échelon* as it were. We go up by stairs, not by slopes. Now comes a great man, of far-reaching and prospective sight, a Moses, and he tells men that there is a land of promise, which they have a right to who have skill to win it. Then lesser men, the Calebs and Joshuas, go and search it out, bringing back therefrom new wine in the cluster and alluring tales. Next troops of pioneers advance, yet lesser men; then a few bold men who love adventure. Then comes the army, the people with their flocks and herds, the priesthood with their ark of the covenant and the tabernacle, the title-deeds of the new lands which they have heard of but not seen. At last there comes the mixed multitude, following in no order, but not without shouting and tumult, men treading one another under foot, cowards looking back and refusing to march, old men dying without seeing their consolation. If you will lie down on the ground and take the profile of a great city, and see how hill, steeple, dome, tower, the roof of the tall house, gain on the sky, and then come whole streets of warehouses and shops, then common dwellings, then cheap, low tenements, you will have a good profile of man's march to gain new conquests in science, art, morals, religion, and general development. It is so in the family, a bright boy shooting before all the rest, and taking the thunder out of the adverse cloud for his [Pg 285] brothers and sisters, who follow and grow rich with unscathed forehead. It is so in the nation, a few great men bearing the brunt of the storm, and wading through the surges to set their weaker brothers, screaming and struggling, with dry feet, in safety, on the firm land of science or religion. It is so in the world, a tall nation achieving art, science, law, morals, religion, and by the fact revealing their beauty to the barbarian race.

In all departments of human concern there are such pioneers for the family, the nation or mankind. It is instructive to study this law of human progress, to see the De Gamas and Columbuses, aspiring men who dream of worlds to come and lead the perilous van; to see the Vespuccis, the Cortezes, the Pizarros, who get rank and fame by following in their track; to see next the merchant adventurers, soldiers, sutlers and the like, who make money out of the new conquest, while the great discoverers had for meet reward the joy of their genius, the nobleness of their work, a sight of the world's future welfare from the prophet's mountain—a hard life, a bad name, and a grave unknown.

Now while there are those men in the van of society, who aspire at more, chiding and taxing mankind with idleness, cowardice, and even sin, there are yet those others who loiter on the way, from weakness or wilfulness, refusing to advance—idlers, cowards, sinners. If born in the rear, [Pg 286] afar from civilization, they are left to die—the savages, the inferior races, the perishing classes of the world. If born in the centre of civilization, for a while they impede the march by actively hindering others, by standing in their way, or by plundering the rest—the dangerous classes of society. They too are slain and trodden under foot of men, and likewise perish.

In most large families there is a bad boy, a black sheep in the flock, an Ishmael whom Abraham will drive out into the wilderness, to meet an angel if he can find one. That story of Hagar and her son is very old, but verified anew each year in families and nations. So in society there are criminals who do not keep up with the moral advance of the mass, stragglers from the march, whom society treats as Abraham his base-born boy, but sending them off with no loaf or skin of water, not even a blessing, but a curse; sending them off as Cain went, with a bad name and a mark on their forehead! So in the world there are inferior nations, savage, barbarous, half-civilized; some are inferior in nature, some perhaps only behind us in development; on a lower form in the great school of Providence—Negroes, Indians, Mexicans, Irish, and the like, whom the world treats as Ishmael and the Gibeonites got treated: now their land is stolen from them in war; their children, or their persons, are annexed to the strong as slaves. The civilized continually preys on the savage, reannexing their territory and stealing their persons—owning them or [Pg 287] claiming their work. Esau is rough and hungry, Jacob smooth and well fed. The smooth man overreaches the rough; buys his birthright for a mess of pottage; takes the ground from underneath his feet, thereby supplanting his brother. So the elder serves the younger, and the fresh civilization, strong, and sometimes it may be wicked also, overmasters the ruder age that is contented to stop. The young man now a barbarian will come up one day and take all our places, making us seem ridiculous, nothing but timid conservatives!

All these three, the reputed pests of the family, society, and the world, are but loiterers from the march, bad boys, or dull ones. Criminals are a class of such; savages are nations thereof—classes or nations that for some cause do not keep up with the movement of mankind. The same human nature is in us all, only there it is not so highly developed. Yet the bad boy, who to-day is a curse to the mother that bore him, would perhaps have been accounted brave and good in the days of the Conqueror; the dangerous class might have fought in the Crusades and been reckoned

soldiers of the Lord whose chance for heaven was most auspicious. The savage nations would have been thought civilized in the days when "there was no smith in Israel." David would make a sorry figure among the present kings of Europe, and Abraham would be judged of by a standard not known in his time. There have been many centuries in which the pirate, the land-robber and the murderer were thought the greatest of men. [Pg 288]

Now it becomes a serious question, What shall be done for these stragglers, or even with them? It is sometimes a terrible question to the father and mother what they shall do for their reprobate son who is an offence to the neighborhood, a shame, a reproach and a heart-burning to them. It is a sad question to society, What shall be done with the criminals—thieves, housebreakers, pirates, murderers? It is a serious question to the world, What is to become of the humbler nations—Irish, Mexicans, Malays, Indians, Negroes?

In the world and in society the question is answered in about the same way. In a low civilization, the instinct of self-preservation is the strongest of all. They are done with, not for; are done away with. It is the Old Testament answer:—The inferior nation is hewn to pieces, the strong possess their lands, their cities, their cattle, their persons, also, if they will; the class of criminals gets the prophet's curse: the two bears, the jail and the gallows, eat them up. In the family alone is the Christian answer given; the good shepherd goes forth to seek the one sheep that has strayed and gone, lost upon the mountains; the father goes out after the poor prodigal, whom the swine's meat could not feed nor fill.[31] The world, which is the society of nations, and society, which is [Pg 289] the family of classes, still belong mainly to the "old dispensation," Heathen or Hebrew, the period of force. In the family there is a certain instinctive love binding the parent to the child, and therefore a certain unity of action, growing out of that love. So the father feels his kinship to his boy, though a reprobate; looks for the causes of his son's folly or sin, and strives to cure him; at least to do something for him, not merely with him. The spirit of Christianity comes into the family, but the recognition of human brotherhood stops mainly there. It does not reach throughout society; it has little influence on national politics or international law—on the affairs of the world taken as a whole. I know the idea of human brotherhood has more influence now than hitherto; I think in New England it has a wider scope, a higher range, and works with more power than elsewhere. Our hearts bleed for the starving thousands of Ireland, whom we only read of; for the down-trodden slave, though of another race and dyed by Heaven with another hue; yes, for the savage and the suffering everywhere. The hand of our charity goes through every land. If there is one quality for which the men of New England may be proud it is this, their [Pg 290] sympathy with suffering man. Still we are far from the Christian ideal. We still drive out of society the Ishmaels and Esaus. This we do not so much from ill-will as want of thought, but thereby we lose the strength of these outcasts. So much water runs over the dam—wasted and wasting!

In all these melancholy cases what is it best to do? what shall the parents do to mend their dull boy, or their wicked one? There are two methods which may be tried. One is the method of force, sometimes referred to Solomon, and recommended by the maxim, "Spare not the rod and spoil the child." That is the Old Testament way, "Stripes are prepared for the fool's back." The mischief is, they leave it no wiser than they found it. By the law of the Hebrews, a man brought his stubborn and rebellious son before the magistrates and deposed: "This our son is stubborn and rebellious: he will not obey our voice. He is a glutton and a drunkard." Thereupon, the men of the city stoned him with stones and so "put away the evil from amongst them!" That was the method of force. It may bruise the body; it may fill men with fear; it may kill. I think it never did any other good. It belonged to a rude and bloody age. I may ask intelligent men who have tried it, and I think they will confess it was a mistake. I think I may ask intelligent men on whom it has been [Pg 291] tried, and they will say, "It was a mistake on my father's part, but a curse to me!" I know there are exceptions to that reply; still I think it will be general. A man is seldom elevated by an appeal to low motives; always by addressing what is high and manly within him. Is fear of physical pain the highest element you can appeal to in a child; the most effectual? I do not see how Satan can be cast out by Satan. I think a Saviour never tries it. Yet this method of force is brief and compact. It requires no patience, no thought, no wisdom for its application, and but a moment's time. For this reason, I think, it is still retained in some families and many schools, to the injury alike of all concerned. Blows and violent words are not correction, often but an adjournment of correction: sometimes only an actual confession of inability to correct.

The other is the method of love, and of wisdom not the less. Force may hide, and even silence effects for a time; it removes not the real causes of evil. By the method of love and wisdom the parents remove the causes; they do not kill the demoniac, they cast out the demon, not by letting in Beelzebub, the chief devil, but by the finger of God. They redress the child's folly and evil birth by their own wisdom and good breeding. The day drives out and off the night.

Sometimes you see that worthy parents have a weak and sickly child, feeble in body. No pains are [Pg 292] too great for them to take in behalf of the faint and feeble one. What self-denial of the father; what sacrifice on the mother's part! The best of medical skill is procured; the tenderest watching is not spared. No outlay of money, time, or sacrifice is thought too much to save the child's life; to insure a firm constitution and make that life a blessing. The able-bodied children can take care of themselves, but not the weak. So the affection of father and mother centres on this sickly child. By extraordinary attention the feeble becomes strong; the deformed is transformed, and the

grown man, strong and active, blesses his mother for health not less than life.

Did you ever see a robin attend to her immature and callow child which some heedless or wicked boy had stolen from the nest, wounded and left on the ground, half living; left to perish? Patiently she brings food and water, gives it kind nursing. Tenderly she broods over it all night upon the ground, sheltering its tortured body from the cold air of night and morning's penetrating dew. She perils herself; never leaves it—not till life is gone. That is nature; the strong protecting the feeble. Human nature may pause and consider the fowls of the air, whence the Greatest once drew his lessons. Human history, spite of all its tears and blood, is full of beauty and majestic worth. But it shows few things so fair as the mother watching thus over her sickly and deformed [Pg 293] child, feeding him with her own life. What if she forewent her native instinct and the mother said, "My boy is deformed, a cripple—let him die?" Where would be the more hideous deformity?

If his child be dull, slow-witted, what pains will a good father take to instruct him; still more if he is vicious, born with a low organization, with bad propensities—what admonitions will he administer; what teachers will he consult; what expedients will he try; what prayers will he not pray for his stubborn and rebellious son! Though one experiment fail, he tries another, and then again, reluctant to give over. Did it never happen to one of you to be such a child, to have outgrown that rebellion and wickedness? Remember the pains taken with you; remember the agony your mother felt; the shame that bowed your father's head so oft, and brought such bitter tears adown those venerable cheeks. You cannot pay for that agony, that shame, not pay the hearts which burst with both—yet uttering only a prayer for you. Pay it back then, if you can, to others like yourself, stubborn and rebellious sons.

Has none of you ever been such a father or mother? You know then the sad yearnings of heart which tried you. The world condemned you and your wicked child, and said, "Let the elders stone him with stones. The gallows waiteth for its own!" Not so you! You said: "Nay, now, wait a little. [Pg 294] Perchance the boy will mend. Come, I will try again. Crush him not utterly and a father's heart besides!" The more he was wicked, the more assiduous were you for his recovery, for his elevation. You saw that he would not keep up with the moral march of men; that he was a barbarian, a savage, yes, almost a beast amongst men. You saw this; yes, felt it too as none others felt. Yet you could not condemn him wholly and without hope. You saw some good mixed with his evil; some causes for the evil and excuses for it which others were blind to. Because you mourned most you pitied most—all from the abundance of your love. Though even in your highest hour of prayer, the sad conviction came that work or prayer was all in vain—you never gave him over to the world's reproach, but interposed your fortune, character, yes, your own person, to take the blows which the severe and tyrannous world kept laying on. At last if he would not repent, you hid him away, the best you could, from the mocking sight of other men, but never shut him from your heart; never from remembrance in your deepest prayers. How the whole family suffers for the prodigal till he returns. When he comes back, you rejoice over one recovered olive-plant more than over all the trees of your field which no storm has ever broke or bowed. How you went forth to meet him; with what joy rejoiced! "For this my son was lost and is found," says the old man; "he was dead and is alive once more. Let us pray and be glad!" With [Pg 295] what a serene and hallowed countenance you met your friends and neighbors, as their glad hearts smiled up in their faces when the prodigal came home from riot and swine's-bread, a new man safe and sound! Many such things have I seen, and hearts long cold grew bright and warm again. Towards evening the clouds broke asunder; Simeon saw his consolation and went home in sunlight and in peace.

The general result of this treatment in the family is, that the dull boy learns by degrees, learns what he is fit for: the straggler joins the troop, and keeps step with the rest, nay, sometimes becomes the leader of the march: the vicious boy is corrected; even the faults of his organization get overcome, not suddenly, but at length. The rejected stone finds its place on the wall, and its use. Such is not always the result. Some will not be mended. I stop not now to ask the cause. Some will not return, though you go out to meet them a great way off. What then? Will you refuse to go? Can you wholly abandon a friend or a child who thus deserts himself? Is he so bad that he cannot be made better? Perhaps it is so. Can you not hinder him from being worse? Are you so good that you must forsake him? Did not God send his greatest, noblest, purest Son to seek and save the lost? send him to call sinners to repent? When sinners slew him, did God forsake [Pg 296] mankind? Not one of those sinners did his love forget.

Does the good physician spend the night in feasting with the sound, or in watching with the sick? Nay, though the sick man be past all hope, he will look in to soothe affliction which he cannot cure; at least to speak a word of friendly cheer. The wise teacher spends most pains with backward boys, and is most bountiful himself where Nature seems most niggard in her gifts. What would you say if a teacher refused to help a boy because the boy was slow to learn; because he now and then broke through the rules? What if the mother said: "My boy is a sickly dunce, not worth the pains of rearing. Let him die!" What if the father said: "He is a born villain, to be bred only for the gallows; what use to toil or pray for him! Let the hangman take my son!"

What shall be done for Criminals, the backward children of society, who refuse to keep up with the moral or legal advance of mankind? They are a dangerous class. There are three things which are sometimes confounded: there is Error, an unintentional violation of a natural law. Sometimes this comes from abundance of life and energy; sometimes from ignorance, general or special;

sometimes from heedlessness, which is ignorance for the time. Next there is Crime, the violation of a human statute. Suppose the statute also represents a law of God; the violation thereof may [Pg 297] be the result of ignorance, or of design, it may come from a bad heart. Then it becomes a Sin—the wilful violation of a known law of God. There are many errors which are not crimes; and the best men often commit them innocently, but not without harm, violating laws of the body or the soul, which they have not grown up to understand. There have been many crimes; yes, conscious violations of man's law which were not sins, but rather a keeping of God's law. There are still a great many sins not forbidden by any human statute, not considered as crimes. It is no crime to go and fight in a wicked war; nay, it is thought a virtue. It was a crime in the heroes of the American Revolution to demand the unalienable rights of man—they were "traitors" who did it; a crime in Jesus to sum up the "Law and the Prophets," in one word, Love; he was reckoned an "infidel," guilty of blasphemy against Moses! Now to punish an error as a crime, a crime as a sin, leads to confusion at the first, and to much worse than confusion in the end.

But there are crimes which are a violation of the eternal principles of justice. It is of such, and the men who commit them, that I am now to speak. What shall be done for the dangerous classes, the criminals?

The first question is, What end shall we aim at in dealing with them? The means must be suited [Pg 298] to accomplish that end. We may desire vengeance; then the hurt inflicted on the criminal will be proportioned to the loss or hurt sustained by society. A man has stolen my goods, injured my person, traduced my good name, sought to take my life. I will not ask for the motive of his deeds, or the cause of that motive. I will only consider my own damage, and will make him smart for that. I will use violence—having an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. I will deliver him over to the tormentors till my vengeance is satisfied. If he slew my friend, or sought to slay but lacked the power, as I have the ability I will kill him! This desire of vengeance, of paying a hurt with a hurt, has still very much influence on our treatment of criminals. I fear it is still the chief aim of our penal jurisprudence. When vengeance is the aim, violence is the most suitable method; jails and the gallows most appropriate instruments! But is it right to take vengeance; for me to hurt a man to-day solely because he hurt me yesterday? If so, the proof of that right must be found in my nature, in the law of God; a man can make a statute, God only a right. As I study my nature, I find no such right; reason gives me none; conscience none; religion quite as little. Doubtless I have a right to defend myself by all manly means; to protect myself for the future no less than for the present. In doing that, it may be needful that I should restrain, and in restraining seize and [Pg 299] hold, and in holding incidentally hurt my opponent. But I cannot see what right I have in cold blood wilfully to hurt a man because he once hurt me, and does not intend to repeat the wrong. Do I look to the authority of the greatest Son of man? I find no allusion to such a right. I find no law of God which allows vengeance. In his providence I find justice everywhere as beautiful as certain; but vengeance nowhere. I know this is not the common notion entertained of God and his providence. I shudder to think at the barbarism which yet prevails under the guise of Christianity; the vengeance which is sought for in the name of God!

The aim may be not to revenge a crime, but to prevent it; to deter the offender from repeating the deed, and others from the beginning thereof. In all modern legislation the vindictive spirit is slowly yielding to the design of preventing crime. The method is to inflict certain uniform and specific penalties for each offence, proportionate to the damage which the criminal has done; to make the punishment so certain, so severe, or so infamous, that the offender shall forbear for the future, and innocent men be deterred from crime. But have we a right to punish a man for the example's sake? I may give up my life to save a thousand lives, or one if I will. But society has no right to take it, without my consent, to save the whole human race! I admit that society has the [Pg 300] right of eminent domain over my property, and may take my land for a street; may destroy my house to save the town; perhaps seize on my store of provisions in time of famine. It can render me an equivalent for those things. I have not the same lien on any portion of the universe as on my life, my person. To these I have rights which none can alienate except myself, which no man has given, which all men can never justly take away. For any injustice wilfully done to me, the human race can render me no equivalent.

I know society claims the right of eminent domain over person and life not less than over house and land—to take both for the Commonwealth. I deny the right—certainly it has never been shown. Hence to me, resting on the broad ground of natural justice, the law of God, capital punishment seems wholly inadmissible, homicide with the pomp and formality of law. It is a relic of the old barbarism—paying hurt for hurt. No one will contend that it is inflicted for the offender's good. For the good of others I contend we have no right to inflict it without the sufferer's consent. To put a criminal to death seems to me as foolish as for the child to beat the stool it has stumbled over, and as useless too. I am astonished that nations with the name of Christian ever on their lips, continue to disgrace themselves by killing men, formally and in cold blood; to do this with prayers—"Forgive us as we forgive;" doing it in the name of God! I do not [Pg 301] wonder that in the codes of nations, Hebrew or heathen, far lower than ourselves in civilization, we should find laws enforcing this punishment; laws too enacted in the name of God. But it fills me with amazement that worthy men in these days should go back to such sources for their wisdom; should walk dry-shod through the Gospels and seek in records of a barbarous people to justify this atrocious act! Famine, pestilence, war, are terrible evils, but no one is so dreadful in its effects as the general prevalence of a great theological idea that is false.

