Lectures,

and

Annual Reports,

on

Education.

By

Horace Mann.

Cambridge:
PUBLISHED FOR THE EDITOR.
1867.
TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

GEORGE N. BRIGGS,
GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, AND EX-OFFICIO

Chairman of the Board of Education,
AND TO THE OTHER MEMBERS OF SAID BOARD,

THIS VOLUME, PREPARED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.
Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1860,

BY MRS. MARY MANN,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

TO A

VOLUME OF LECTURES NOW REPUBLISHED.

The Act creating the Massachusetts Board of Education was passed April 20, 1837. In June following, the Board was organized, and its Secretary chosen. The duties of the Secretary, as expressed in the Act, are, to "collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of the Common Schools, and other means of popular education; and to diffuse as widely as possible, throughout every part of the Commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies, and conducting the education of the young, to the end that all children in this Commonwealth, who depend upon Common Schools for instruction, may have the best education which those schools can be made to impart."

The Board, immediately after its organization, issued an "Address to the Public," inviting the friends of education to assemble in convention, in their respective counties, in the ensuing autumn; and the Secretary was requested to be present at
those conventions, both for the purpose of obtaining information in regard to the condition of the schools, and of explaining to the public what were supposed to be the leading motives and objects of the Legislature in creating the Board.

The author of the following Lectures was a member of the Legislature when the act establishing the Board was passed; and he was intimately acquainted with the general views of its projectors and advocates. At that time, however, the idea never entered his mind that he should be even a candidate for the Secretaryship; but when the Board was organized, and the station was offered him, he was induced to accept it;—not so much from any supposed fitness for the office, as from the congeniality of its duties with all his tastes and predilections, and because he thought that whatever of industry, or of capacity for usefulness, he might possess, could be exerted more beneficially to his fellow-men in this situation than in any other. On accepting the appointment, therefore, it became his duty to meet the county conventions, which were held throughout the State, in the autumn of 1837; and the first of the following lectures was prepared for those occasions. Its object was to sketch a rapid outline of deficiencies to be supplied, and of objects to be pursued, in relation to the Common-School system of Massachusetts.

In the session of 1838, the Legislature provided
that a Common-School convention should be held, each year, in each county of the Commonwealth, and that the Secretary should be present at every convention. This law continued in force until the year 1842, when it was repealed. During the first five years, therefore, after the establishment of the Board, a Common-School convention was annually held in each county in the Commonwealth; and in some of the large counties two or more such conventions were held. The Secretary made his annual circuit through the State, and was present at them all; and the first five of the following lectures were respectively delivered before the annual conventions. The lecture on "District-School Libraries" was prepared in view of the great deficiency of books in our towns, suitable for the reading of children; and was delivered before Teachers' Associations, Lyceums, &c., in different parts of the State. In the year 1839, a number of the friends of education in Boston instituted a course of lectures for the female teachers in the city, and the lecture on "School Punishments" was delivered, as one of that course.

On almost all the occasions above referred to, a copy of the lecture delivered was requested for the press; but the inadequacy of the views presented, when compared with the magnitude and grandeur of the subject discussed, always induced the author (except in regard to the first lecture, which was printed in 1840, in order to make known, more
generally, the objects which the Board had in view) to decline a compliance with the request. In the month of May last, however, the Board of Education, by a special and unanimous vote, requested him to prepare a volume of his Lectures on Education for the press, and to this request he has now acceded.

In preparing this volume, the author was led to doubt whether he should retain those portions of the lectures which contained special and direct allusions to the times and circumstances in which they were delivered; or whether, by omitting all reference to temporary and passing events, he should publish only those parts in which an attempt was made to discuss broad and general principles, or to enlist parental, patriotic, and religious motives in behalf of the cause. He has been induced to adopt the first part of the alternative, both because it presents the lectures as they were delivered, and because it gives an aspect of practical reform, rather than of theoretic speculation to the work.

The author begs leave to add, that, as the lectures were designed for popular and promiscuous audiences, and pertaining to a cause in which but very little general interest was felt, he was constrained not only to confine himself to popular topics, but also to treat them, as far as he was able, in a popular manner. The more didactic expositions of the merits of the great cause of Education, and
some of the relations which that cause holds to the interests of civilization and human progress, he has endeavored to set forth in his Annual Reports; while his more detailed and specific views, in regard to modes and processes of instruction and training, may be found in the volumes of the Common-School Journal. Each one of these three channels of communication with the public he has endeavored to use for the exposition of a particular class of the views and motives belonging to the comprehensive subject of education.