It makes me shudder to recollect that out of the twenty-eight States of this Union twenty-seven should still continue the gallows as a part of the furniture of a Christian Government. I hope our

own State, dignified already by so many noble acts, will soon rid herself of the stain. Let us try the experiment of abolishing this penalty, if we will, for twenty years, or but ten, and I am confident we shall never return to that punishment. If a man be incapable of living in society, so ill-born or ill-bred that you cannot cure or mend him, why, hide him away out of society. Let him do no harm, but treat him kindly, not like a wolf but a man. Make him work, to be useful to himself, to society, but do not kill him. Or if you do, never say again, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us." What if He should take you at your word! What [Pg 302] would you think of a father who to-morrow should take the Old Testament for his legal warrant, and bring his son before your Mayor and Aldermen because he was "stubborn and rebellious, a drunkard and a glutton," and they should stone him to death in front of the City Hall! But there is quite as good a warrant in the Old Testament for that as for hanging a man. The law is referred to Jehovah as its author. How much better is it to choke the life out of a man behind the prison wall? Is not society the father of us all, our protector and defender? Hanging is vengeance; nothing but vengeance. I can readily conceive of that great Son of man, whom the loyal world so readily adores, performing all needful human works with manly dignity. Artists once loved to paint the Saviour in the lowly toil of lowly men, his garments covered with the dust of common life; his soul sullied by no pollution. But paint him to your fancy as an executioner; legally killing a man; the halter in his hands, hanging Judas for high treason! You see the relation which that punishment bears to Christianity. Yet what was unchristian in Jesus does not become Christian in the sheriff. We call ourselves Christians; we often repeat the name, the words of Christ,—but his prayer? oh no—not that.

There are now in this land, I think, sixteen men under sentence of death; sixteen men to be hanged till they are dead! Is there not in the nation skill to heal these men? Perhaps it is so. I [Pg 303] have known hearts which seemed to me cold stones, so hard, so dry. No kindly steel had alchemy to win a spark from them. Yet their owners went about the streets and smiled their hollow smiles; the ghastly brother cast his shadow in the sun, or wrapped his cloak about him in the wintry hour, and still the world went on though the worst of men remained unhanged. Perhaps you cannot cure these men!—is there not power enough to keep them from doing harm; to make them useful? Shame on us that we know no better than thus to pour out life upon the dust, and then with reeking hands turn to the poor and weak and say, "Ye shall not kill."

But if the prevention of crime be the design of the punishment, then we must not only seek to hinder the innocent from vice, but we must reform the criminal. Do our methods of punishment effect that object? During the past year we have committed to the various prisons in Massachusetts five thousand six hundred sixty-nine persons for crime. How many of them will be reformed and cured by this treatment, and so live honest and useful lives hereafter? I think very few. The facts show that a great many criminals are never reformed by their punishment. Thus in France, taking the average of four years, it seems that twenty-two out of each hundred criminals were punished oftener than once; in Scotland thirty-six out of the hundred. Of the seventy-eight received at your State's prison the last year—seventeen have been sent to that very prison [Pg 304] before. How many of them have been tenants of other institutions I know not, but as only twenty-three of the seventy-eight are natives of this State, it is plain that many, under other names, may have been confined in jail before. Yet of these seventy-eight, ten are less than twenty years old. [32] Of thirty-five men sent from Boston to the State's prison in one year, fourteen had been there before. More than half the inmates of the House of Correction in this city are punished oftener than once! These facts show that if we aim at the reformation of the offender we fail most signally. Yet every criminal not reformed lives mainly at the charge of society; and lives too in the most costly way, for the articles he steals have seldom the same value to him as to the lawful owner.

It seems to me that our whole method of punishing crimes is a false one; that but little good comes of it, or can come. We beat the stool which we have stumbled over. We punish a man in proportion to the loss or the fear of society; not in proportion to the offender's state of mind; not with a careful desire to improve that state of mind. This is wise if vengeance be the aim; if reformation, it seems sheer folly. I know our present method is the result of six thousand years' [Pg 305] experience of mankind; I know how easy it is to find fault—how difficult to devise a better mode. Still the facts are so plain that one with half an eye cannot fail to see the falseness of the present methods. To remove the evil, we must remove its cause,—so let us look a little into this matter, and see from what quarter our criminals proceed.

Here are two classes.

I. There are the foes of society; men that are criminals in soul, born criminals, who have a bad nature. The cause of their crime therefore is to be found in their nature itself, in their organization if you will. All experience shows that some men are born with a depraved organization, an excess of animal passions, or a deficiency of other powers to balance them.

II. There are the victims of society; men that become criminals by circumstances, made criminals, not born; men who become criminals, not so much from strength of evil in their soul, or excess of evil propensities in their organization, as from strength of evil in their circumstances. I do not say that a man's character is wholly determined by the circumstances in which he is placed, but all experience shows that circumstances, such as exposure in youth to good men or bad men, education, intellectual, moral, and religious, or neglect thereof entire or partial, have a vast influence in forming the character of men, especially of men not well endowed by nature. [Pg 306]

Now the criminals in soul are the most dangerous of men, the born foes of society. I will not at

this moment undertake to go behind their organization and ask, "How comes it that they are so ill-born?" I stop now at that fact. The cause of their crime is in their bodily constitution itself. This is always a small class. There are in New England perhaps five hundred men born blind or deaf. Apart from the idiots, I think there are not half so many who by nature and bodily constitution are incapable of attaining the average morality of the race at this day; not so many born foes of society as are born blind or deaf.

The criminals from circumstances become what they are by the action of causes which may be ascertained, guarded against, mitigated, and at last overcome and removed. These men are born of poor parents, and find it difficult to satisfy the natural wants of food, clothing, and shelter. They get little culture, intellectual or moral. The school-house is open, but the parent does not send the children, he wants their services, to beg for him, perhaps to steal, it may be to do little services which lie within their power. Besides, the child must be ill-clad, and so a mark is set on him. The boy of the perishing classes, with but common endowments, cannot learn at school as one of the thrifty or abounding class. Then he receives no stimulus at home; there every thing [Pg 307] discourages his attempts. He cannot share the pleasure and sport of his youthful fellows. His dress, his uncleanly habits, the result of misery, forbid all that. So the children of the perishing herd together, ignorant, ill-fed, and miserably clad. You do not find the sons of this class in your colleges, in your high schools where all is free for the people; few even in the grammar schools; few in the churches. Though born into the nineteenth century after Christ, they grow up almost in the barbarism of the nineteenth century before him. Children that are blind and deaf, though born with a superior organization, if left to themselves become only savages, little more than animals. What are we to expect of children, born indeed with eyes and ears, but yet shut out from the culture of the age they live in? In the corruption of a city, in the midst of its intenser life, what wonder that they associate with crime, that the moral instinct, baffled and cheated of its due, becomes so powerless in the boy or girl; what wonder that reason never gets developed there, nor conscience, nor that blessed religious sense learns ever to assert its power? Think of the temptations that beset the boy; those yet more revolting which address the other sex. Opportunities for crime continually offer. Want impels, desire leagues with opportunity, and the result we know. Add to all this the curse that creates so much disease, poverty, wretchedness, [Pg 308] and so perpetually begets crime; I mean intemperance! That is almost the only pleasure of the perishing class. What recognized amusement have they but this, of drinking themselves drunk? Do you wonder at this? with no air, nor light, nor water, with scanty food and a miserable dress, with no culture, living in a cellar or a garret, crowded, stifling, and offensive even to the rudest sense, do you wonder that man or woman seeks a brief vacation of misery in the dram-shop and in its drunkenness? I wonder not. Under such circumstances how many of you would have done better? To suffer continually from lack of what is needful for the natural bodily wants of food, of shelter, of warmth, that suffering is misery. It is not too much to say, there are always in this city thousands of persons who smart under that misery. They are indeed a perishing class.

Almost all our criminals, victims and foes, come from this portion of society. Most of those born with an organization that is predisposed to crime are born there. The laws of nature are unavoidably violated from generation to generation. Unnatural results must follow. The misfortunes of the father are visited on his miserable child. Cows and sheep degenerate when the demands of nature are not met, and men degenerate not less. Only the low, animal instincts, those of self-defence and self-perpetuation get developed; these with preternatural force. The [Pg 309] animal man wakes, becomes brutish, while the spiritual element sleeps within him. Unavoidably then the perishing is mother of the dangerous class.

I deny not that a portion of criminals come from other sources, but at least nine tenths thereof proceed from this quarter. Of two hundred and seventy-three thousand, eight hundred and eighteen criminals punished in France from 1825 to 1839, more than half were wholly unable even to read, and had been brought up subject to no family affections. Out of seventy criminals in one prison at Glasgow who were under eighteen, fifty were orphans having lost one or both parents, and nearly all the rest had parents of bad character and reputation. Taking all the criminals in England and Wales in 1841, there were not eight in a hundred that could read and write well. In our country, where everybody gets a mouthful of education, though scarce any one a full meal, the result is a little different. Thus of the seven hundred and ninety prisoners in the Mount Pleasant State's Prison in New York, one hundred it is said could read and understand. Yet of all our criminals only a very small proportion have been in a condition to obtain the average intellectual and moral culture of our times.

Our present mode of treating criminals does no good to this class of men, these victims of circumstances. I do not know that their improvement is even contemplated. We do not ask what causes made this man a criminal, and then set ourselves to remove those causes. We look only at [Pg 310] the crime; so we punish practically a man because he had a wicked father; because his education was neglected, and he exposed to the baneful influence of unholy men. In the main we treat all criminals alike if guilty of the same offence, though the same act denotes very different degrees of culpability in the different men, and the same punishment is attended with quite opposite results. Two men commit similar crimes, we sentence them both to the State Prison for ten years. At the expiration of one year let us suppose one man has thoroughly reformed, and has made strict and solemn resolutions to pursue an honest and useful life. I do not say such a result is to be expected from such treatment; still it is possible, and I think has happened, perhaps many times. We do not discharge the man; we care nothing for his penitence; nothing for his improvement; we keep him nine years more. That is an injustice to him; we have robbed him of nine years of time which he might have converted into life. It is unjust also to society, which

needs the presence and the labor of all that can serve. The man has been a burden to himself and to us. Suppose at the expiration of his ten years the other man is not reformed at all; this result, I fear, happens in the great majority of cases. He is no better for what he has suffered; we know that he will return to his career of crime, with new energy and with even malice. Still he is [Pg 311] discharged. This is unjust to him, for he cannot bear the fresh exposure to circumstances which corrupted him at first, and he will fall lower still. It is unjust to society, for the property and the persons of all are exposed to his passions just as much as before. He feels indignant as if he had suffered a wrong. He says, "Society has taken vengeance on me, when I was to be pitied more than blamed. Now I will have my turn. They will not allow me to live by honest toil. I will learn their lesson. I will plunder their wealth, their roof shall blaze!" He will live at the expense of society, and in the way least profitable and most costly to mankind. This idle savage will levy destructive contributions on the rich, the thrifty, and the industrious. Yes, he will help teach others the wickedness which himself once, and perhaps unavoidably learned. So in the very bosom of society there is a horde of marauders waging perpetual war against mankind.

Do not say my sympathies are with the wicked, not the industrious and good. It is not so. My sympathies are not confined to one class, honorable or despised. But it seems to me this whole method of keeping a criminal a definite time and then discharging him, whether made better or worse is a mistake. Certainly it is so if we aim at his reformation. What if a shepherd made it a rule to look one hour for each lost sheep, and then return with or without the wanderer? What if [Pg 312] a smith decreed that one hour and no more should be spent in shoeing a horse, and so worked that time on each, though half that time were enough—or sent home the beast with but three shoes, or two, or one, because the hour passed by? What if the physicians decreed, that all men sick of some contagious disease, should spend six weeks in the hospital, then, if the patient were found well the next day after admission, still kept him the other forty; or, if not mended at the last day, sent him out sick to the world? Such a course would be less unjust, less inhuman, only the wrong is more obvious.

To aggravate the matter still more, we have made the punishment more infamous than the crime. A man may commit great crimes which indicate deep depravity; may escape the legal punishment thereof by gold, by flight, by further crimes, and yet hold up his head unblushing and unrepentant amongst mankind. Let him commit a small crime, which shall involve no moral guilt, and be legally punished—who respects him again? What years of noble life are deemed enough to wipe the stain out of his reputation? Nay, his children after him, to the third generation, must bear the curse!

The evil does not stop with the infamy. A guilty man has served out his time. He is thoroughly resolved on industry and a moral life. Perhaps he has not learned that crime is wrong, but found [Pg 313] it unprofitable. He will live away from the circumstances which before led him to crime. He comes out of prison, and the jail-mark is on him. He now suffers the severest part of his punishment. Friends and relations shun him. He is doomed and solitary in the midst of the crowd. Honest men will seldom employ him. The thriving class look on him with shuddering pity; the abounding loathe the convict's touch. He is driven among the dangerous and the perishing; they open their arms and offer him their destructive sympathy. They minister to his wants; they exaggerate his wrongs; they nourish his indignation. His direction is no longer in his own hands. His good resolutions—he knows they were good, but only impossible. He looks back, and sees nothing but crime and the vengeance society takes for the crime. He looks around, and the world seems thrusting at him from all quarters. He looks forward, and what prospect is there? "Hope never comes that comes to all." He must plunge afresh into that miry pit, which at last is sure to swallow him up. He plunges anew, and the jail awaits him; again; deeper yet; the gallows alone can swing him clear from that pestilent ditch. But he is a man and a brother, our companion in weakness. With his education, exposure, temptation, outward and from within, how much better would the best of you become? [Pg 314]

No better result is to be looked for from such a course. Of the one thousand five hundred and ninety-two persons in the State's prison of New York, four hundred have been there more than once. In five years, from 1841 to 1847, there were punished in the House of Correction in this city, five thousand seven hundred and forty-eight persons; of these three thousand one hundred and forty-six received such a sentence oftener than once. Yes, in five years, three hundred and thirteen were sent thither, each ten times or more! How many found a place in other jails I know not.

What if fathers treated dull or vicious boys in this manner at home—making them infamous for the first offence, or the first dulness, and then refusing to receive them back again? What if the father sent out his son with bad boys, and when he erred and fell, said: "You did mischief with bad boys once; I know they enticed you. I knew you were feeble and could not resist their seductions. But I shall punish you. Do as well as you please, I will not forgive you. If you err again, I will punish you afresh. If you do never so well, you shall be infamous for ever!" What if a public teacher never took back to college a boy who once had broke the academic law—but made him infamous for ever? What if the physicians had kept a patient the requisite time in the hospital, and discharged him as wholly cured, but bid men beware of him and shun him for ever? [Pg 315] That is just what we are doing with this class of criminals; not intentionally, not consciously—but doing none the less!

Let us look a moment more carefully, though I have already touched on this subject, at the proximate causes of crime in this class of men. The first cause is obvious—poverty. Most of the criminals are from the lowest ranks of society. If you distribute men into three classes, the

abounding, the thriving, the perishing, you will find the inmates of your prisons come almost wholly from the latter class. The perishing fill the sink of society, and the dangerous the sink of the perishing—for in that "lowest deep there is a lower depth." Of three thousand one hundred and eighty-eight persons confined in the House of Correction in this city, one thousand six hundred and fifty-seven were foreigners; of the five hundred and fifty sent from this city in five years to the State's Prison, one hundred and eighty-five were foreigners. Of five hundred and forty-seven females in the Prison on Blackwell's Island at one time—five hundred and nineteen were committed for "vagrancy;" women with no capital but their person, with no friend, no shelter. Examine minutely, you shall find that more than nine tenths of all criminals come from the perishing class of men. There all cultivation, intellectual, moral, religious, is at the lowest ebb. They are a class of barbarians; yes, of savages, living in the midst of civilization, but not of [Pg 316] it. The fact, that most criminals come from this class, shows that the causes of the crime lie out of them more than in them; that they are victims of society, not foes. The effect of property in elevating and moralizing a class of men is seldom appreciated. Historically the animal man comes before the spiritual. Animal wants are imperious; they must be supplied. The lower you go in the social scale, the more is man subordinated to his animal appetites and demonized by them. Nature aims to preserve the individual and repeat the species—so all passions relative to these two designs are preëminently powerful. If a man is born into the intense life of an American city, and grows up, having no contact with the loftier culture which naturally belongs to that intense life, why the man becomes mainly an animal, all the more violent for the atmosphere he breathes in. What shall restrain him? He has not the normal check of reason, conscience, religion, these sleep in the man; nor the artificial and conventional check of honor, of manners. The public opinion which he bows to favors obscenity, drunkenness, and violence. He is doubly a savage. His wants cannot be legally satisfied. He breaks the law, the law which covers property, then goes on to higher crimes.

The next cause is the result of the first—education is neglected, intellectual, moral, and religious. Now and then a boy in whom the soul of genius is covered with the beggar's rags, struggles [Pg 317] through the terrible environment of modern poverty to die, the hero of misery, in the attempt at education! His expiring light only makes visible the darkness out of which it shone. Boys born into this condition find at home nothing to aid them, nothing to encourage a love of excellence, or a taste for even the rudiments of learning. What is unavoidably the lot of such? The land has been the schoolmaster of the human race—but the perishing class scarce sees its face. Poverty brings privations, misery, and that a deranged state of the system; then unnatural appetites goad and burn the man. The destruction of the poor is their poverty. They see wealth about them, but have none; so none of what it brings; neither the cleanliness, nor health, nor self-respect, nor cultivation of mind, and heart, and soul. I am told that no Quaker has ever been confined in any jail in New England for any real crime. Are the Quakers better born than other men? Nay, but they are looked after in childhood. Who ever saw a Quaker in an almshouse? Not a fiftieth part of the people of New York are negroes, yet more than a sixth part of all the criminals in her four State's Prisons are men of color. These facts show plainly the causes of crime.

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the temptations of the perishing class in our great cities. In Boston at this moment there are more than four hundred boys employed about the various [Pg 318] bowling-alleys of the city, exposed to the intemperance, the coarseness, the general corruption of the men who mainly frequent those places. What will be their fate? Shall I speak of their sisters; of the education they are receiving; the end that awaits them? Poverty brings misery with its family of vices.

A third cause of crime comes with the rest—intemperance, the destroying angel that lays waste the household of the poor. In our country, misery in a healthy man is almost proof of vice; but the vice may belong to one alone, and the misery it brings be shared by the whole family. A large proportion of the perishing class are intemperate, and a great majority of all our criminals.

Now, our present method is wholly inadequate to reform men exposed to such circumstances. You may punish the man, but it does no good. You can seldom frighten men out of a fever. Can you frighten them from crime, when they know little of the internal distinction between right and wrong; when all the circumstances about them impel to crime? Can you frighten a starving girl into chastity? You cannot keep men from lewdness, theft and violence, when they have no self-respect, no culture, no development of mind, heart, and soul. The jail will not take the place of the church, of the school-house, of home. It will not remove the causes which are making new criminals. It does not reform the old ones. Shall we shut men in a jail, and when there treat them [Pg 319] with all manner of violence, crush out the little self-respect yet left, give them a degrading dress, and send them into the world cursed with an infamous name, and all that because they were born in the low places of society and caught the stain thereof? The jail does not alter the circumstances which occasioned the crime, and till these causes are removed a fresh crop will spring out of the festering soil. Some men teach dogs and horses things unnatural to these animals; they use violence and blows as their instrument of instruction. But to teach man what is conformable to his nature, something more is required.

To return to the other class, who are born criminals. Bare confinement in the prison alters no man's constitutional tendencies; it can no more correct moral or mental weakness or obliquity than it can correct a deficiency of the organs of sensation. You all know the former treatment of men born with defective or deranged intellectual faculties—of madmen and fools. We still pursue the same course towards men born with defective or deranged moral faculties, idiots and madmen of a more melancholy class, and with a like result.

I know how easy it is to find fault, and how difficult to propose a better way; how easy to misunderstand all that I have said, how easy to misrepresent it all. But it seems to me that hitherto we have set out wrong in this undertaking; have gone on wrong, and, by the present [Pg 320] means, can never remove the causes of crime nor much improve the criminals as a class. Let me modestly set down my thoughts on this subject, in hopes that other men, wiser and more practical, will find out a way yet better still. A jail, as a mere house of punishment for offenders, ought to have no place in an enlightened people. It ought to be a moral hospital where the offender is kept till he is cured. That his crime is great or little, is comparatively of but small concern. It is wrong to detain a man against his will after he is cured; wrong to send him out before he is cured, for he will rob and corrupt society, and at last miserably perish. We shall find curable cases and incurable.

I would treat the small class of born criminals, the foes of society, as maniacs. I would not kill them more than madmen; I would not inflict needless pain on them. I would not try to shame, to whip, or to starve into virtue men morally insane. I would not torture a man because born with a defective organization. Since he could not live amongst men, I would shut him out from society; would make him work for his own good and the good of society. The thought of punishment for its own sake, or as a compensation for the evil which a man has done, I would not harbor for a moment. If a man has done me a wrong, calumniated, insulted, abused me with all his power, it renders the matter no better that I turn round and make him smart for it. If he has burned my [Pg 321] house over my head, and I kill him in return, it does not rebuild my house. I cannot leave him at large to burn other men's houses. He must be restrained. But if I cure the man perhaps he will rebuild it, at any rate, will be of some service to the world, and others gain much while I lose nothing.

When the victims of society violated its laws, I would not torture a man for his misfortune, because his father was poor, his mother a brute; because his education was neglected. I would shut him out from society for a time. I would make him work for his own good and the good of others. The evil he had caught from the world I would overcome by the good that I would present to him. I would not clothe him with an infamous dress, crowd him with other men whom society had made infamous, leaving them to ferment and rot together. I would not set him up as a show to the public, for his enemy, or his rival, or some miserable fop to come and stare at with merciless and tormenting eye. I would not load him with chains, nor tear his flesh with a whip. I would not set soldiers with loaded gun to keep watch over him, insulting their brother by mocking and threats. I would treat the man with firmness, but with justice, with pity, with love. I would teach the man; what his family could not do for him, what society and the church had failed of, the jail should do, for the jail should be a manual labor school, not a dungeon of torture. [Pg 322] I would take the most gifted, the most cultivated, the wisest and most benevolent, yes, the most Christian man in the State, and set him to train up these poor savages of civilization. The best man is the natural physician of the wicked. A violent man, angry, cruel, remorseless, should never enter the jail except as a criminal. You have already taken one of the greatest, wisest, and best men of this Commonwealth, and set him to watch over the public education of the people.[33] True, you give him little money, and no honor; he brings the honor to you, not asking but giving that. You begin to see the result of setting such a man to such a work, though unhonored and ill paid. Soon you will see it more plainly in the increase of temperance, industry, thrift, of good morals and sound religion! I would set such a man, if I could find such another, to look after the dangerous classes of society. I would pay him for it; honor him for it. I would have a Board of Public Morals to look after this matter of crime, a Secretary of Public Morals, a Christian Censor, whose business it should be to attend to this class, to look after the jails and make them houses of refuge, of instruction, which should do for the perishing class what the school-house and the [Pg 323] church do for others. I would send missionaries amongst the most exposed portions of mankind as well as amongst the savages of New Holland. I would send wise men, good men. There are already some such engaged in this work. I would strengthen their hands. I would make crime infamous. If there are men whose crime is to be traced not to a defective organization of body, not to the influence of circumstances, but only to voluntary and self-conscious wickedness,—I would make these men infamous. It should be impossible for such a man, a voluntary foe of mankind, to live in society. I would have the jail such a place that the friends of a criminal of either class should take him as now they take a lunatic or a sick man, and bring him to the Court that he might be healed if curable, or if not might be kept from harm and hid away out of sight. Crime and sin should be infamous; not its correction, least of all its cure. I would not loathe and abhor a man who had been corrected and reformed by the jail more than a boy who had been reformed by his teacher, or a man cured of lunacy. I would have society a father who goes out to meet the prodigal while yet a great way off; yes, goes and brings him away from his riotous living, washes him, clothes him, and restores him to a right mind. There is a prosecuting attorney for the State; I would have also a defending attorney for the accused, that justice might be done [Pg 324] all round. Is the State only a step-mother? Then is she not a Christian Commonwealth but a barbarous despotism, fitly represented by that uplifted sword on her public seal, and that motto of barbarous and bloody Latin. I would have the State aid men and direct them after they have been discharged from the jail, not leave them to perish; not force them to perish. Society is the natural guardian of the weak.

I cannot think the method here suggested would be so costly as the present. It seems to me that institutions of this character might be made not only to support themselves, but be so managed as to leave a balance of income considerably beyond the expense. This might be made use of for the advantage of the criminal when he returned to society; or with it he might help make

restitution of what he had once stolen. Besides being less costly, it would cure the offender and send back valuable men into society.

It seems to me that our whole criminal legislation is based on a false principle—force and not love; that it is eminently well adapted to revenge, not at all to correct, to teach, to cure. The whole apparatus for the punishment of offenders, from the gallows down to the House of Correction, seems to me wrong; wholly wrong, unchristian, and even inhuman. We teach crime while we punish it. Is it consistent for the State to take vengeance when I may not? Is it better for [Pg 325] the State to kill a man in cold blood, than for me to kill my brother when in a rage? I cannot help thinking that the gallows and even the jail, as now administered, are practical teachers of violence and wrong! I cannot think it will always be so. Hitherto we have looked on criminals as voluntary enemies of mankind. We have treated them as wild beasts, not as dull or loitering boys. We have sought to destroy by death, to disable by mutilation or imprisonment, to terrify and subdue, not to convince, to reform, encourage, and bless.

The history of the past is full of prophecy for the future. Not many years ago we shut up our lunatics in jails, in dungeons, in cages; we chained the maniac with iron; we gave him a bottle of water and a sack of straw; we left him in filth, in cold and nakedness. We set strong and brutal men to watch him. When he cried, when he gnashed his teeth and tore his hair, we beat him all the more! They do so yet in some places, for they think a madman is not a brother but a devil. What was the result? Madness was found incurable. Now lunacy is a disease, to be prescribed for as fever or rheumatism; when we find an incurable case we do not kill the man, nor chain him, nor count him a devil. Yet lunacy is not curable by force, by jails, dungeons, and cages; only by [Pg 326] the medicine of wise men and good men. What if Christ had met one demoniac with a whip and another with chains!

You know how we once treated criminals! with what scourgings and mutilations, what brandings, what tortures with fire and red-hot iron! Death was not punishment enough, it must be protracted amid the most cruel torments that quivering flesh could bear. The multitude looked on and learned a lesson of deadly wickedness. A judicial murder was a holiday! It is but little more than two hundred years since a man was put to death in the most enlightened country of Europe for eating meat on Friday; not two hundred since men and women were hanged in Massachusetts for a crime now reckoned impossible! It is not a hundred years since two negro slaves were judicially burned alive in this very city! These facts make us shudder, but hope also. In a hundred years from this day will not men look on our gallows, jails, and penal law as we look on the racks, the torture-chambers of the middle ages, and the bloody code of remorseless inquisitors?

We need only to turn our attention to this subject to find a better way. We shall soon see that punishment as such is an evil to the criminal, and so swells the sum of suffering with which society runs over; that it is an evil also to the community at large by abstracting valuable force from profitable work, and so a loss.[34] We shall one day remember that the offender is a man, [Pg 327] and so his good also is to be consulted. He may be a bad man, voluntarily bad if you will. Still we are to be economical even of his suffering, for the least possible punishment is the best. Already a good many men think that error is better refuted by truth than by fagots and axes. How long will it be before we apply good sense and Christianity to the prevention of crime? One day we must see that a jail, as it is now conducted, is no more likely to cure a crime than a lunacy or a fever! Hitherto we have not seen the application of the great doctrines of Christianity; not felt that all [Pg 328] men are brothers. So our remedies for social evils have been bad almost as the disease; remedies which remedied nothing, but hid the patient out of sight. All great criminals have been thought incurable, and then killed. What if the doctors found a patient sick of a disease which he had foolishly or wickedly brought upon himself, and then, by the advice of twelve other doctors, professionally killed him for justice or example's sake? They would do what all the States in Christendom have done these thousand years. I cannot see why the Legislature has not as good right to authorize the medical college thus to kill men, as to authorize the present forms of destroying life!

We do not look the facts of crime fairly in the face. We do not see what heathens we are. Why, there is not a Christian nation in the world that has not a Secretary of War, armies, soldiers, and the terrible apparatus of destruction. But there is not one that has a Secretary of Peace, not one that takes half the pains to improve its own criminals which it takes to build forts and fleets! Yet it seems to me that a Christian State should be a great peace society, a society for mutual advancement in the qualities of a man!

Do we not see that by our present course we are teaching men violence, fraud, deceit, and murder? What is the educational effect of our present political conduct, of our invasions, our battles, our victories; of the speeches of "our great men?" You all know that this teaches the poor, [Pg 329] the low, and the weak that murder and robbery are good things when done on a large scale; that they give wealth, fame, power, and honors. The ignorant man, ill-born and ill-bred, asks: "Why not when done on a small scale; why not good for me?" If it is right in the President of the United States to rob and murder, why not for the President of the United States Bank? Do famous men say, "Our country however bounded," and vote to plunder a sister State? then why shall not the poor man, hungry and cold, say, "My purse however bounded," and seize on all he can get? Give one a seat in Congress if you will, and the other a noose of hemp, there is a God before whom seats in Congress and hempen halters are of equal value, but who does justice to great and little!

To reform the dangerous classes of society, to advance those who loiter behind our civilization, we need a special work designed directly for the good of the criminals and such as stand on that perilous ground which slopes towards crime. Some good men undertook this work long ago. They found much to do; a good deal to encourage them. Some of them are well known to you, are laboring here in the midst of us. They need counsel, encouragement, and aid. We must not look coldly on their enterprise nor on them. They can tell far better than I what specific plans are best [Pg 330] for their specific work. Already have they accomplished much in this noble enterprise. The society for aiding discharged convicts is a prophecy of yet better things. Soon I trust it will extend its kind offices to all the prisons, and its work be made the affair of the State. The plan now before your Legislature for a "State Manual Labor School," designed to reform vicious children, is also full of promise. The wise and anonymous charity which so beautifully and in silence has dropped its gold into the chest for these poor outcasts, is itself its hundred-fold reward. Institutions like that which we contemplate have been found successful in England, Germany, and France. They actually reform the juvenile delinquent and bring up useful men, not hardened criminals.[35] We are beginning to attend to this special work of removing the causes of [Pg 331] crime, and restoring at least the young offenders.

However, the greater portion of this work is not special and for the criminal, but general and for society. To change the treatment of criminals, we must change every thing else. The dangerous class is the unavoidable result of our present civilization; of our present ideas of man and social life. To reform and elevate the class of criminals, we must reform and elevate all other classes. To do that, we must educate and refine men. We must learn to treat all men as brothers. This is a great work and one of slow achievement. It cannot be brought about by legislation, nor any mechanical contrivance and reorganization alone. There is no remedy for this evil and its kindred but keeping the laws of God; in one word, none but Christianity, goodness, and piety felt in the heart, applied in all the works of life, individually, socially, and politically. While educated and abounding men acknowledge no rule of conduct but self-interest, what can you expect of the ignorant and the perishing? While great men say without rebuke that we do not look at "the natural justice of a war," do you expect men in the lowest places of society, ignorant and brutish, pinched by want, to look at the natural justice of theft, of murder? It were a vain expectation. We must improve all classes to improve one; perhaps the highest first. Different men acting in the [Pg 332] most various directions, without concert, often jealous one of another, and all partial in their aims, are helping forward this universal result. While we are contending against slavery, war, intemperance, or party rage, while we are building up hospitals, colleges, schools, while we are contending for freedom of conscience, or teaching abstractly the love of man and love of God, we are all working for the welfare of this neglected class. The gallows of the barbarian and the Gospel of Christianity cannot exist together. The times are full of promise. Mankind slowly fulfils what a man of genius prophesies; God grants what a good man asks, and when it comes, it is better than what he prayed for.

FOOTNOTES:

[31] The allusion is to the following passages of Scripture, which were read as the lesson for the day: Numb. xiv.; 2 Kings, ii. 23-25; and Luke, xv.

[32] See other statistics in "Sermon of the Perishing Classes," pp. 205, 206.

[33] Mr. Horace Mann.

[34] The period of confinement in our States' Prisons differs a good deal in the various States, as will appear from the following Table.

	Whole No. in prison.	Average sentence.
In Conn.	189,	March 31, 1841, 7 yrs. 3 mos.
Va.	181,	Sept 30, 1839, 6 " 10 "
Mass.	322,	Sept. 30, 1840, 5 " 9 "
La.	68,	Sept 30, 1839, 5 " 1 "
N. J.	152,	Sept. 30, 1840, 4 " 7 "
Ky.	162,	Sept. 30, 1839, 4 "
D. C.	79,	Nov. 30, 1840, 3 " 8 "
Md.	104,	3 "
Phila.	129,	Sept. 30, 1840, 2 " 5 "

The difference between the average term of punishment in Connecticut and Philadelphia is 300 per cent! If the same result is effected by each, there has then been a great amount of gratuitous suffering in one case.

[35] I refer to the prisons at Stretton-upon-Dunmore in Warwickshire, that at Horn near Hamburg, and the one at Mettray near Tours in France. The French penal code allows the guardian or relatives of an offender under age to take him from prison on giving bonds for his good behavior. While these pages were first passing through the press, I learned the happy effect which followed the execution of the license laws in this city. In 1846, from the 10th of March to the 24th of April, there were sent to the House of Correction for intemperance one hundred eighty-nine persons. During the same period of the year 1847, only eighty-four have been thus punished! But alas, in 1851 the evil has returned, and the demon of drunkenness mows down the wretched in Boston with unrestricted scythe.

IX.

[Pg 333]

A SERMON OF POVERTY.—PREACHED AT THE MELODEON, ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 1849.

PROVERBS X. 15.

The destruction of the poor is their poverty.

Last Sunday something was said of riches. To-day I ask your attention to a sermon of poverty. By poverty, I mean the state in which a man does not have enough to satisfy the natural wants of food, raiment, shelter, warmth and the like. From the earliest times that we know of, there have been two classes of men, the rich who had more than enough, the poor who had less. In one of the earliest books which treats of the condition of men, we find that Abraham, a rich man, owns the bodies of three hundred men that are poor. In four thousand years, the difference between rich and poor in our part of America is a good deal lessened, not done away with. In New England property is more uniformly distributed than in most countries, perhaps more equally than in any [Pg 334] land as highly civilized. But even here the old distinction remains in a painful form and extended to a pitiful degree.

At one extreme of society is a body called the rich, men who have abundance, not a very numerous body, but powerful, first through the energy which accumulates money, and secondly, through the money itself. Then there is a body of men who are comfortable. This class comprises the mass of the people in all the callings of life. Out of this class the rich men come, and into it their children or grandchildren commonly return. Few of the rich men of Boston were sons of rich men; still fewer grandsons; few of them perhaps will be fathers of men equally rich; still fewer grandfathers of such. Then there is the class that is miserable. Some of them are supported by public charity, some by private, some of them by their toil alone—but altogether they form a mass of men who only stay in the world, and do not live in the best sense of that word.

Such are the great divisions of society in respect to property. However, the lines between these three classes are not sharp and distinctly drawn. There are no sharp divisions in nature; but for our convenience, we distinguish classes by their centre where they are most unlike, and not by their circumference where they intermix and resemble each other. The line between the [Pg 335] miserable and comfortable, between the comfortable and rich, is not distinctly drawn. The centre of each class is obvious enough while the limits thereof are a dissolving view.