Justice to himself compels the author to add another remark, although of an unpleasant character. Some of the following lectures have been delivered not only before different audiences in Massachusetts, but in other States; and, in several instances, the author has seen, not only illustrations and clauses, but whole sentences taken bodily from the lectures, and transferred to works subsequently published. Should cases of this kind be noticed by the reader, he is requested to compare dates before deciding the question of plagiarism.

Boston, March, 1845.
LECTURE III.

1838.
LECTURE III.

THE NECESSITY OF EDUCATION IN A REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT.

Gentlemen of the Convention:—

The common arguments in favor of Education have been so often repeated, that, in rising to address you on this subject, I feel like appealing to your own judgment and good sense to bear testimony to its worth, rather than attempting to make your convictions firmer, or your feelings stronger, by any attestations of mine.

I hardly need to say, that, by the word Education, I mean much more than an ability to read, write, and keep common accounts. I comprehend, under this noble word, such a training of the body as shall build it up with robustness and vigor,—at once protecting it from disease, and enabling it to act, formatively, upon the crude substances of Nature,—to turn a wilderness into cultivated fields, forests into ships, or quarries and clay-pits into villages and cities. I mean, also, to include such a cultivation of the intellect as shall enable it to discover those permanent and mighty laws which pervade all parts of the created universe, whether material or spiritual. This is necessary, because, if we act in obedience to these laws, all the resistless forces of Nature become our auxiliaries, and cheer us on to certain prosperity and triumph; but, if we act in contravention or defiance of these laws, then Nature resists, thwarts, baffles us; and, in the end, it is just as certain that she will overwhelm
us with ruin, as it is that God is stronger than man. And, finally, by the term Education, I mean such a culture of our moral affections and religious susceptibilities, as, in the course of Nature and Providence, shall lead to a subjection or conformity of all our appetites, propensities, and sentiments to the will of Heaven.

My friends, is it not manifest to us all, that no individual, unless he has some acquaintance with the lower forms of education, can superintend even the coarsest and most common interests of life, without daily error and daily shame? The general utility of knowledge, also, and the higher and more enduring satisfactions of the intellect, resulting from the discovery and contemplation of those truths with which the material and the spiritual universe are alike filled, impart to this subject a true dignity and a sublime elevation. But, in its office of atempering feelings which otherwise would blast or consume us; — in its authority to say to the clamorous propensities of our nature, “Peace, be still!” — in its auxiliary power to fit us for the endearments of domestic, for the duties of social, and for the sanctity of immortal life; — in its twofold office of enhancing the enjoyment which each one of us may feel in the virtue and happiness of all others, and of increasing the virtue and happiness of all others, to make a larger fund for common enjoyment; — in these high and sacred prerogatives, the cause of education lays claim to our mind and heart and strength, as one of the most efficient instruments prepared by the Creator for the welfare of His creatures, and the honor of Himself.

Take any individual you please, separate him from the crowd of men, and look at him, apart and alone, — like some Robinson Crusoe in a far-off island of the ocean, without any human being around him, with no prospect
of leaving any human being behind him,—and, even in such a solitude, how authoritative over his actions, how decisive of his contemplations and of his condition, are the instructions he received and the habits he formed in early life! But now behold him as one of the tumultuous throng of men; observe the wide influences which he exerts upon others,—in the marts of business, in the resorts of pleasure, in the high places of official trust,—and reflect how many of all these influences, whether beneficent or malign, depend upon the education he has received, and you will have another gauge or standard whereby to estimate the importance of our theme. Look at him again, not as a being, coming, we know not whence, alighting for a brief residence upon this earth, and then making his exit through the door of the tomb, to be seen and heard of no more, and leaving no more impression upon society of his ways or works, than the sea-bird leaves upon the surface of the deep, when she stoops from the upper air, dips her breast for a moment in the wave, and then rises again to a viewless height; but look at him in his relations to posterity, as the father of a family, as a member of a generation which sows those seeds of virtue or vice, that, centuries hence, shall bear fruit or poison;—look at him as a citizen in a free government, throwing his influence and his vote into one or the other of the scales where peace and war, glory and infamy, are weighed;—look at him in these relations, and consider how a virtuous or a vicious education tends to fit or to unfit him for them all, and you will catch one more glimpse of the importance of the subject now presented to your consideration. But if we ascend to a still higher point of vision, and,—forgetting the earthly, personal career, and the wide sphere of social influences, and those acts of life which survive life,—fasten our
eyes upon effects which education may throw forward into immortal destinies, it is then that we are awed, amazed, overpowered, by the thought, that we have been created and placed in a system, where the soul's eternal flight may be made higher or lower by those who plume its tender wings and direct its early course. Such is the magnitude, the transcendence of this subject. In a philosophical view, beginning at what point we will, and following the most rigid connection and dependence of cause and effect, of antecedent and consequence, we shall find that education is intimately related to every good, and to every evil, which, as mortal, or as immortal beings, we can desire or dread.

Were a being of an understanding mind and a benevolent heart, to see, for the first time, a peaceful babe repose in its cradle, or on its mother's breast, and were he to be told, that that infant had been so constituted that every joint and organ in its whole frame might become the rendezvous of diseases and racking pains; that such was its internal structure, that every nerve and fibre beneath its skin might be made to throb with a peculiar torture; that, in the endless catalogue of human disasters, maladies, adversities or shame, there was scarcely one to which it would not be exposed; that, in the whole criminal law of society, and in the more comprehensive and self-executing law of God, there was not a crime which its heart might not at some time will, and its hand perpetrate; that, in the ghastly host of tragic passions,—Fear, Envy, Jealousy, Hate, Remorse, Despair,—there was not one which might not lacerate its soul, and bring down upon it an appropriate catastrophe;—were the benevolent spectator whom I have supposed, to see this environment of ills underlying, surrounding, overhanging their feeble and unconscious
victim, and, as it were, watching to dart forth and seize it, might he not be excused for wishing the newly-created spirit well back again into nonentity?

But we cannot return to nonentity. We have no refuge in annihilation. Creative energy has been exerted. Our first attribute, the vehicle of all our other attributes, — is immortality. We are of indestructible mould. Do what else we please with our nature and our faculties, we cannot annihilate them. Go where we please, self-desertion is impossible. Banished, we may be, from the enjoyment of God, but never from his dominion. There is no right or power of expatriation. There is no neighboring universe to fly to. If we forswear allegiance, it is but an empty form, for the laws by which we are bound do not only surround us, but are in us, and parts of us. Whatsoever other things may be possible, yet to break up or suspend this perpetuity of existence; to elude this susceptibility to pains, at once indefinite in number and indescribable in severity; to silence conscience, or say that it shall not hold dominion over the soul; to sink the past in oblivion; or to alter any of the conditions on which Heaven has made our bliss and our woe to depend, these things are impossible. Personality has been given us, by which we must refer all sensations, emotions, resolves, to our conscious selves. Identity has been given us, by virtue of which, through whatever ages we exist, our whole being is made a unity. Now, whether curses or blessings, by these conditions of our nature we must stand; for they are appointed to us, by a law higher than Fate, — by the law of God.

Were any one of this assembly to be shipwrecked upon a desert island, — “out of Humanity’s reach,” — would it not be his first act to ascend the nearest eminence and explore his position? Would he not at once strive to
descrie the dangers and the resources by which he might be surrounded? And, if reason, or even an enlightened self-love, constitutes any attribute of our nature, is it any the less our duty, — finding ourselves to be, and to have entered upon an interminable career of existence, — finding ourselves inwrought and organized with certain faculties and susceptibilities, so that we are necessitated to enjoy pleasure or to suffer pain, and so that neutrality between good and evil is impossible, — is it, I say, any the less our duty and our interest to look around us and within us, and to see what, on the whole, we can best do with this nature and with these faculties, of which we find ourselves in possession? Ought we not to inquire what mighty forces of Nature and of Providence are sweeping us along, and whither their currents are tending? What parts of the great system in which we are placed can be accommodated to us, and to what parts we must accommodate ourselves?

Before such a theme I stand in awe. On which side shall its vastness be approached? Shall I speak of the principles on which an educational system for a State should be organized; or of the means and agencies by which it should be administered, in contrast with the absence of any fundamental plan? From the Capitol, where the sovereign law is enacted, and whence it is promulgated, to the school district and the fireside, where the grand results of that law are to appear, in a more prosperous, more intelligent, more virtuous, and, of course, more happy generation of men and women, there is a vast intervening distance; — upon which one of the many links of the chain that binds these two extremes together shall I expatiate?