The poor are miserable. Their food is the least that will sustain nature, not agreeable, not healthy; their clothing scanty and mean, their dwellings inconvenient and uncomfortable, with roof and walls that let in the cold and the rain—dwellings that are painful and unhealthy; in their personal habits they are commonly unclean. Then they are ignorant; they have no time to attend school in childhood, no time to read or to think in manhood, even if they have learned to do either before that. If they have the time, few men can think to any profit while the body is uncomfortable. The cold man thinks only of the cold; the wretched of his misery. Besides this they are frequently vicious. I do not mean to say they are wicked in the sight of God. I never see a poor man carried to jail for some petty crime, or even for a great one, without thinking that probably, in God's eye, the man is far better than I am, and from the State's prison or scaffold, will ascend into heaven and take rank a great ways before me. I do not mean to say they are wicked before God; but it is they who commit the minor crimes, against decency, sobriety, against property and person, and most of the major crimes, against human life. I mean that they commit the crimes that get punished by law. They crowd your courts, they tenant your jails; they [Pg 336] occupy your gallows. If some man would write a book describing the life of all the men hanged in Massachusetts for fifty years past, or tried for some capital offence, and show what class of society they were from, how they were bred, what influences were about them in childhood, how they passed their Sundays, and also describe the configuration of their bodies, it would help us to a valuable chapter in the philosophy of crime, and furnish mighty argument against the injustice of our mode of dealing with offenders.

Poverty is the dark side of modern society. I say modern society, though poverty is not modern, for ancient society had poverty worse than ours and a side still darker yet. Cannibalism, butchery of captives after battle, frequent or continual wars for the sake of plunder, and the slavery of the weak—these were the dark side of society in four great periods of human history, the savage, the barbarous, the classic and the feudal. Poverty is the best of these five bad things, each of which, however, has grimly done its service in its day.

There is no poverty among the Gaboon negroes. Put them in our latitude, and it soon comes. Nay, as they get to learn the wants of cultivated men, there will be a poorer class even in the torrid zone. Poverty prevails in every civilized nation on earth; yes, in every savage nation in austere climes. Let us look at some examples. England is the richest country in Europe. I mean she has [Pg 337] more wealth in proportion to her population than any other in a similar climate. Look at her possessions in every corner of the globe; at her armies which Europe cannot conquer; at her

ships which weave the great commercial web that spreads all round about the world; at home what factories, what farms, what houses, what towns, what a vast and wealthy metropolis; what an aristocracy—so rich, so cultivated, so able, so daring, and so unconquered.

But in that very English nation the most frightful poverty exists. Look at the two sister islands: this the queen, and that the beggar of all nations; the rose and the shamrock; the one throned in royal beauty, the other bowed to the dust, torn and trampled under foot. In that capital of the world's wealth, in that centre of power far greater than the power of all the Cæsars, there is the most squalid poverty. Look at St. Giles and St. James—that the earthly hell of want and crime, this the worldly heaven of luxury and power! Put on the one side the stately nobility of England, well born, well bred, armed with the power of manners, the power of money, the power of culture and the power of place, and on the other side put the beggary of England, the two million paupers who are kept wholly on public or private charity; the three million laborers who formerly fed on potatoes, God knows what they feed on now, and all the other hungry sons of want who [Pg 338] are kept in awe only by the growling lion who guards the British throne; and you see at once the result of modern civilization in the ablest, the foremost, the freest, the most practical and the richest nation in the old world.

Even here in New England, a country not two hundred and fifty years old, a little patch of cleared land on the edge of the continent, we hear of poverty which is frightful to think of. It is a serious question what shall be done for the poor; there are few that can tell what shall be done with them, or what is to become of them. Want is always here in Boston. Misery is here. Starvation is not unknown. What is now serious will one day be alarming. Even now it is awful to think of the misery that lurks in this Christian town. New England in fifty years has increased vastly in wealth, but poverty increases too. There has been a great advance in the productiveness of human labor; with our tools a man can do as much rude work in one day as he could in three days a hundred years ago. I mean work with the axe, the plough, the spade; of nicer work, yet more; of the most delicate work, see what machines do for him. The end is not yet; soon we shall have engines that will whittle granite, as a gang of saws cleaves logs into broad smooth boards. Yet with all this advance in the productiveness of human toil, still there is poverty. A day's work now [Pg 339] will bring a man greater proportionate pay than ever before in New England. I mean to say that the ordinary wages for an ordinary day's work will support a man comfortably and respectably longer than they ever would before. On the whole, the price of things has come down and the price of work has gone up. Yet still there are the poor; there is want, there is misery, there is starvation. The community gives more than ever before; a better public provision is made for the poor, private benevolence is more active and works far more wisely—yet still there is poverty, want, misery unremoved, unmitigated, and, many think, immitigable!

Now I am not going to deny that poverty, like other forms of suffering, plays a part in the economy of the human race. If God's children will not work, or will throw away their bread, I do not complain that He sends them to bed without their supper—to a hard bed and a narrow and a cold. "Earn your breakfast before you eat it," is not merely the counsel of Poor Richard, but of Almighty God; it is a just counsel, and not hard. But is poverty an essential, substantial, integral element in human civilization, or is it an accidental element thereof, and transiently present; is it amenable to suppression? For my own part, I believe that all evil is transient, a thing that belongs to the process of development, not to the nature of man, or the higher forms of social life towards [Pg 340] which he is advancing. If God be absolutely good, then only good things are everlasting. This general opinion which comes from my religion as well as my philosophy, affects my special opinion of the history and design of poverty. I look on it as on cannibalism, the butchery of captives, the continual war for the sake of plunder, or on slavery; yes, as I look on the diseases incident to childhood, things that mankind live through and outgrow; which, painful as they are, do not make up the greatest part of the entire life of mankind. If it shall be said that I cannot know this, that I have not a clear intellectual perception of the providential design thereof, or the means of its removal, still I believe it, and if I have not the knowledge which comes of philosophy, I have still faith, the result of instinctive trust in God.

Let us look a little at the causes of poverty. Some things we see best on a large scale. So let us look at poverty thus, and then come down to the smaller forms thereof.

I. There may be a natural and organic cause. The people of Lapland, Iceland and Greenland are a poor people compared with the Scotch, the Danes, or the French. There is a natural and organic cause for their poverty in the soil and climate of those countries, which cannot be changed. They must emigrate before they can become rich or comfortable in our sense of the word. Hence their [Pg 341] poverty is to be attributed to their geographical position. Put the New Englanders there, even they would be a poor people. Thus the poverty of a nation may depend on the geographical position of the nation.

Suppose a race of men has little vigor of body or of mind, and yet the same natural wants as a vigorous race; put them in favorable circumstances, in a good climate, on a rich soil, they will be poor on account of the feebleness of their mind and body; put them in a stern climate, on a sterile soil, and they will perish. Such is the case with the Mexicans. Soil and climate are favorable, yet the people are poor. Suppose a nation had only one third part of the Laplander's ability, and yet needed the result of all his power, and was put in the Laplander's position, they would not live through the first winter. Had they been Mexicans who came to Plymouth in 1620, not one of

them, it is probable, would have seen the next summer. Take away half the sense or bodily strength of the Bushmans of South Africa, and though they might have sense enough to dig nuts out of the ground, yet the lions and hyenas would eventually eat up the whole nation. So the poverty of a nation may come from want of power of body or of mind.

Then if a nation increases in numbers more rapidly than in wealth, there is a corresponding increase of want. Let the number of births in England for the next ten years be double the [Pg 342] number for the last ten, without a corresponding creation of new wealth, and the English are brought to the condition of the Irish. Let the number of births in Ireland in like manner multiply, and one half the population must perish for want of food. So the poverty of a nation may depend on the disproportionate increase of its numbers.

Then an able race, under favorable outward circumstances, without an over-rapid increase of numbers, if its powers are not much developed, will be poor in comparison with a similar race under similar circumstances, but highly developed. Thus England, under Egbert in the ninth century, was poor compared with England under Victoria in the nineteenth century. The single town of Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, or even Sheffield, is probably worth many times the wealth of all England in the ninth century. So the poverty of a nation may depend on its want of development.

Old England and New England are rich, partly through the circumstances of climate and soil, partly and chiefly through the great vigor of the race, with only a normal increase of numbers, and partly through a more complete development of the nations. Such are the chief natural and organic causes of poverty on a large scale in a nation.

II. The causes may be political. By political, I mean such as are brought about by the laws, either [Pg 343] the fundamental laws, the constitution, or the minor laws, statutes. Sometimes the laws tend to make the whole nation poor. Such are the laws which force the industry of the people out of the natural channel, restricting commerce, agriculture, manufactures, industry in general. Sometimes this is done by promoting war, by keeping up armies and navies, by putting the destructive work of fighting, or the merely conservative work of ruling, before the creative works of productive industry. France was an example of that a hundred years ago. Spain yet continues such, as she has been for two centuries.

Sometimes this is done by hindering the general development of the nation, by retarding education, by forbidding all freedom of thought. The States of the Church are an example of this when compared with Tuscany; all Italy and Austria, when compared with England; Spain, when compared with Germany, France, and Holland.

Sometimes this is brought about by keeping up an unnatural institution—as slavery, for example. South Carolina is an instance of this, when compared with Massachusetts. South Carolina has many advantages over us, yet South Carolina is poor while Massachusetts is rich.

Sometimes this political action primarily affects only the distribution of wealth, and so makes one class rich and another poor. Such is the case with laws which give all the real estate to the oldest son, laws which allow property to be entailed for a long time or forever, laws which cut men off [Pg 344] from the land. These laws at first seem only to make one class rich and the others poor, and merely to affect the distribution of wealth in a nation, but they are unnatural and retard the industry of the people, and diminish their productive power, and make the whole nation less rich. Legislation may favor wealth and not men—property which is accumulated labor, rather than labor which is the power that accumulates property. Such legislation always endangers wealth in the end, lessening its quantity and making its tenure uncertain.

Two things may be said of European legislation in general, and especially of English legislation. First, That it has aimed to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few and keep it there. Hence it favors primogeniture, entails monopolies of posts of profit and of honor. Second, It has always looked out for the proprietor and his property, and cared little for the man without property; hence it always wanted the price of things high, the wages of men low, and in addition to natural and organic obstacles it continually put social impediments in the poor man's way. In England no son of a laborer could rise to eminence in the law or in medicine, scarcely in the church; no, not even in the army or navy.

These two statements will bear examination. The genius of England has demanded these two [Pg 345] things. The genius of America demands neither, but rejects both; demands the distribution of property, puts the rights of man first, the rights of things last. Such are the political causes, and such their effects.

III. Then there are social causes which make a nation poor. Such are the prevalence of an opinion that industry is not respectable; that it is honorable to consume, disgraceful to create; that much must be spent, though little earned. The Spanish nation is poor in part through the prevalence of this opinion.

Sometimes social causes seem only to affect a class. The Pariahs in India must not fill any office that is well paid. They are despised, and of course they are poor and miserable. The blacks in New England are despised and frowned down, not admitted to the steamboat, the omnibus, to the school-houses in Boston, or even to the meeting-house with white men; not often allowed to work in company with the whites; and so they are kept in poverty. In Europe the Jews have been equally despised and treated in the same way, but not made poor, because they are in many respects a superior race of men, and because they have the advantage of belonging to a nation

whose civilization is older than any other in Europe; a nation specially gifted with the faculty of thrift; a tribe whom none but other Jews, Scotchmen, or New Englanders, could outwit, over-reach, and make poor. No Ferdinand and Isabella, no inquisition could so completely expel them [Pg 346] from any country, as the superior craft and cunning of the Yankee has driven them out of New England. There are Jews in every country of Europe, everywhere despised and maltreated, and forced into the corners of society, but everywhere superior to the men who surround them. Such are the social causes which produce poverty.

Now let us look at the matter on a smaller scale, and see the cause of poverty in New-England, of poverty in Broad street and Sea street. From the great mass let me take out a class who are accidentally poor. There are the widows and orphan children who inherit no estate; the able men reduced by sickness before they have accumulated enough to sustain them. Then let me take out a class of men transiently poor, men who start with nothing, but have vigor and will to make their own way in the world. The majority of the poor still remain—the class who are permanently poor. The accidentally poor can easily be taken care of by public or private charity; the transient poor will soon take care of themselves. The young man who lives on six cents a day while studying medicine in Boston, is doubtless a poor man, but will soon repay society for the slight aid it has lent him, and in time will take care of other poor men. So these two classes, the accidental and [Pg 347] the transient poor, can easily be disposed of.

What causes have produced the class that is permanently poor? What has just been said of nations, is true also of individuals.

First, there are natural and organic causes of poverty. Some men are born into the midst of want, ignorance, idleness, filthiness, intemperance, vice, crime; their earliest associations are debasing, their companions bad. They are born into the Iceland of society, into the frigid zone, some of them under the very pole-star of want. Such men are born and bred under the greatest disadvantages. Every star in their horoscope has a malignant aspect, and sheds disastrous influence. I do not remember five men in New England, from that class, becoming distinguished in any manly pursuit,—not five. Almost all of our great men and our rich men came from the comfortable class, none from the miserable. The old poverty is parent of new poverty. It takes at least two generations to outgrow the pernicious influence of such circumstances.

Then much of the permanent poverty comes from the lack of ability, power of body and of mind. In that Iceland of society men are commonly born with a feeble organization, and bred under every physical disadvantage; the man is physically weak, or else runs to muscle and not brain, and so is mentally weak. His feebleness is the result of the poverty of his fathers, and his own [Pg 348] want in childhood. The oak tree grows tall and large in a rich valley, stunted, small, and scrubby on the barren sand.

Again this class of men increase most rapidly in numbers. When the poor man has not half enough to fill his own mouth, and clothe his own back, other backs are added, other mouths opened. He abounds in nothing but naked and hungry children.

Further still, he has not so good a chance as the comfortable to get education and general development. A rude man, with superior abilities, in this century, will often be distanced by the well-trained man who started at birth with inferior powers. But if the rude man begin with inferior abilities, inferior circumstances, encumbered also with a load becoming rapidly more burdensome, you see under what accumulated disadvantages he labors all his life. So to the first natural and organic cause of poverty, his untoward position in society; to the second, his inferior ability; and to the third, the increase of his family, excessively rapid, we must add a fourth cause, his inferior development. An ignorant man, who is also weak in body, and besides that, starts with every disadvantage, his burdens annually increasing, may be expected to continue a poor man. It is only in most extraordinary cases that it turns out otherwise.

To these causes we must add what comes therefrom as their joint result: idleness, by which the [Pg 349] poor waste their time; thriftlessness and improvidence, by which they lose their opportunities and squander their substance. The poor are seldom so economical as the rich; it is so with children, they spoil the furniture, soil and rend their garments, put things to a wasteful use, consume heedlessly and squander, careless of to-morrow. The poor are the children of society.

To these five causes I must add intemperance, the great bane of the miserable class. I feel no temptation to be drunken, but if I were always miserable, cold, hungry, naked, so ignorant that I did not know the result of violating God's laws, had I been surrounded from youth with the worst examples, not respected by other men, but a loathsome object in their sight, not even respecting myself, I can easily understand how the temporary madness of strong drink would be a most welcome thing. The poor are the prey of the rum-seller. As the lion in the Hebrew wilderness eateth up the wild ass, so in modern society the rum-seller and rum-maker suck the bones of the miserable poor. I never hear of a great fortune made in the liquor trade, but I think of the wives that have been made widows thereby, of the children bereft of their parents, of the fathers and mothers whom strong drink has brought down to shame, to crime, and to ruin. The history of the first barrel of rum that ever visited New England is well known. It brought some forty men before [Pg 350] the bar of the court. The history of the last barrel can scarcely be much better.

Such are the natural and organic causes which make poverty.

With the exception of laws which allow the sale of intoxicating drink, I think there are few political causes of poverty in New England, and they are too inconsiderable to mention in so brief a sketch as this. However, there are some social causes of our permanent poverty. I do not think we have much respect for the men who do the rude work of life, however faithfully and well—little respect for work itself. The rich man is ashamed to have begun to make his fortune with his own hard hands; even if the rich man is not, his daughter is for him. I do not think we have cared much to respect the humble efforts of feeble men; not cared much to have men dear, and things cheap. It has not been thought the part of political economy, of sound legislation, or of pure Christianity, to hinder the increase of pauperism, to remove the causes of poverty, yes, the causes of crime—only to take vengeance on it when committed!

Boston is a strange place; here is energy enough to conquer half the continent in ten years; power of thought to seize and tame the Connecticut and the Merrimack; charity enough to send missionaries all over the world; but not justice enough to found a high school for her own [Pg 351] daughters, or to forbid her richest citizens from letting bar-rooms as nurseries of poverty and crime, from opening wide gates which lead to the almshouse, the jail, the gallows, and earthly hell!

Such are the causes of poverty, organic, political, social. You may see families pass from the comfortable to the miserable class, by intemperance, idleness, wastefulness, even by feebleness of body and of mind; yet while it is common for the rich to descend into the comfortable class, solely by lack of the eminent thrift which raised their fathers thence, or because they lack the common stimulus to toil and save, it is not common for the comfortable to fall into the pit of misery in New England, except through wickedness, through idleness, or intemperance.

It is not easy to study poverty in Boston. But take a little inland town, which few persons migrate into, you will find the miserable families have commonly been so, for a hundred years; that many of them are descended from the "servants," or white slaves, brought here by our fathers; that such as fall from the comfortable classes, are commonly made miserable by their own fault, sometimes by idleness, which is certainly a sin, for any man who will not work, and persists in living, eats the bread of some other man, either begged or stolen—but chiefly by intemperance. [Pg 352] Three fourths of the poverty of this character, is to be attributed to this cause.

Now there is a tendency in poverty to drive the ablest men to work, and so get rid of the poverty, and this I take it is the providential design thereof. Poverty, like an armed man, stalks in the rear of the social march, huge and haggard, and gaunt and grim, to scare the lazy, to goad the idle with his sword, to trample and slay the obstinate sluggard. But he treads also the feeble under his feet, for no fault of theirs, only for the misfortune of being born in the rear of society. But in poverty there is also a tendency to intimidate, to enfeeble, to benumb. The poverty of the strong man compels him to toil; but with the weak, the destruction of the poor is his poverty. An active man is awakened from his sleep by the cold; he arises and seeks more covering; the indolent, or the feeble, shiver on till morning, benumbed and enfeebled by the cold. So weakness begets weakness; poverty, poverty; intemperance, intemperance; crime, crime.

Every thing is against the poor man; he pays the dearest tax, the highest rent for his house, the dearest price for all he eats or wears. The poor cannot watch their opportunity, and take advantage of the markets, as other men. They have the most numerous temptations to intemperance and crime; they have the poorest safeguards from these evils. If the chief value of wealth, as a rich man tells us, be this—that "it renders its owner independent of others," then on [Pg 353] what shall the poor men lean, neglected and despised by others, looked on as loathsome, and held in contempt, shut out even from the sermons and the prayers of respectable men? It is no marvel if they cease to respect themselves.