I venture, my friends, at this time, to solicit your attention, while I attempt to lay before you some of the re-
lations which we bear to the cause of Education, because we are the citizens of a Republic; and thence to deduce some of the reasons, which, under our political institutions, make the proper training of the rising generation the highest earthly duty of the risen.

It is a truism, that free institutions multiply human energies. A chained body cannot do much harm; a chained mind can do as little. In a despotic government, the human faculties are benumbed and paralyzed; in a Republic, they glow with an intense life, and burst forth with uncontrollable impetuosity. In the former, they are circumscribed and straitened in their range of action; in the latter, they have "ample room and verge enough," and may rise to glory or plunge into ruin. Amidst universal ignorance, there cannot be such wrong notions about right, as there may be in a community partially enlightened; and false conclusions which have been reasoned out are infinitely worse than blind impulses.

To demonstrate the necessity of education in our government, I shall not attempt to derive my proofs from the history of other Republics. Such arguments are becoming stale. Besides, there are so many points of difference between our own political institutions, and those of any other government calling itself free, which has ever existed, that the objector perpetually eludes or denies the force of our reasoning, by showing some want of analogy between the cases presented.

I propose, therefore, on this occasion, not to adduce, as proofs, what has been true only in past times; but what is true at the present time, and must always continue to be true. I shall rely, not on precedents, but on the nature of things; and draw my arguments less from history than from humanity.

Now it is undeniable that, with the possession of cer-
tain higher faculties,—common to all mankind,—whose proper cultivation will bear us upward to hitherto undiscovered regions of prosperity and glory, we possess, also, certain lower faculties or propensities;—equally common;—whose improper indulgence leads, inevitably, to tribulation, and anguish, and ruin. The propensities to which I refer seem indispensable to our temporal existence, and, if restricted within proper limits, they are promotive of our enjoyment; but, beyond those limits, they work dishonor and infatuation, madness and despair. As servants, they are indispensable; as masters, they torture as well as tyrannize. Now despotic and arbitrary governments have dwarfed and crippled the powers of doing evil as much as the powers of doing good; but a republican government, from the very fact of its freedom, unreins their speed, and lets loose their strength. It is justly alleged against despotisms, that they fetter, mutilate, almost extinguish the noblest powers of the human soul; but there is a per contra to this, for which we have not given them credit;—they circumscribe the ability to do the greatest evil, as well as to do the greatest good.

My proposition, therefore, is simply this:—If republican institutions do wake up unexampled energies in the whole mass of a people, and give them implements of unexampled power wherewith to work out their will, then these same institutions ought also to confer upon that people unexampled wisdom and rectitude. If these institutions give greater scope and impulse to the lower order of faculties belonging to the human mind, then they must also give more authoritative control and more skilful guidance to the higher ones. If they multiply temptations, they must fortify against them. If they quicken the activity and enlarge the sphere of the appetites and passions, they must, at least in an equal ratio, establish
the authority and extend the jurisdiction of reason and conscience. In a word, we must not add to the impulsive, without also adding to the regulating forces.

If we maintain institutions, which bring us within the action of new and unheard-of powers, without taking any corresponding measures for the government of those powers, we shall perish by the very instruments prepared for our happiness.

The truth has been so often asserted, that there is no security for a republic but in morality and intelligence, that a repetition of it seems hardly in good taste. But all permanent blessings being founded on permanent truths, a continued observance of the truth is the condition of a continued enjoyment of the blessing. I know we are often admonished that, without intelligence and virtue, as a chart and a compass, to direct us in our untried political voyage, we shall perish in the first storm; but I venture to add that, without these qualities, we shall not wait for a storm, — we cannot weather a calm. If the sea is as smooth as glass we shall founder, for we are in a stone boat. Unless these qualities pervade the general head and the general heart, not only will republican institutions vanish from amongst us, but the words prosperity and happiness will become obsolete. And all this may be affirmed, not from historical examples merely, but from the very constitution of our nature. We are created and brought into life with a set of innate, organic dispositions or propensities, which a free government rouses and invigorates, and which, if not bridled and tamed, by our actually seeing the eternal laws of justice, as plainly as we can see the sun in the heavens, — and by our actually feeling the sovereign sentiment of duty, as plainly as we feel the earth beneath our feet, — will hurry us forward into regions populous with every form of evil.
Divines, moralists, metaphysicians, — almost without exception, — regard the human being as exceedingly complex in his mental or spiritual constitution, as well as in his bodily organization; — they regard him as having a plurality of tendencies and affections, though brought together and embodied in one person. Hence, in all discussions or disquisitions respecting human nature, they analyze or assort it into different classes of powers and faculties.