The poor are the most obnoxious to disease; their children are not only most numerous, but most unhealthy. More than half of the children of that class, perish at the age of five. Amongst the poor, infectious diseases rage with frightful violence. The mortality in that class is amazing. If things are to continue as now, I thank God it is so. If Death is their only guardian, he is at least powerful, and does not scorn his work.

In addition to the poor, whom these causes have made and kept in poverty, the needy of other lands flock hither. The nobility of old England, so zealous in pursuing their game, in keeping their entails unbroken, and primogeniture safe, have sent their beggary to New England, to be supported by the crumbs that fall from our table. So, in the same New England city, the extremes of society are brought together. Here is health, elegance, cultivation, sobriety, decency, refinement—I wish there was more of it; there is poverty, ignorance, drunkenness, violence, crime, in most odious forms—starvation! We have our St. Giles's and St. James's; our nobility, not a whit less noble than the noblest of other lands, and our beggars, both in a Christian city. Amid [Pg 354] the needy population, Misery and Death have found their parish. Who shall dare stop his ears, when they preach their awful denunciation of want and woe?

Good men ask, What shall we do? Foreign poverty has had this good effect; it has shamed or frightened the American beggar into industry and thrift.

Poverty will not be removed till the causes thereof are removed. There are some who look for a great social revolution. So do I; only I do not look for it to come about suddenly, or by mechanical

means. We are in a social revolution, and do not know it. While I cannot accept the peculiar doctrines of the Associationists, I rejoice in their existence. I sympathize with their hope. They point out the evils of society, and that is something. They propose a method of removing its evils. I do not believe in that method, but mankind will probably make many experiments before we hit upon the right one. For my own part, I confess I do not see any way of removing poverty wholly or entirely, in one or two, or in four or five generations. I think it will linger for some ages to come. Like the snow, it is to be removed by a general elevation of the temperature of the air, not all at once, and will long hang about the dark and cold places of the world. But I do think it will at last be overcome, so that a man who cannot subsist, will be as rare as a cannibal. "Ye have the [Pg 355] poor with you always," said Jesus, and many who remember this, forget that he also said, "and when soever ye will, ye may do them good." I expect to see a mitigation of poverty in this country, and that before long.

It is likely that the legal theory of property in Europe will undergo a great change before many years; that the right to bequeathe enormous estates to individuals will be cut off; that primogeniture will cease, and entailments be broken, and all monopolies of rank and power come to an end, and so a great change take place in the social condition of Europe, and especially of England. That change will bring many of the comfortable into the rich class, and eventually many of the miserable into the comfortable class. But I do not expect such a radical change here, where we have not such enormous abuses to surmount.

I think something will be done in Europe for the organization of labor, I do not know what; I do not know how; I have not the ability to know; and will not pretend to criticize what I know I cannot create, and do not at present understand. I think there will be a great change in the form of society; that able men will endeavor to remove the causes of crime, not merely to make money out of that crime; that intemperance will be diminished; that idleness in rich or poor will be counted a disgrace; that labor will be more respected; education more widely diffused; and that [Pg 356] institutions will be founded, which will tend to produce these results. But I do not pretend to devise those institutions, and certainly shall not throw obstacles in the way of such as can or will try. It seems likely that something will be first done in Europe, where the need is greatest. There a change must come. By and by, if it does not come peaceably, the continent will not furnish "special constables" enough to put down human nature. If the white republicans cannot make a revolution peacefully, wait a little, and the red republicans will make it in blood. "Peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must," says mankind, first in a whisper, then in a voice of thunder. If powerful men will not write justice with black ink, on white paper, ignorant and violent men will write it on the soil, in letters of blood, and illuminate their rude legislation with burning castles, palaces and towns. While the social change is taking place never so peacefully, men will think the world is going to ruin. But it is an old world, pretty well put together, and, with all these changes, will probably last some time longer. Human society is like one of those enormous boulders, so nicely poised on another rock, that a man may move it with a single hand. You are afraid to come under its sides, lest it fall. When the wind blows, it rocks with formidable noise, and men say it will soon be down upon us. Now and then a rude boy undertakes to throw it over, but all the men who can [Pg 357] get their shoulders under, cannot raise the ponderous mass from its solid and firm-set base.

Still, after all these changes have taken place, there remains the difference between the strong and the weak, the active and the idle, the thrifty and the spendthrift, the temperate and the intemperate, and though the term poverty ceases to be so dreadful, and no longer denotes want of the natural necessaries of the body, there will still remain the relatively rich and the relatively poor.

But now something can be done directly, to remove the causes of poverty, something to mitigate their effects; we need both the palliative charity, and the remedial justice. Tenements for the poor can be provided at a cheap rent, that shall yet pay their owner a reasonable income. This has been proved by actual experiment, and, after all that has been said about it, I am amazed that no more is done. I will not exhort the churches to this in the name of religion—they have other matters to attend to; but if capitalists will not, in a place like Boston, it seems to me the City should see that this class of the population is provided with tenements, at a rate not ruinous. It would be good economy to do it, in the pecuniary sense of good economy; certainly to hire money at six per cent., and rent the houses built therewith, at eight per cent., would cost less than to [Pg 358] support the poor entirely in almshouses, and punish them in jails.

Something yet more may be done, in the way of furnishing them with work, or of directing them to it; something towards enabling them to purchase food and other articles cheap.

Something might be done to prevent street beggary, and begging from house to house, which is rather a new thing in this town. The indiscriminate charity, which it is difficult to withhold from a needy and importunate beggar, does more harm than good.

Much may be done to promote temperance; much more, I fear, than is likely to be done; that is plainly the duty of society. Intemperance is bad enough with the comfortable and the rich; with the poor it is ruin—sheer, blank and swift ruin. The example of the rich, of the comfortable, goes down there like lightning, to shatter, to blast, and to burn. It is marvellous, that in Christian Boston, men of wealth, and so above the temptation which lurks behind a dollar, men of character otherwise thought to be elevated, can yet continue a traffic which leads to the ruin and slow butchery of such masses of men. I know not what can be done by means of the public law. I do know what can be done by private self-denial, by private diligence.

Something also may be done to promote religion amongst the poor, at least something to make it [Pg 359]

practicable for a poor man to come to church on Sunday, with his fellow-creatures who are not miserable—and to hear the best things that the ablest men in the church have to offer. We are very democratic in our State, not at all so in our church. In this matter the Catholics put us quite to shame. If, as some men still believe, it be a manly calling and a noble, to preach Christianity, then to preach it to men who stand in the worst and most dangerous positions in society; to take the highest truths of human consciousness, the loftiest philosophy, the noblest piety, and bring them down into the daily life of poor men, rude men, men obscure, unfriended, ready to perish; surely this is the noblest part of that calling, and demands the noblest gifts, the fairest and the largest culture, the loftiest powers.

It is no hard thing to reason with reasoning men, and be intelligible to the intelligent; to talk acceptably and even movingly to scholars and men well read, is no hard thing if you are yourself well read and a scholar. But to be intelligible to the ignorant, to reason with men who reason not, to speak acceptably and movingly with such men, to inspire them with wisdom, with goodness and with piety, that is the task only for some men of rare genius who can stride over the great gulf betwixt the thrones of creative power, and the humble positions of men ignorant, poor and forgot! Yet such men there are, and here is their work. [Pg 360]

Something can be done for the children of the poor—to promote their education, to find them employment, to snatch these little ones from underneath the feet of that grim Poverty. It is not less than awful, to think while there are more children born in Boston of Catholic parents than of Protestant, that yet more than three fifths thereof die before the sun of their fifth year shines on their luckless heads. I thank God that thus they die. If there be not wisdom enough in society, nor enough of justice there to save them from their future long-protracted suffering, then I thank God that Death comes down betimes, and moistens his sickle while his crop is green. I pity not the miserable babes who fall early before that merciful arm of Death. They are at rest. Poverty cannot touch them. Let the mothers who bore them rejoice, but weep only for those that are left —left to ignorance, to misery, to intemperance, to vice that I shall not name; left to the mercies of the jail, and perhaps the gallows at the last. Yet Boston is a Christian city—and it is eighteen hundred years since one great Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost!

I see not what more can be done directly, and I see not why these things should not be done. Still some will suffer: the idle, the lazy, the proud who will not work, the careless who will voluntarily waste their time, their strength, or their goods—they must suffer, they ought to suffer. Want is the only schoolmaster to teach them industry and thrift. Such as are merely unable, who are poor [Pg 361] not by their fault—we do wrong to let them suffer; we do wickedly to leave them to perish. The little children who survive—are they to be left to become barbarians in the midst of our civilization?

Want is not an absolutely needful thing, but very needful for the present distress, to teach us industry, economy, thrift and its creative arts. There is nature—the whole material world—waiting to serve. "What would you have thereof?" says God. "Pay for it and take it, as you will; only pay as you go!" There are hands to work, heads to think; strong hands, hard heads. God is an economist: He economizes suffering; there is never too much of it in the world for the purpose it is to serve, though it often falls where it should not fall. It is here to teach us industry, thrift, justice. It will be here no more when we have learned its lesson. Want is here on sufferance; misery on sufferance; and mankind can eject them if we will. Poverty, like all evils, is amenable to suppression.

Can we not end this poverty—the misery and crime it brings? No, not to-day. Can we not lessen it? Soon as we will. Think how much ability there is in this town, cool, far-sighted talent. If some of the ablest men directed their thoughts to the reform of this evil, how much might be done in a [Pg 362] single generation; and in a century—what could not they do in a hundred years? What better work is there for able men? I would have it written on my tombstone: "This man had but little wit, and less fame, yet he helped remove the causes of poverty, making men better off and better," rather by far than this: "Here lies a great man; he had a great place in the world, and great power, and great fame, and made nothing of it, leaving the world no better for his stay therein, and no man better off."

After all the special efforts to remove poverty, the great work is to be done by the general advance of mankind. We shall outgrow this as cannibalism, butchery of captives, war for plunder, and other kindred miseries have been outgrown. God has general remedies in abundance, but few specific. Something will be done by diffusing throughout the community principles and habits of economy, industry, temperance; by diffusing ideas of justice, sentiments of brotherly love, sentiments and ideas of religion. I hope every thing from that—the noiseless and steady progress of Christianity; the snow melts, not by sunlight, or that alone, but as the whole air becomes warm. You may in cold weather melt away a little before your own door, but that makes little difference till the general temperature rises. Still while the air is getting warm, you facilitate the process by breaking up the obdurate masses of ice and putting them where the sun shines with [Pg 363] direct and unimpeded light. So must we do with poverty.

It is only a little that any of us can do—for any thing. Still we can do a little; we can each do by helping towards raising the general tone of society: first, by each man raising himself; by industry, economy, charity, justice, piety; by a noble life. So doing, we raise the moral

temperature of the whole world, and just in proportion thereto. Next, by helping those who come in our way; nay, by going out of our way to help them. In each of these modes, it is our duty to work. To a certain extent each man is his brother's keeper. Of the powers we possess we are but trustees under Providence, to use them for the benefit of men, and render continually an account of our stewardship to God. Each man can do a little directly to help convince the world of its wrong, a little in the way of temporizing charity, a little in the way of remedial justice; so doing, he works with God, and God works with him.:

X.

[Pg 364]

A SERMON OF THE MORAL CONDITION OF BOSTON.—PREACHED AT THE MELODEON, ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1849.

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1 SAMUEL VII. 12.

Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

A man who has only the spirit of his age can easily be a popular man; if he have it in an eminent degree, he must be a popular man in it: he has its hopes and its fears; his trumpet gives a certain and well-known sound; his counsel is readily appreciated; the majority is on his side. But he cannot be a wise magistrate, a just judge, a competent critic, or a profitable preacher. A man who has only the spirit of a former age can be none of these four things; and not even a popular man. He remembers when he ought to forecast, and compares when he ought to act; he cannot appreciate the age he lives in, nor have a fellow-feeling with it. He may easily obtain the pity of his age, not its sympathy or its confidence. The man who has the spirit of his own, and also that [Pg 365] of some future age, is alone capable of becoming a wise magistrate, a just judge, a competent critic, and a profitable preacher. Such a man looks on passing events somewhat as the future historian will do, and sees them in their proportions, not distorted; sees them in their connection with great general laws, and judges of the falling rain not merely by the bonnets it may spoil and the pastime it disturbs, but by the grass and corn it shall cause to grow. He has hopes and fears of his own, but they are not the hopes and fears of men about him; his trumpet cannot give a welcome or well-known sound, nor his counsel be presently heeded. Majorities are not on his side, nor can he be a popular man.

To understand our present moral condition, to be able to give good counsel thereon, you must understand the former generation, and have potentially the spirit of the future generation; must appreciate the past, and yet belong to the future. Who is there that can do this? No man will say, "I can." Conscious of the difficulty, and aware of my own deficiencies in all these respects, I will yet endeavor to speak of the moral condition of Boston.

First, I will speak of the actual moral condition of Boston, as indicated by the morals of Trade. In a city like Rome, you must first feel the pulse of the church, in St. Petersburg that of the court, to determine the moral condition of those cities. Now trade is to Boston what the church is to Rome [Pg 366] and the imperial court to St. Petersburg: it is the pendulum which regulates all the common and authorized machinery of the place; it is an organization of the public conscience. We care little for any Pius the Ninth, or Nicholas the First; the dollar is our emperor and pope, above all the parties in the State, all sects in the church, lord paramount over both, its spiritual and temporal power not likely to be called in question; revolt from what else we may, we are loyal still to that.

A little while ago, in a sermon of riches, speaking of the character of trade in Boston, I suggested that men were better than their reputation oftener than worse; that there were a hundred honest bargains to one that was dishonest. I have heard severe strictures from friendly tongues, on that statement, which gave me more pain than any criticism I have received before. The criticism was, that I overrated the honesty of men in trade. Now, it is a small thing to be convicted of an error—a just thing and a profitable to have it detected and exposed; but it is a painful thing to find you have overrated the moral character of your townsmen. However, if what I said be not true as history, I hope it will become so as prophecy; I doubt not my critics will help that work.

Love of money is out of proportion to love of better things—to love of justice, of truth, of a manly [Pg 367] character developing itself in a manly life. Wealth is often made the end to live for; not the means to live by, and attain a manly character. The young man of good abilities does not commonly propose it to himself to be a noble man, equipped with all the intellectual and moral qualities which belong to that, and capable of the duties which come thereof. He is satisfied if he can become a rich man. It is the highest ambition of many a youth in this town to become one of the rich men of Boston; to have the social position which wealth always gives, and nothing else in this country can commonly bestow. Accordingly, our young men that are now poor, will sacrifice every thing to this one object; will make wealth the end, and will become rich without becoming

noble. But wealth without nobleness of character is always vulgar. I have seen a clown staring at himself in the gorgeous mirror of a French palace, and thought him no bad emblem of many an ignoble man at home, surrounded by material riches which only reflected back the vulgarity of their owner.

Other young men inherit wealth, but seldom regard it as a means of power for high and noble ends, only as the means of selfish indulgence; unneeded means to elevate yet more their self-esteem. Now and then you find a man who values wealth only as an instrument to serve mankind withal. I know some such men; their money is a blessing akin to genius, a blessing to mankind, a [Pg 368] means of philanthropic power. But such men are rare in all countries, perhaps a little less so in Boston than in most other large trading towns; still, exceeding rare. They are sure to meet with neglect, abuse, and perhaps with scorn; if they are men of eminent ability, superior culture, and most elevated moral aims, set off, too, with a noble and heroic life, they are sure of meeting with eminent hatred. I fear the man most hated in this town would be found to be some one who had only sought to do mankind some great good, and stepped before his age too far for its sympathy. Truth, Justice, Humanity, are not thought in Boston to have come of good family; their followers are not respectable. I am not speaking to blame men, only to show the fact; we may meddle with things too high for us, but not understand nor appreciate.

Now this disproportionate love of money appears in various ways. You see it in the advantage that is taken of the feeblest, the most ignorant, and the most exposed classes in the community. It is notorious that they pay the highest prices, the dearest rents, and are imposed upon in their dealings oftener than any other class of men; so the raven and the hooded crow, it is said, seek out the sickliest sheep to pounce upon. The fact that a man is ignorant, poor, and desperate, furnishes to many men an argument for defrauding the man. It is bad enough to injure any man; [Pg 369] but to wrong an ignorant man, a poor and friendless man; to take advantage of his poverty or his ignorance, and to get his services or his money for less than a fair return—that is petty baseness under aggravated circumstances, and as cowardly as it is mean. You are now and then shocked at rich men telling of the arts by which they got their gold—sometimes of their fraud at home, sometimes abroad, and a good man almost thinks there must be a curse on money meanly got at first, though it falls to him by honest inheritance.

This same disproportionate love of money appears in the fact that men, not driven by necessity, engage in the manufacture, the importation, and the sale of an article which corrupts and ruins men by hundreds; which has done more to increase poverty, misery, and crime than any other one cause whatever; and, as some think, more than all other causes whatever. I am not speaking of men who aid in any just and proper use of that article, but in its ruinous use. Yet such men, by such a traffic, never lose their standing in society, their reputation in trade, their character in the church. A good many men will think worse of you for being an Abolitionist; men have lost their place in society by that name; even Dr. Channing "hurt his usefulness" and "injured his reputation" by daring to speak against that sin of the nation; but no man loses caste in Boston by [Pg 370] making, importing, and selling the cause of ruin to hundreds of families—though he does it with his eyes open, knowing that he ministers to crime and to ruin! I am told that large quantities of New England rum have already been sent from this city to California; it is notorious that much of it is sent to the nations of Africa—if not from Boston, at least from New England—as an auxiliary in the slave-trade. You know with what feelings of grief and indignation a clergyman of this city saw that characteristic manufacture of his town on the wharves of a Mahometan city. I suppose there are not ten ministers in Boston who would not "get into trouble," as the phrase is, if they were to preach against intemperance, and the causes that produce intemperance, with half so much zeal as they innocently preach "regeneration" and a "form of piety" which will never touch a single corner of the earth. As the minister came down, the Spirit of Trade would meet him on the pulpit stairs to warn him: "Business is business; religion is religion; business is ours, religion yours; but if you make or even allow religion to interfere with our business, then it will be the worse for you—that is all!" You know it is not a great while since we drove out of Boston the one Unitarian minister who was a fearless apostle of temperance.[36] His presence here was a grief to [Pg 371] that "form of piety;" a disturbance to trade. Since then the peace of the churches has not been much disturbed by the preaching of temperance. The effect has been salutary; no Unitarian minister has risen up to fill that place!

This same disproportionate love of money appears in the fact, that the merchants of Boston still allow colored seamen to be taken from their ships and shut up in the jails of another State. If they cared as much for the rights of man as for money, as much for the men who sail the ship as for the cargo it carries, I cannot think there would be brass enough in South Carolina, or all the South, to hold another freeman of Massachusetts in bondage, merely for the color of his skin. No doubt, a merchant would lose his reputation in this city by engaging directly in the slave-trade, for it is made piracy by the law of the land.[37] But did any one ever lose his reputation by taking a mortgage on slaves as security for a debt; by becoming, in that way or by inheritance, the [Pg 372] owner of slaves, and still keeping them in bondage?

You shall take the whole trading community of Boston, rich and poor, good and bad, study the phenomena of trade as astronomers the phenomena of the heavens, and from the observed facts, by the inductive method of philosophy, construct the ethics of trade, and you will find one great maxim to underlie the whole: Money must be made. Money-making is to the ethics of trade what attraction is to the material world; what truth is to the intellect, and justice in morals. Other things must yield to that; that to nothing. In the effort to comply with this universal law of trade, many a character gives way; many a virtue gets pushed aside; the higher, nobler qualities of a

man are held in small esteem.

This characteristic of the trading class appears in the thought of the people as well as their actions. You see it in the secular literature of our times; in the laws, even in the sermons; nobler things give way to love of gold. So in an ill-tended garden, in some bed where violets sought to open their fragrant bosoms to the sun, have I seen a cabbage come up and grow apace, with thick and vulgar stalk, with coarse and vulgar leaves, with rank unsavory look; it thrust aside the little violet, which, underneath that impenetrable leaf, lacking the morning sunshine and the dew of night, faded and gave up its tender life; but above the grave of the violet there stood the [Pg 373] cabbage, green, expanding, triumphant, and all fearless of the frost. Yet the cabbage also had its value and its use.

There are men in Boston, some rich, some poor, old and young, who are free from this reproach; men that have a well-proportioned love of money, and make the pursuit thereof an effort for all the noble qualities of a man. I know some such men, not very numerous anywhere, men who show that the common business of life is the place to mature great virtues in; that the pursuit of wealth, successful or not, need hinder the growth of no excellence, but may promote all manly life. Such men stand here as violets among the cabbages, making a fragrance and a loveliness all their own; attractive anywhere, but marvellous in such a neighborhood as that.

Look next on the morals of Boston, as indicated by the Newspapers, the daily and the weekly press. Take the whole newspaper literature of Boston, cheap and costly, good and bad, study it all as a whole, and by the inductive method construct the ethics of the press, and here you find no signs of a higher morality in general than you found in trade. It is the same centre about which all things gravitate here as there. But in the newspapers the want of great principles is more obvious, and more severely felt than in trade—the want of justice, of truth, of humanity, of sympathy with man. In trade you meet with signs of great power; the highway of commerce bears [Pg 374] marks of giant feet. Our newspapers seem chiefly in the hands of little men, whose cunning is in a large ratio to their wisdom or their justice. You find here little ability, little sound learning, little wise political economy; of lofty morals almost nothing at all. Here, also, the dollar is both Pope and King; right and truth are vassals, not much esteemed, nor over-often called to pay service to their Lord, who has other soldiers with more pliant neck and knee.

A newspaper is an instrument of great importance; all men read it; many read nothing else; some it serves as reason and conscience too: in lack of better, why not? It speaks to thousands every day on matters of great moment—on matters of morals, of politics, of finance. It relates daily the occurrences of our land, and of all the world. All men are affected by it; hindered or helped. To many a man his morning paper represents more reality than his morning prayer. There are many in a community like this who do not know what to say—I do not mean what to think, thoughtful men know what to think—about any thing till somebody tells them; yet they must talk, for "the mouth goes always." To such a man a newspaper is invaluable; as the idolater in the Judges had "a Levite to his priest," so he has a newspaper to his reason or his conscience, and can talk to the day's end. An able and humane newspaper would get this class of persons into good habits of [Pg 375] speech, and do them a service, inasmuch as good habits of speech are better than bad.

One portion of this literature is degrading; it seems purposely so, as if written by base men, for base readers, to serve base ends. I know not which is most depraved thereby, the taste or the conscience. Obscene advertisements are there, meant for the licentious eye; there are loathsome details of vice, of crime, of depravity, related with the design to attract, yet so disgusting that any but a corrupt man must revolt from them; there are accounts of the appearance of culprits in the lower courts, of their crime, of their punishment; these are related with an impudent flippancy, and a desire to make sport of human wretchedness and perhaps depravity, which amaze a man of only the average humanity. We read of Judge Jeffreys and the bloody assizes in England, one hundred and sixty years ago, but never think there are in the midst of us men who, like that monster, can make sport of human misery; but for a cent you can find proof that the race of such is not extinct. If a penny-a-liner were to go into a military hospital, and make merry at the sights he saw there, at the groans he heard, and the keen smart his eye witnessed, could he publish his fiendish joy at that spectacle—you would not say he was a man. If one mock at the crimes of men, perhaps at their sins, at the infamous punishments they suffer—what can you say of him? [Pg 376]

It is a significant fact that the commercial newspapers, which of course in such a town are the controlling newspapers, in reporting the European news, relate first the state of the markets abroad, the price of cotton, of consols, and of corn; then the health of the English queen, and the movements of the nations. This is loyal and consistent; at Rome, the journal used to announce first some tidings of the Pope, then of the lesser dignitaries of the church, then of the discovery of new antiques, and other matters of great pith and moment; at St. Petersburg, it was first of the Emperor that the journal spoke; at Boston, it is legitimate that the health of the dollar should be reported first of all.

The political newspapers are a melancholy proof of the low morality of this town. You know what they will say of any party movement; that measures and men are judged on purely party grounds. The country is commonly put before mankind, and the party before the country. Which of them in political matters pursues a course that is fair and just; how many of them have ever advanced a great idea, or been constantly true to a great principle of natural justice; how many resolutely

oppose a great wrong; how many can be trusted to expose the most notorious blunders of their party; how many of them aim to promote the higher interests of mankind? What servility is there [Pg 377] in some of these journals, a cringing to the public opinion of the party; a desire that "our efforts may be appreciated!" In our politics every thing which relates to money is pretty carefully looked after, though not always well looked after; but what relates to the moral part of politics is commonly passed over with much less heed. Men would compliment a senator who understood finance in all its mysteries, and sneer at one who had studied as faithfully the mysteries of war, or of slavery. The Mexican War tested the morality of Boston, as it appears both in the newspapers and in trade, and showed its true value.

There are some few exceptions to this statement; here and there is a journal which does set forth the great ideas of this age, and is animated by the spirit of humanity. But such exceptions only remind one of the general rule.

In the sectarian journals the same general morality appears, but in a worse form. What would have been political hatred in the secular prints, becomes theological odium in the sectarian journals; not a mere hatred in the name of party, but hatred in the name of God and Christ. Here is less fairness, less openness, and less ability than there, but more malice; the form, too, is less manly. What is there a strut or a swagger, is here only a snivel. They are the last places in which you need look for the spirit of true morality. Which of the sectarian journals of Boston advocates [Pg 378] any of the great reforms of the day? nay, which is not an obstacle in the path of all manly reform? But let us not dwell upon this, only look and pass by.

I am not about to censure the conductors of these journals, commercial, political, or theological. I am no judge of any man's conscience. No doubt they write as they can or must. This literature is as honest and as able as "the circumstances will admit of." I look on it as an index of our moral condition, for a newspaper literature always represents the general morals of its readers. Grocers and butchers purchase only such articles as their customers will buy; the editors of newspapers reveal the moral character of their subscribers as well as their correspondents. The transient literature of any age is always a good index of the moral taste of the age. These two witnesses attest the moral condition of the better part of the city; but there are men a good deal lower than the general morals of trade and the press. Other witnesses testify to their moral character.

Let me now speak of your moral condition as indicated by the Poverty in this city. I have so recently spoken on the subject of poverty in Boston, and printed the sermon, that I will not now mention the misery it brings. I will only speak of the moral condition which it indicates, and the [Pg 379] moral effect it has upon us.

In this age, poverty tends to barbarize men; it shuts them out from the educational influences of our times. The sons of the miserable class cannot obtain the intellectual, moral, and religious education which is the birthright of the comfortable and the rich. There is a great gulf between them and the culture of our times. How hard it must be to climb up from a cellar in Cove Place to wisdom, to honesty, to piety. I know how comfortable pharisaic self-righteousness can say, "I thank thee I am not wicked like one of these," and God knows which is the best before His eyes, the scorner, or the man he loathes and leaves to dirt and destruction. I know this poverty belongs to the state of transition we are now in, and can only be ended by our passing through this into a better. I see the medicinal effect of poverty, that with cantharidian sting it drives some men to work, to frugality and thrift; that the Irish has driven the American beggar out of the streets, and will shame him out of the almshouse ere long. But there are men who have not force enough to obey this stimulus; they only cringe and smart under its sting. Such men are made barbarians by poverty, barbarians in body, in mind and conscience, in heart and soul. There is a great amount of this barbarism in Boston; it lowers the moral character of the place, as icebergs in your harbor [Pg 380] next June would chill the air all day.

The fact that such poverty is here, that so little is done by public authority, or by the ablest men in the land, to remove the evil tree and dig up its evil root; that amid all the wealth of Boston and all its charity, there are not even comfortable tenements for the poor to be had at any but a ruinous rent—that is a sad fact, and bears a sad testimony to our moral state! Sometimes the spectacle of misery does good, quickening the moral sense and touching the electric tie which binds all human hearts into one great family; but when it does not lead to this result, then it debases the looker-on. To know of want, of misery, of all the complicated and far-extended ill they bring; to hear of this, and to see it in the streets; to have the money to alleviate, and yet not to alleviate; the wisdom to devise a cure therefor, and yet make no effort towards it—that is to be yourself debased and barbarized. I have often thought, in seeing the poverty of London, that the daily spectacle of such misery did more in a year to debauch the British heart than all the slaughter at Waterloo. I know that misery has called out heroic virtue in some men and women, and made philanthropists of such as otherwise had been only getters and keepers of gain. We have noble examples of that in the midst of us; but how many men has poverty trod down into the [Pg 381] mire; how many has this sight of misery hardened into cold worldliness, the man frozen into mere respectability, its thin smile on his lips, its ungodly contempt in his heart!

Out of this barbarism of poverty there come three other forms of evil which indicate the moral condition of Boston; of that portion named just now as below the morals of trade and the press. These also I will call up to testify.

One is Intemperance. This is a crime against the body; it is felony against your own frame. It makes a schism amongst your own members. The amount of it is fearfully great in this town. Some of our most wealthy citizens, who rent their buildings for the unlawful sale of rum to be applied to an intemperate abuse, are directly concerned in promoting this intemperance; others, rich but less wealthy, have sucked their abundance out of the bones of the poor, and are actual manufacturers of the drunkard and the criminal. Here are numerous distilleries owned, and some of them conducted, I am told, by men of wealth. The fire thereof is not quenched at all by day, and there is no night there; the worm dieth not. There out of the sweetest plant which God has made to grow under a tropic sun, men distil a poison the most baneful to mankind which the world has ever known. The poison of the Borgias was celebrated once; cold-hearted courtiers [Pg 382] shivered at its name. It never killed many; those with merciful swiftness. The poison of rum is yet worse; it yearly murders thousands; kills them by inches, body and soul. Here are respectable and wealthy men, men who this day sit down in a Christian church and thank God for his goodness, with contrite hearts praise him for that Son of Man who gave his life for mankind, and would gladly give it to mankind; yet these men have ships on the sea to bring the poor man's poison here, or bear it hence to other men as poor; have distilleries on the land to make still yet more for the ruin of their fellow Christians; have warehouses full of this plague, which "outvenoms all the worms of Nile;" have shops which they rent for the illegal and murderous sale of this terrible scourge. Do they not know the ruin which they work; are they the only men in the land who have not heard of the effects of intemperance? I judge them not, great God! I only judge myself. I wish I could say, "They know not what they do;" but at this day who does not know the effect of intemperance in Boston?

I speak not of the sale of ardent spirits to be used in the arts, to be used for medicine, but of the needless use thereof; of their use to damage the body and injure the soul of man. The chief of your police informs me there are twelve hundred places in Boston, where this article is sold to be drunk on the spot; illegally sold. The Charitable Association of Mechanics, in this city, have taken [Pg 383] the accumulated savings of more than fifty years, and therewith built a costly establishment, where intoxicating drink is needlessly but abundantly sold! Low as the moral standard of Boston is, low as are the morals of the press and trade, I had hoped better things of these men, who live in the midst of hard-working laborers, and see the miseries of intemperance all about them. But the dollar was too powerful for their temperance.

Here are splendid houses, where the rich man or the thrifty needlessly drinks. Let me leave them; the evil Demon of Intemperance appears not there; he is there, but under well-made garments, amongst educated men, who are respected and still respect themselves. Amid merriment and song the Demon appears not. He is there, gaunt, bony, and destructive, but so elegantly clad, with manners so unoffending, you do not mark his face, nor fear his steps. But go down to that miserable lane, where men mothered by Misery and sired by Crime, where the sons of Poverty and the daughters of Wretchedness, are huddled thick together, and you see this Demon of Intemperance in all his ugliness. Let me speak soberly: exaggeration is a figure of speech I would always banish from my rhetoric, here, above all, where the fact is more appalling than any fiction I could devise. In the low parts of Boston, where want abounds, where misery [Pg 384] abounds, intemperance abounds yet more, to multiply want, to aggravate misery, to make savage what poverty has only made barbarian; to stimulate passion into crime. Here it is not music and the song which crown the bowl; it is crowned by obscenity, by oaths, by curses, by violence, sometimes by murder. These twine the ivy round the poor man's bowl; no, it is the Upas that they twine. Think of the sufferings of the drunkard himself, of his poverty, his hunger and his nakedness, his cold; think of his battered body; of his mind and conscience, how they are gone. But is that all? Far from it. These curses shall become blows upon his wife; that savage violence shall be expended on his child. In his senses this man was a barbarian; there are centuries of civilization betwixt him and cultivated men. But the man of wealth, adorned with respectability and armed with science, harbors a Demon in the street, a profitable Demon to the rich man who rents his houses for such a use. The Demon enters our barbarian, who straightway becomes a savage. In his fury he tears his wife and child. The law, heedless of the greater culprits, the Demon, and the demon-breeder, seizes our savage man and shuts him in the jail. Now he is out of the tempter's reach; let us leave him; let us go to his home. His wife and children still are there, freed from their old tormentor. Enter: look upon the squalor, the filth, the want, the misery still left behind. Respectability halts at the door with folded arms, and can no further go. But charity, [Pg 385] the love of man which never fails, enters even there; enters to lift up the fallen, to cheer the despairing, to comfort and to bless. Let us leave her there, loving the unlovely, and turn to other sights.

In the streets, there are about nine hundred needy boys, and about two hundred needy girls, the sons and daughters mainly of the intemperate; too idle or too thriftless to work; too low and naked for the public school. They roam about—the nomadic tribes of this town, the gipsies of Boston—doing some chance work for a moment, committing some petty theft. The temptations of a great city are before them.[38] Soon they will be impressed into the regular army of crime, to be [Pg 386] stationed in your jails, perhaps to die on your gallows. Such is the fate of the sons of

intemperance; but the daughters! their fate—let me not tell of that.

In your Legislature they have just been discussing a law against dogs, for now and then a man is bitten and dies of hydrophobia. Perhaps there are ten mad dogs in the State at this moment, and it may be that one man in a year dies from the bite of such. Do the legislators know how many shops there are in this town, in this State, which all the day and all the year sell to intemperate men a poison that maddens with a hydrophobia still worse? If there were a thousand mad dogs in the land, if wealthy men had embarked a large capital in the importation or the production of mad dogs, and if they bit and maddened and slew ten thousand men in a year, do you believe your Legislature would discuss that evil with such fearless speech? Then you are very young, and know little of the tyranny of public opinion, and the power of money to silence speech, while justice still comes in, with feet of wool, but iron hands.[39]

There is yet another witness to the moral condition of Boston. I mean Crime. Where there is such [Pg 387]
poverty and intemperance, crime may be expected to follow. I will not now dwell upon this
theme, only let me say, that in 1848, three thousand four hundred and thirty-five grown persons, [Pg 388]
and six hundred and seventy-one minors were lawfully sentenced to your jail and House of Correction; in all, four thousand one hundred and six; three thousand four hundred and forty-four persons were arrested by the night police, and eleven thousand one hundred and seventy-eight were taken into custody by the watch; at one time there were one hundred and forty-four in the common jail. I have already mentioned that more than a thousand boys and girls, between six and sixteen, wander as vagrants about your streets; two hundred and thirty-eight of these are children of widows, fifty-four have neither parent living. It is a fact known to your police, that about one thousand two hundred shops are unlawfully open for retailing the means of intemperance. These are most thickly strown in the haunts of poverty. On a single Sunday the police found three hundred and thirteen shops in the full experiment of unblushing and successful crime. These rum-shops are the factories of crime; the raw material is furnished by poverty; it passes into the hands of the rum-seller, and is soon ready for delivery at the mouth of the jail, or the foot of the gallows. It is notorious that intemperance is the proximate cause of three fourths of the crime in Boston; yet it is very respectable to own houses and rent them for
the purpose of making men intemperate; nobody loses his standing by that. I am not surprised to [Pg 389]
hear of women armed with knives, and boys with six-barrelled revolvers in their pockets; not surprised at the increase of capital trials.

One other matter let me name—I call it the Crime against Woman. Let us see the evil in its type, its most significant form. Look at that thing of corruption and of shame, almost without shame, whom the judge, with brief words, despatches to the jail. That was a woman once. No! At least, she was once a girl. She had a mother; perhaps, beyond the hills, a mother, in her evening prayer, remembers still this one child more tenderly than all the folded flowers that slept the sleep of infancy beneath her roof; remembers, with a prayer, her child, whom the world curses after it has made corrupt! Perhaps she had no such mother, but was born in the filth of some reeking cellar, and turned into the mire of the streets, in her undefended innocence, to mingle with the coarseness, the intemperance, and the crime of a corrupt metropolis. In either case, her blood is on our hands. The crime which is so terribly avenged on woman—think you that God will hold men innocent of that? But on this sign of our moral state, I will not long delay.