First, there is a conscience in every one of us, and a sense of responsibility to God, which establish a moral relation between us and our Creator; and which, — though we could call all the grandeur and the splendors of the universe our own, and were lulled and charmed by all its music and its beauty, — will forever banish all true repose from our bosom, unless our nature and our lives are supposed to be in harmony with the divine will. The object of these faculties is, their Infinite Creator; and they never can be supremely happy unless they are tuned to perfect concord with every note in the celestial anthems of love and praise.

Then there is a set of faculties that we denominate social or sympathetic, among the most conspicuous of which is benevolence or philanthropy,—a sentiment which mysteriously makes our pulse throb, and our nerves shrink, at the pains or adversity of others, even though, at the same time, our own frame is whole, and our own fortunes gladdening. How beautiful and marvellous a thing it is, when imbosomed in a happy family, surrounded by friends and children, — which even Paradise had not, — that the history of idolatry in the far-off islands of the Pacific, or of the burning of Hindoo widows on the other side of the globe, amongst a people whom we never saw and never shall see, should pierce our
hearts like a knife! How glorious a quality of our nature it is, that the story of some old martyr or hero, who nobly upheld truth with life, — though his dust has now been blown about by the winds for twenty centuries, — should transport us with such feelings of admiration and ecstasy, that we long to have been he, and to have borne all his sufferings; and we find ourselves involuntarily sublimed by so noble a passion, that the most terrible form of death, if hallowed by a righteous cause, looks lovely as a bride to the bridegroom!

There are also the yearning, doting fondness of parents for children, of natural kindred for each other, and the passionate, yet pure affection of the sexes, which fit us for the duties and the endearments of domestic life. Even that vague general attachment to our fellow-beings, which binds men together in fraternal associations, is so strong, and is universally recognized as so natural, that we look upon hermits and solitaries as creatures half-mad or half-monstrous. The sphere of these sentiments or affections is around us and before us, — family, neighborhood, country, kind, posterity.

And lastly, there is the strictly selfish part of our nature, which consists of a gang of animal appetites, — a horde of bandit propensities, — each one of which, by its own nature, is deaf to the voice of God, reckless of the welfare of men, blind, remorseless, atheistic; — each one of the whole pack being supremely bent upon its own indulgence, and ready to barter earth and heaven to win it. We all have some pretty definite idea of beasts of prey and of birds of prey; but not among the whelps of the lion's lair, not among the young of the vulture's nest, are there any spoilers at all comparable to those that may be trained from the appetites and propensities which each human being brings with him into the world.
I am sorry not to be able to speak of this part of our common nature in a more complimentary manner; but to utter what facts will not warrant, would be to exchange the records of truth for a song of Delilah.

The first of these animal propensities is the simple want of food or nourishment. This appetite may be very gentlemanly and well-behaved. There is nothing in it necessarily incompatible with decorum and good-breeding, or with the conscientious fulfilment of every private and every public duty. When duly indulged, and duly restrained, it furnishes the occasions,—around the family and the hospitable board,—for much of the pleasure of domestic, and the enjoyment of social existence. But thousands go through life, without ever having occasion to know or to think of its awful strength. Behold, what this appetite has actually and not unfrequently become, when, taking the ghastly form of Hunger in a besieged city, or amongst a famishing people, it forces the living to feed upon flesh torn from the limbs of the dead. Look at that open boat, weltering in mid-ocean; it holds the crew of a foundered vessel who have escaped with life only, but days and days have passed away, and no morsel of food or drop of drink has assuaged the tortures of hunger and thirst. At first, they wept together as suffering friends, then they prayed together as loving Christians; but now friendship is extinct and prayer is choked, for hunger has grown to a cannibal, uttering horrible whispers, and proposing the fatal lot, by which the blood of one is to fill a bowl to be quaffed by the rest! Look again at the ravages of this appetite, in its other and more familiar, though not less appalling forms;—look at its havoc of life in China, where thousands annually perish by opium; in Turkey, where the pipe kills more than the bowstring; and at the Golgothas of Intem-
In a Republican Government.