Put all these things together: the character of trade, of the press; take the evidence of poverty,
intemperance, and crime—it all reveals a sad state of things. I call your attention to these facts. [Pg 390]
We are all affected by them more or less; all more or less accountable for them.

Hitherto I have only stated facts, without making comparisons. Let me now compare the present condition of Boston with that in former times. Every man has an ideal, which is better than the actual facts about him. Some men amongst us put that ideal in times past, and maintain it was then an historical fact; they are commonly men who have little knowledge of the past, and less hope for the future; a good deal of reverence for old precedents, little for justice, truth, humanity; little confidence in mankind, and a great deal of fear of new things. Such men love to look back and do homage to the past, but it is only a past of fancy, not of fact, they do homage to. They tell us we have fallen; that the golden age is behind us, and the garden of Eden; ours are degenerate days; the men are inferior, the women less winning, less witty, and less wise, and the children are an untoward generation, a disgrace, not so much to their fathers, but certainly to their grandsires. Sometimes this is the complaint of men who have grown old; sometimes of such as seem to be old without growing so, who seem born to the gift of age, without the grace of youth.

Other men have a similar ideal, commonly a higher one, but they place it in the future, not as an [Pg 391]
historical reality, which has been, and is therefore to be worshipped, but one which is to be made real by dint of thought, of work. I have known old persons who stoutly maintained that the pears and the plums and the peaches, are not half so luscious as they were many years ago; so they bewailed the existing race of fruits, complaining of "the general decay" of sweetness, and

brought over to their way of speech some aged juveniles. Meanwhile, men born young, set themselves to productive work, and, instead of bewailing an old fancy, realized a new ideal in new fruits, bigger, fairer, and better than the old. It is to men of this latter stamp, that we must look for criticism and for counsel. The others can afford us a warning, if not by their speech, at least by their example.

It is very plain, that the people of New England are advancing in wealth, in intelligence, and in morality; but in this general march, there are little apparent pauses, slight waverings from side to side; some virtues seem to straggle from the troop; some to lag behind, for it is not always the same virtue that leads the van. It is with the flock of virtues, as with wild fowl—the leaders alternate. It is probable that the morals of New England in general, and of Boston in special, did decline somewhat from 1775 to 1790; there were peculiar but well-known causes, which no longer exist, to work that result. In the previous fifteen years, it seems probable that there had [Pg 392] been a rapid increase of morality, through the agency of causes equally peculiar and transient. To estimate the moral growth or decline of this town, we must not take either period as a standard. But take the history of Boston, from 1650 to 1700, from 1700 to 1750, thence to 1800, and you will see a gradual, but a decided progress in morality in each of these periods. It is not easy to prove this in a short sermon; I can only indicate the points of comparison, and state the general fact. From 1800 to 1849, this progress is well marked, indisputable, and very great. Let us look at this a little in detail, pursuing the same order of thought as before.

It is generally conceded that the moral character of trade has improved a good deal within fifty or sixty years. It was formerly a common saying, that "If a Yankee merchant were to sell salt water at high-tide, he would yet cheat in the measure." The saying was founded on the conduct of American traders abroad, in the West Indies and elsewhere. Now things have changed for the better. I have been told by competent authority, that two of the most eminent merchants of Boston, fifty or sixty years ago, who conducted each a large business, and left very large fortunes, were notoriously guilty of such dishonesty in trade, as would now drive any man from the Exchange. The facility with which notes are collected by the banks, compared to the former [Pg 393] method of collection, is itself a proof of an increase of practical honesty; the law for settling the affairs of a bankrupt tells the same thing. Now this change has not come from any special effort, made to produce this particular effect, and, accordingly, it indicates the general moral progress of the community.

The general character of the press, since the end of the last century, has decidedly improved, as any one may convince himself of, by comparing the newspapers of that period, with the present; yet a publicity is now-a-days given to certain things which were formerly kept more closely from the public eye and ear. This circumstance sometimes produces an apparent increase of wrong-doing, while it is only an increased publicity thereof. Political servility, and political rancor, are certainly bad enough, and base enough, at this day, but not long ago both were baser and worse; to show this, I need only appeal to the memories of men before me, who can recollect the beginning of the present century. Political controversies are conducted with less bitterness than before; honesty is more esteemed; private worth is more respected. It is not many years since the Federal party, composed of men who certainly were an honor to their age, supported Aaron Burr, for the office of President of the United States; a man whose character, both public and private, was notoriously marked with the deepest infamy. Political parties are not very puritanical in their [Pg 394] virtue at this day; but I think no party would now for a moment accept such a man as Mr. Burr, for such a post.[40] There is another pleasant sign of this improvement in political parties: last autumn the victorious party, in two wards of this city, made a beautiful demonstration of joy, at their success in the Presidential election, and on Thanksgiving day, and on Christmas, gave a substantial dinner to each poor person in their section of the town. It was a trifle, but one pleasant to remember.

Even the theological journals have improved within a few years. I know it has been said that some of them are not only behind their times, which is true, "but behind all times." It is not so. Compared with the sectarian writings—tracts, pamphlets, and hard-bound volumes of an earlier day—they are human, enlightened, and even liberal.

In respect to poverty, there has been a great change for the better. However, it may be said in general, that a good deal of the poverty, intemperance, and crime, is of foreign origin; we are to deal with it, to be blamed if we allow it to continue; not at all to be blamed for its origin. I know it is often said, "The poor are getting poorer, and soon will become the mere vassals of the rich;" that "The past is full of discouragement; the future full of fear." I cannot think so. I feel neither [Pg 395] the discouragement nor the fear. It should be remembered that many of the Fathers of New England owned the bodies of their laborers and domestics! The condition of the working man has improved, relatively to the wealth of the land, ever since. The wages of any kind of labor, at this day, bear a higher proportion to the things needed for comfort and convenience, than ever before for two hundred years.

If you go back one hundred years, I think you will find that, in proportion to the population and wealth of this town or this State, there was considerably more suffering from native poverty then than now. I have not, however, before me the means of absolute proof of this statement; but this is plain, that now public charity is more extended, more complete, works in a wiser mode, and with far more beneficial effect; and that pains are now taken to uproot the causes of poverty—pains which our fathers never thought of. In proof of this increase of charity, and even of the existence of justice, I need only refer to the numerous benevolent societies of modern origin, and to the establishment of the ministry at large, in this city—the latter the work of Unitarian

philanthropy. Some other churches have done a little in this good work. But none have done much. I am told the Catholic clergy of this city do little to remove the great mass of poverty, [Pg 396] intemperance, and crime among their followers. I know there are some few honorable exceptions, and how easy it is for Protestant hostility to exaggerate matters; still, I fear the reproach is but too well founded, that the Catholic clergy are not vigilant shepherds, who guard their sacred flock against the terrible wolves which prowl about the fold. I wish to find myself mistaken here.

Some of you remember the "Old Almshouse" in Park-street; the condition and character of its inmates; the effect of the treatment they there received. I do not say that our present attention to the subject of poverty is any thing to boast of—certainly we have done little in comparison with what common sense demands; very little in comparison with what Christianity enjoins; still it is something; in comparison with "the good old times," it is much that we are doing.

There has been a great change for the better in the matter of intemperance in drinking. Within thirty years, the progress towards sobriety is surprising, and so well marked and obvious that to name it is enough. Probably there is not a "respectable" man in Boston who would not be ashamed to have been seen drunk yesterday; even to have been drunk in ever so private a manner; not one who would willingly get a friend or a guest in that condition to-day! Go back a few years, and it brought no public reproach, and, I fear, no private shame. A few years further [Pg 397] back, it was not a rare thing, on great occasions, for the fathers of the town to reel and stagger from their intemperance—the magistrates of the land voluntarily furnishing the warning which a romantic historian says the Spartans forced upon their slaves.

It is easy to praise the Fathers of New England; easier to praise them for virtues they did not possess, than to discriminate, and fairly judge those remarkable men. I admire and venerate their characters, but they were rather hard drinkers; certainly a love of cold water was not one of their loves. Let me mention a fact or two: it is recorded in the Probate office, that in 1678, at the funeral of Mrs. Mary Norton, widow of the celebrated John Norton, one of the ministers of the first church in Boston, fifty-one gallons and a half of the best Malaga wine were consumed by the "mourners;" in 1685, at the funeral of the Rev. Thomas Cobbett, minister at Ipswich, there were consumed one barrel of wine and two barrels of cider—"and as it was cold," there was "some spice and ginger for the cider." You may easily judge of the drunkenness and riot on occasions less solemn than the funeral of an old and beloved minister. Towns provided intoxicating drink at the funeral of their paupers; in Salem, in 1728, at the funeral of a pauper, a gallon of wine and another of cider are charged as "incidental;" the next year, six gallons of rum on a similar occasion; in Lynn, in 1711, the town furnished "half a barrel of cider for the Widow Dispaw's [Pg 398] funeral." Affairs had come to such a pass, that in 1742, the General Court forbade the use of wine and rum at funerals. In 1673, Increase Mather published his "Wo unto Drunkards." Governor Winthrop complains, in 1630, that "The young folk gave themselves to drink hot waters very immoderately."[41]

But I need not go back so far. Who that is fifty years of age, does not remember the aspect of [Pg 399] Boston on public days; on the evening of such days? Compare the "Election day," or the Fourth of July, as they were kept thirty or forty years ago, with such days in our time. Some of you remember the celebration of Peace, in 1783; many of you can recollect the similar celebration in 1815. On each of those days the inhabitants from the country towns came here to rejoice with the citizens of this town. Compare the riot, the confusion, the drunkenness then, with the order, decorum, and sobriety of the celebration at the introduction of water last autumn, and you see what has been done in sixty or seventy years for temperance.

A great deal of the crime in Boston is of foreign origin: of the one thousand and sixty-six children [Pg 400] vagrant in your streets, only one hundred and three had American parents; of the nine hundred and thirty-three persons in the House of Correction here, six hundred and sixteen were natives of other countries; I know not how many were the children of Irishmen, who had not enjoyed the advantages of our institutions. I cannot tell how many rum-shops are kept by foreigners.[42] Now in Ireland no pains have been taken with the education of the people by the Government; very little by the Catholic church; indeed, the British government for a long time rendered it impossible for the church to do any thing in this way. For more than seventy years, in that Catholic country, none but a Protestant could keep a school or even be a tutor in a private family. A Catholic schoolmaster was to be transported, and, if he returned, adjudged guilty of high treason, barbarously put to death, drawn and quartered. A Protestant schoolmaster is as repulsive to a Catholic, as a Mahometan schoolmaster or an Atheist would be to you. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Irish are ignorant, and, as a consequence thereof, are idle, thriftless, poor, intemperate, and barbarian; not to be wondered at if they conduct like wild beasts when they are set loose in a land where we think the individual must be left free to the greatest extent. Of course they will violate our laws, those wild bisons leaping over the fences [Pg 401] which easily restrain the civilized domestic cattle; will commit the great crimes of violence, even capital offences, which certainly have increased rapidly of late. This increase of foreigners is prodigious: more than half the children in your public schools are children of foreigners; there are more Catholic than Protestant children born in Boston.

With the general and unquestionable advance of morality, some offences are regarded as crimes which were not noticed a few years ago. Drunkenness is an example of this. An Irishman in his native country thinks little of beating another or being beaten; he brings his habits of violence with him, and does not at once learn to conform to our laws. Then, too, a good deal of crime which was once concealed is now brought to light by the press, by the superior activity of the

police; and yet, after all that is said, it seems quite clear that what is legally called crime and committed by Americans, has diminished a good deal in fifty years. Such crime, I think, never bore so small a proportion to the population, wealth, and activity of Boston, as now. Even if we take all the offences committed by these strangers who have come amongst us, it does not compare so very unfavorably as some allege with the "good old times." I know men often look on the fathers of this colony as saints; but in 1635, at a time when the whole State contained less than one tenth of the present population of Boston, and they were scattered from Weymouth [Pg 402] Fore-River to the Merrimack, the first grand jury ever impanelled at Boston "found" a hundred bills of indictment at their first coming together.

If you consider the circumstances of the class who commit the greater part of the crimes which get punished, you will not wonder at the amount. The criminal court is their school of morals; the constable and judge are their teachers; but under this rude tuition I am told that the Irish improve and actually become better. The children who receive the instruction of our public schools, imperfect as they are, will be better than their fathers; and their grandchildren will have lost all trace of their barbarian descent.

I have often spoken of our penal law as wrong in its principle, taking it for granted that the ignorant and miserable men who commit crime do it always from wickedness, and not from the pressure of circumstances which have brutalized the man; wrong in its aim, which is to take vengeance on the offender, and not to do him a good in return for the evil he has done; wrong in its method, which is to inflict a punishment that is wholly arbitrary, and then to send the punished man, overwhelmed with new disgrace, back to society, often made worse than before,— not to keep him till we can correct, cure, and send him back a reformed man. I would retract [Pg 403] nothing of what I have often said of that; but not long ago all this was worse; the particular statutes were often terribly unjust; the forms of trial afforded the accused but little chance of justice; the punishments were barbarous and terrible. The plebeian tyranny of the Lord Brethren in New England was not much lighter than the patrician despotism of the Lord Bishops in the old world, and was more insulting. Let me mention a few facts, to refresh the memories of those who think we are going to ruin, and can only save ourselves by holding to the customs of our fathers, and of the "good old times." In 1631, a man was fined forty pounds, whipped on the naked back, both his ears cut off, and then banished this colony, for uttering hard speeches against the government and the church at Salem. In the first century of the existence of this town, the magistrates could banish a woman because she did not like the preaching, nor all the ministers, and told the people why; they could whip women naked in the streets, because they spoke reproachfully of the magistrates; they could fine men twenty pounds, and then banish them, for comforting a man in jail before his trial; they could pull down, with legal formality, the house of a man they did not like; they could whip women at a cart's tail from Salem to Rhode Island, for fidelity to their conscience; they could beat, imprison, and banish men out of the land, simply for baptizing one another in a stream of water, instead of sprinkling them from a dish; they could [Pg 404] crop the ears, and scourge the backs, and bore the tongues of men, for being Quakers; yes, they could shut them in jails, could banish them out of the colony, could sell them as slaves, could hang them on a gallows, solely for worshipping God after their own conscience; they could convulse the whole land, and hang some thirty or forty men for witchcraft, and do all this in the name of God, and then sing psalms, with most nasal twang, and pray by the hour, and preach—I will not say how long, nor what, nor how! It is not yet one hundred years since two slaves were judicially burnt alive, on Boston Neck, for poisoning their master.

But why talk of days so old? Some of you remember when the pillory and the whipping-post were a part of the public furniture of the law, and occupied a prominent place in the busiest street in town. Some of you have seen men and women scourged, naked, and bleeding, in State street; have seen men judicially branded in the forehead with a hot iron, their ears clipped off by the sheriff, and held up to teach humanity to the gaping crowd of idle boys and vulgar men. A magistrate was once brought into odium in Boston, for humanely giving back to his victim a part of the ear he had officially shorn off, that the mutilated member might be restored and made whole. How long is it since men sent their servants to the "Workhouse," to be beaten "for [Pg 405] disobedience," at the discretion of the master? It is not long since the gallows was a public spectacle here in the midst of us, and a hanging made a holiday for the rabble of this city and the neighboring towns; even women came to see the death-struggle of a fellow-creature, and formed the larger part of the mob; many of you remember the procession of the condemned man sitting on his coffin, a procession from the jail to the gallows, from one end of the city to the other. I remember a public execution some fourteen or fifteen years ago, and some of the students of theology at Cambridge, of undoubted soundness in the Unitarian faith, came here to see men kill a fellow-man!

Who can think of these things, and not see that a great progress has been made in no long time. But if these things be not proof enough, then consider what has been done here in this century for the reformation of juvenile offenders; for the discharged convict; for the blind, the deaf, and the dumb; for the insane, and now even for the idiot. Think of the numerous Societies for the widows and orphans; for the seamen; the Temperance Societies; the Peace Societies; the Prison Discipline Society; the mighty movement against slavery, which, beginning with a few heroic men who took the roaring lion of public opinion by the beard, fearless of his roar, has gone on now, till neither the hardest nor the softest courage in the State dares openly defend the unholy [Pg 406] institution. A philanthropic female physician delivers gratuitous lectures on physiology to the poor of this city, to enable them to take better care of their houses and their bodies; an unpretending man, for years past, responsible to none but God, has devoted all his time and his

toil to the most despised class of men, and has saved hundreds from the jail, from crime and ruin at the last. Here are many men and women not known to the public, but known to the poor, who are daily ministering to the wants of the body and the mind. Consider all these things, and who can doubt that a great moral progress has been made? It is not many years since we had white slaves, and a Scotch boy was invoiced at fourteen pounds lawful money, in the inventory of an estate in Boston. In 1630, Governor Dudley complains that some of the founders of New England, in consequence of a famine, were obliged to set free one hundred and eighty servants, "to our extreme loss," for they had cost sixteen or twenty pounds apiece. Seventy years since, negro slavery prevailed in Massachusetts, and men did not blush at the institution. Think of the treatment which the leaders of the anti-slavery reform met with but a few years ago, and you see what a progress has been made![43]

I have extenuated nothing of our condition; I have said the morals of trade are low morals, and [Pg 407]
the morals of the press are low; that poverty is a terrible evil to deal with, and we do not deal with it manfully; that intemperance is a mournful curse, all the more melancholy when rich men purposely encourage it; that here is an amount of crime which makes us shudder to think of; that the voice of human blood cries out of the ground against us. I disguise nothing of all this; let us confess the fact, and, ugly as it is, look it fairly in the face. Still, our moral condition is better than ever before. I know there are men who seem born with their eyes behind, their hopes all running into memory; some who wish they had been born long ago: they might as well; sure it is no fault of theirs that they were not. I hear what they have to tell us. Still, on the whole, the aspect of things is most decidedly encouraging; for if so much has been done when men understood the matter less than we, both cause and cure, how much more can be done for the future?

What can we do to make things better?

I have so recently spoken of poverty that I shall say little now. A great change will doubtless take place before many years in the relations between capital and labor; a great change in the spirit of society. I do not believe the disparity now existing between the wealth of men has its origin in human nature, and therefore is to last for ever; I do not believe it is just and right that less than [Pg 408]
one twentieth of the people in the nation should own more than ten twentieths of the property of the nation, unless by their own head, or hands, or heart, they do actually create and earn that amount. I am not now blaming any class of men; only stating a fact. There is a profound conviction in the hearts of many good men, rich as well as poor, that things are wrong; that there is an ideal right for the actual wrong; but I think no man yet has risen up with ability to point out for us the remedy of these evils, and deliver us from what has not badly been named the Feudalism of Capital. Still, without waiting for the great man to arise, we can do something with our littleness even now; the truant children may be snatched from vagrancy, beggary, and ruin; tenements can be built for the poor, and rented at a reasonable rate. It seems to me that something more can be done in the way of providing employment for the poor, or helping them to employment.

In regard to intemperance, I will not say we can end it by direct efforts. So long as there is misery there will be continued provocation to that vice, if the means thereof are within reach. I do not believe there will be much more intemperance amongst well-bred men; among the poor and wretched it will doubtless long continue. But if we cannot end, we can diminish it, fast as we will. If rich men did not manufacture, nor import, nor sell; if they would not rent their buildings [Pg 409]
for the sale of intoxicating liquor for improper uses; if they did not by their example favor the improper use thereof, how long do you think your police would arrest and punish one thousand drunkards in the year? how long would twelve hundred rum-shops disgrace your town? Boston is far more sober, at least in appearance, than other large cities of America, but it is still the headquarters of intemperance for the State of Massachusetts. In arresting intemperance, two thirds of the poverty, three fourths of the crime of this city would end at once, and an amount of misery and sin which I have not the skill to calculate. Do you say we cannot diminish intemperance, neither by law, nor by righteous efforts without law? Oh, fie upon such talk. Come, let us be honest, and say we do not wish to, not that we cannot. It is plain that in sixteen years we can build seven great railroads radiating out of Boston, three or four hundred miles long; that we can conquer the Connecticut and the Merrimack, and all the lesser streams of New England; can build up Lowell, and Chicopee, and Lawrence; why, in four years Massachusetts can invest eight and fifty millions of dollars in railroads and manufactures, and cannot prevent intemperance; cannot diminish it in Boston! So there are no able men in this town! I am amazed at such talk, in such a place, full of such men, surrounded by such trophies of their work! When the churches preach and men believe that Mammon is not the only God we are practically to serve; that it is [Pg 410]
more reputable to keep men sober, temperate, comfortable, intelligent, and thriving, than it is to make money out of other men's misery; more Christian, than to sell and manufacture rum, to rent houses for the making of drunkards and criminals, then we shall set about this business with the energy that shows we are in earnest, and by a method which will do the work.

In the matter of crime, something can be done to give efficiency to the laws. No doubt a thorough change must be made in the idea of criminal legislation; vengeance must give way to justice, policemen become moral missionaries, and jails moral hospitals, that discharge no criminal until he is cured. It will take long to get the idea into men's minds. You must encounter many a doubt,

many a sneer, and expect many a failure, too. Men who think they "know the world," because they know that most men are selfish, will not believe you. We must wait for new facts to convince such men. After the idea is established, it will take long to organize it fittingly.

Much can be done for juvenile offenders, much for discharged convicts, even now. We can pull down the gallows, and with it that loathsome theological idea on which it rests,—the idea of a vindictive God. A remorseless court, and careful police, can do much to hinder crime;[44] but they cannot remove the causes thereof. [Pg 411]

Last year, a good man, to whom the State was deeply indebted before, suggested that a moral police should be appointed to look after offenders; to see why they committed their crime; and if only necessity compelled them, to seek out for them some employment, and so remove the causes of crime in detail. The thought was worthy of the age, and of the man. In the hands of a practical man, this thought might lead to good results. A beginning has already been made in the right direction, by establishing the State Reform School for Boys. It will be easy to improve on this experiment, and conduct prisons for men on the same scheme of correction and cure, not merely of punishment, in the name of vengeance. But, after all, so long as poverty, misery, intemperance, and ignorance continue, no civil police, no moral police, can keep such causes from creating crime. What keeps you from a course of crime? Your morality, your religion? Is it? Take away your property, your home, your friends, the respect of respectable men; take away what you have [Pg 412] received from education, intellectual, moral, and religious, and how much better would the best of us be than the men who will to-morrow be huddled off to jail, for crimes committed in a dram-shop to-day? The circumstances which have kept you temperate, industrious, respectable, would have made nine tenths of the men in jail as good men as you are.

It is not pleasant to think that there are no amusements which lie level to the poor, in this country. In Paris, Naples, Rome, Vienna, Berlin, there are cheap pleasures for poor men, which yet are not low pleasures. Here there are amusements for the comfortable and the rich, not too numerous, rather too rare, perhaps, but none for the poor, save only the vice of drunkenness; that is hideously cheap; the inward temptation powerful; the outward occasion always at hand. Last summer, some benevolent men treated the poor children of the city to a day of sunshine, fresh air, and frolic in the fields. Once a year the children, gathered together by another benevolent man, have a floral procession in the streets; some of them have charitably been taught to dance. These things are beautiful to think of; signs of our progress, from "The good old times," and omens of a brighter day, when Christianity shall bear more abundantly flowers and fruit even yet more fair.

The morals of the current literature, of the daily press—you can change when you will. If there is [Pg 413] not in us a demand for low morals, there will be no supply. The morals of trade, and of politics, the handmaid thereof, we can make better soon as we wish.

It has been my aim to give suggestions, rather than propose distinct plans of action; I do not know that I am capable of that. But some of you are rich men, some able men; many of you, I think, are good men. I appeal to you to do something to raise the moral character of this town. All that has been done in fifty years, or a hundred and fifty, seems very little, while so much still remains to do; only a hint and an encouragement. You cannot do much, nor I much: that is true. But, after all, every thing must begin with individual men and women. You can at least give the example of what a good man ought to be and to do, to-day; to-morrow you will yourself be the better man for it. So far as that goes, you will have done something to mend the morals of Boston. You can tell of actual evils, and tell of your remedy for them; can keep clear from committing the evils yourself: that also is something.

Here are two things that are certain: We are all brothers, rich and poor, American and foreign; put here by the same God, for the same end, and journeying towards the same heaven, owing mutual help. Then, too, the wise men and good men are the natural guardians of society, and God [Pg 414] will not hold them guiltless, if they leave their brothers to perish. I know our moral condition is a reproach to us; I will not deny that, nor try to abate the shame and grief we should feel. When I think of the poverty and misery in the midst of us, and all the consequences thereof, I hardly dare feel grateful for the princely fortunes some men have gathered together. Certainly it is not a Christian society, where such extremes exist; we are only in the process of conversion; proselytes of the gate, and not much more. There are noble men in this city, who have been made philanthropic, by the sight of wrong, of intemperance, and poverty, and crime. Let mankind honor great conquerors, who only rout armies, and "plant fresh laurels where they kill;" I honor most the men who contend against misery, against crime and sin; men that are the soldiers of humanity, and in a low age, amidst the mean and sordid spirits of a great trading town, lift up their serene foreheads, and tell us of the right, the true, first good, first perfect, and first fair. From such men I hear the prophecy of the better time to come. In their example I see proofs of the final triumph of good over evil. Angels are they, who keep the tree of life, not with flaming sword, repelling men, but, with friendly hand, plucking therefrom, and giving unto all the leaves, the flower, and the fruit of life, for the healing of the nations. A single good man, kindling his [Pg 415] early flame, wakens the neighbors with his words of cheer; they, at his lamp, shall light their torch and household fire, anticipating the beamy warmth of day. Soon it will be morning, warm and light; we shall be up and a-doing, and the lighted lamp, which seemed at first too much for eyes to bear, will look ridiculous, and cast no shadow in the noonday sun. A hundred years hence,

men will stand here as I do now, and speak of the evils of these times as things past and gone, and wonder that able men could ever be appalled by our difficulties, and think them not to be surpassed. Still, all depends on the faithfulness of men—your faithfulness and mine.

The last election has shown us what resolute men can do on a trifling occasion, if they will. You know the efforts of the three parties—what meetings they held, what money they raised, what talent was employed, what speeches made, what ideas set forth: not a town was left unattempted; scarce a man who had wit to throw a vote, but his vote was solicited. You see the revolution which was wrought by that vigorous style of work. When such men set about reforming the evils of society, with such a determined soul, what evil can stand against mankind? We can leave nothing to the next generation worth so much as ideas of truth, justice, and religion, organized into fitting institutions; such we can leave, and, if true men, such we shall.

FOOTNOTES:

[36] Rev. John Pierpont

[37] This statement was made in 1849; subsequent events have shown that I was mistaken. It is now thought respectable and patriotic not only to engage in the slave-trade, but to kidnap men and women in Boston. Most of the prominent newspapers, and several of the most prominent clergy, defend the kidnapping. Attempts have repeatedly been made to kidnap my own parishioners. Kidnapping is not even a matter of church discipline in Boston in 1851.

[38] The conduct of public magistrates who are paid for serving the people, is not what it should be in respect to temperance. The city authorities allow the laws touching the sale of the great instrument of demoralization to be violated continually. There is no serious effort made to enforce these laws. Nor is this all: the shameless conduct of conspicuous men at the supper given in this city after the funeral of John Quincy Adams, and the debauchery on that occasion, are well known and will long be remembered.

At the next festival (in September, 1851), it is notorious, that the city authorities, at the expense of the citizens, provided a large quantity of intoxicating drink for the entertainment of our guests during the excursion in the harbor. It is also a matter of great notoriety, that many were drunk on that occasion. I need hardly add, that on board one of the crowded steamboats, three cheers were given for the "Fugitive Slave Law," by men who it is hoped will at length become sober enough to "forget" it. When the magistrates of Boston do such deeds, and are not even officially friends of temperance, what shall we expect of the poor and the ignorant and the miserable? "Cain, where is thy Brother?" may be asked here and now as well as in the Bible story.

[39] The statistics of intemperance are instructive and surprising. Of the one thousand two hundred houses in Boston where intoxicating drink is retailed to be drunken on the premises, suppose that two hundred are too insignificant to be noticed, or else are large hotels to be considered presently; then there are one thousand common retail groggeries. Suppose they are in operation three hundred and thirteen days in the year, twelve hours each day; that they sell one glass in a little less than ten minutes, or one hundred glasses in the day, and that five cents is the price of a glass. Then each groggery receives $5 a day, or $1,565 (313 × 5) in a year, and the one thousand groggeries receive $1,565,000. Let us suppose that each sells drink for really useful purposes to the amount of $65 per annum, or all to the amount of $65,000; there still remains the sum of $1,500,000 spent for intemperance in these one thousand groggeries. This is about twice the sum raised by taxation for the public education of all the children in the State of Massachusetts! But this calculation does not equal the cost of intemperance in these places; the receipts of these retail houses cannot be less than $2,000 per annum, or in the aggregate, $2,000,000. This sum in two years would pay for the new Aqueduct. Suppose the amount paid for the needless, nay, for the injurious use of intoxicating drink in private families, in boarding houses and hotels, is equal to the smallest sum above named ($1,500,000), then it appears that the city of Boston spends ($1,500,000 + $1,500,000 =) $3,000,000 annually for an article that does no good to any but harm to all, and brings ruin on thousands each year. But if a school-house or a school costs a little money, a complaint is soon made.

[40] It must be remembered that this was written, not in 1851, but in 1849.

[41] In 1679, "The Reforming Synod," assembled at Boston, thus complained of intemperance, amongst other sins of the times: "That heathenish and idolatrous practice of health-drinking is too frequent. That shameful iniquity of sinful drinking is become too general a provocation. Days of training and other public solemnities have been abused in this respect: and not only English but Indians have been debauched by those that call themselves Christians.... This is a crying sin, and the more aggravated in that the first planters of this colony did ... come into this land with a design to convert the heathen unto Christ, but if instead of that they be taught wickedness ... the Lord may well punish by them.... There are more temptations and occasions unto that sin publicly allowed of, than any necessity doth require. The proper end of taverns, &c., being for the entertainment of strangers ... a far less number would suffice," etc.

Cotton Mather says of intemperance in his time: "To see ... a drunken man become a drowned man, is to see but a most retaliating hand of God. Why we have seen this very thing more than threescore times in our land. And I remember the drowning of one drunkard, so oddly circumstanced; it was in the hold of a vessel that lay full of water near the shore. We have seen it so often, that I am amazed at you, O ye drunkards of New England; I am amazed that you can harden your hearts in your sin, without expecting to be destroyed suddenly and without remedy. Yea, and we have seen the devil

that has possessed the drunkard, throwing him into fire, and then kept shrieking Fire! Fire! till they have gone down to the fire that never shall be quenched. Yea, more than one or two drunken women in this very town, have, while in their drink, fallen into the fire, and so they have tragically gone roaring out of one fire into another. O ye daughters of Belial, hear and fear and do wickedly no more."

The history of the first barrel of rum which was brought to Plymouth has been carefully traced out to a considerable extent. Nearly forty of the "Pilgrims" or their descendants were publicly punished for the drunkenness it occasioned.

[42] Over eight hundred in 1851.

[43] This statement appears somewhat exaggerated in 1851.

[44] In 1847, the amount of goods stolen in Boston, and reported to the police, beyond what was received, was more than $37,000; in 1848, less than $11,000. In 1849, the police were twice as numerous as in the former year, and organized and directed with new and remarkable skill.

APPENDIX

[Pg 417]

Note to p. 62.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE INSTALLATION OF MR. PARKER.

LETTER OF THE COMMITTEE TO MR. PARKER.

Boston, November 28, 1845.

Dear Sir:—

Among your friends and congregation at the Melodeon, a Society has been organized according to law; and we have been instructed, as the Standing Committee, to invite you to become its Minister.

It gives us great pleasure to be the means to forward, in this small degree, the end proposed, and we cordially extend you the invitation, with the sincere hope that it will meet a favorable answer.

We are, truly and respectfully,

Your friends,

Mark Healey,
John Flint,
Levi B. Meriam,
Amos Coolidge,
John G. King,
Sidney Homer,
Henry Smith,
Geo. W. Robinson,
C. M. Ellis.

To the Rev. Theodore Parker,

West Roxbury, Mass.

[Pg 418]

MR. PARKER'S REPLY.

To Mark Healey, John Flint, Levi B. Meriam, Amos Coolidge, John G. King, Sidney Homer, Henry Smith, George W. Robinson, and C. M. Ellis, Esquires.

Dear Friends:—

When I received your communication of the 28th ult. I did not hesitate in my decision, but I have delayed giving you a formal reply, in order that I might confer with my friends in this place, whom it becomes my painful duty to leave. I accept your invitation; but wish it to be provided that our connection may at any time be dissolved, by either party giving notice to the other of a desire to that effect, six months before such a separation is to take place.

It is now nearly a year since I began to preach at the Melodeon. I came at the request of some of you; but I did not anticipate the present result. Far from it. I thought but few would come and listen to what was so widely denounced. But I took counsel of my hopes and not of my fears. It seems to me now that, if we are faithful to our duty, we shall in a few years build up a society

which shall be not only a joy to our own hearts, but a blessing also to others, now strangers and perhaps hostile to us. I feel that we have begun a good work. With earnest desires for the success of our common enterprise, and a willingness to labor for the advancement of real Christianity, I am,

Faithfully, your friend,

THEODORE PARKER.

West Roxbury, 12th Dec., 1845.

On Sunday, January 4, 1846, REV. THEODORE PARKER was installed as Pastor of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society in Boston. The exercises on the occasion were as follows:—

INTRODUCTORY HYMN.

PRAYER.

VOLUNTARY ON THE ORGAN.

[Pg 419]

The Chairman of the Standing Committee then addressed the Congregation as follows:—

By the instructions of the Society, the Committee have made an arrangement with Mr. Parker, by which the services of this Society, under its new organization, should commence with the new year; and this being our first meeting, it has been set apart for such introductory services as may seem fitting for our position and prospects.

The circumstances under which this Society has been formed, and its progress hitherto, are familiar to most of those present. It first began from certain influences which seemed hostile to the cause of religious freedom. It was the opinion of many of those now present, that a minister of the Gospel, truly worthy of that name, was proscribed on account of his opinions, branded as a heretic, and shut out from the pulpits of this city.

At a meeting of gentlemen held January 22, 1845, the following Resolution was passed:—

"*Resolved*, That the Rev. Theodore Parker shall have a chance to be heard in Boston."

To carry this into effect, this Hall was secured for a place of meeting, and the numbers who have met here from Sunday to Sunday, have fully answered our most sanguine expectations. Our meetings have proved that though our friend was shut out from the temples, yet "the people heard him gladly." Of the effects of his preaching among us I need not speak. The warm feelings of gratitude and respect expressed on every side, are the best evidences of the efficacy of his words, and of his life.

Out of these meetings our Society has naturally sprung. It became necessary to assume some permanent form—the labor of preaching to two Societies, would of course be too much for Mr. Parker's health and strength—the conviction that his settlement in Boston would be not only important for ourselves, but also for the cause of liberal Christianity and religious freedom—these were some of the reasons which induced us to form a Society, and invite him to become its minister. To this he has consented; with the understanding that the connection may be dissolved by either party, on giving six months notice to that effect.

At his suggestion, and with the warm approval of the Committee, we have determined to adopt the old Congregational form of settling our minister; without the aid of bishop, churches, or ministers.

[Pg 420]

As to our Choice, we are, upon mature reflection, and after a year's trial, fully persuaded that we have found our minister, and we ask no ecclesiastical council to ratify our decision.

As to the Charge usually given on such occasions, we prefer to do without it, and trust to the conscience of our minister for his faithfulness.

As to the Right Hand of Fellowship, there are plenty of us ready and willing to give that, and warm hearts with it.

And for such of the other ceremonies usual on such occasions, as Mr. Parker chooses to perform, we gladly accept the substitution of his services for those of any stranger.

The old Puritan form of settling a minister is, for the people to do it themselves; and this let us now proceed to do.

In adopting this course, we are strongly supported both by principle and precedent. Congregationalism is the Republicanism of the Church; and it is fitting that the people themselves should exercise their right of self-government in that most important particular, the choice and settlement of a minister. For examples, I need only remind you of the settlement of the first minister in New England, on which occasion this form was used, and that it is also used at this day by one of the most respectable churches in this city.

The Society then ratified the proceedings by an unanimous vote; and Mr. Parker publicly signified that he adhered to his consent to become the Minister of this Society, and the organization of the Society was thus completed.

Occasional Hymn.

Discourse, by Mr. Parker.

Anthem.

Benediction.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SPEECHES, ADDRESSES, AND OCCASIONAL SERMONS, VOLUME 1 (OF 3) ***

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