Perance, in Ireland, in Old England, and in New England. Now, the elements of this appetite are common to us all; and no untempted mortal can tell what he would do, or would not do, if he were in the besieged city, or in the ocean-test, provisionless boat. The sensations belonging to this appetite reside in the ends of a few nerves, — called by the anatomists, papillae, — which are situated about the tongue and throat; and yet, on the wants of this narrow spot, are founded the cultivation of myriads of orchards, vineyards and gardens, the tilling of grain-fields, prairie-like in extent, the scouring of forests for game, the dredging of seas, and the rearing of cattle upon a thousand hills. Granaries are heaped, cellars filled, vintages flow, to gratify this instinct for food. And what toils and perils, what European as well as African slavery among the ignorant, and what epicurean science among the learned, have their origin and end in this one appetite! Once, cooling draughts from the fountain, and delicious fruits from the earth, sufficed for its demands. Now, whenever the banquet table is spread, there must be mountains of viands and freshets of wine. What absurdities as well as wickednesses it tempts men, otherwise rational and religious, to commit. Have we not all seen instances of men, who will ask the blessing of Heaven upon the bounties wherewith a paternal Providence has spread their daily board, — who will pray that their bodies may be nourished and strengthened for usefulness, by partaking of its supplies; and will then sit down and almost kill themselves by indulgence! It is as impossible to satisfy the refinements, as to satiate the grossness of this appetite. The Roman, Apicius, by his gold, provided a dish for his table composed of thousands

* At the time this was written, the redemption of Ireland by Father Mathew was only beginning.
of nightingales' tongues; a despot, by his power, distils the happiness of a thousand slaves, to make one delicious drop for his palate. This appetite, then, though consisting of only a few sensations about the mouth and throat, is a crucible in which the treasures of the world may be dissolved. Behold the epicure and the inebriate,—men who affect a lofty indignation if you question that they are rational beings;—see them bartering friends, family and fame, body, soul and estate, — to gratify a space not more than two inches square in the inside of the mouth! Do we not need some new form of expression, some single word, where we can condense, into one monosyllable, the meaning of ten thousand fools!

Take another of these animal wants,—that of clothing. How insignificant it seems, and yet of what excesses it is capable! What sacrifices it demands! what follies and crimes it suborns us to commit! Compare the first fig-leaf suit with the monthly publication of London and Parisian fashions! Our first parents began with a vegetable, pea-green wardrobe, plucked from the nearest tree, and were their own dress-maker. Now, how many fields are tilled for linen and cotton and silks! how many races of animals are domesticated, or are hunted under the line, around the poles, in ocean or in air, that their coverings may supply the materials of ours! How many ships plough the ocean to fetch and carry; what ponderous machinery rolls; how many warehouses burst with an opulence of merchandise,—all having ultimate reference to this demand for covering! Nor is there any assignable limit to the refinements and the expenditures, to the frauds and the cruelties, which may grow on this stock. The demands of this propensity, like those of the former, if suffered to go onward unrestrained, increase to infinity. The Austrian, Prince Esterhazy, lately visited
the different courts of Europe, dressed in a coat which cost five hundred thousand dollars; and it cost him from five hundred to a thousand dollars every time he put it on. Yet, undoubtedly, if he had not thought himself sadly stinted in his means, he would have had a better coat, and underclothes to match!

Nor is this all which is founded upon the sensations of the skin, when the thermometer is much below, or much above sixty-five degrees. Shelter must be had; and how much marble and granite rises from the quarry; what masses of clay are shaped and hardened into bricks; how many majestic forests start from their stations, and move afield, to be built up into villages and cities and temples, for the habitations of men! And, notwithstanding all that has been done under the promptings of this appetite, who, if his wishes could execute themselves, would remain satisfied with the house he lives in, the temple he worships in, or the tomb in which he expects to sleep?

Again; there are seasons of the year when vegetable life fails, when the corn and the vine cease to luxuriate in the fields, and the orchards no longer bend with fruitage. There is also the season of infancy, when, though bountiful Nature should scatter her richest productions spontaneously around us, we could not reach out our hands to gather them; and again, there is the season of old age, with its attendant infirmities, when our exhausted frame can no longer procure the necessaries of existence. Now, that in summer we may provide for winter, — that during the vigor of manhood we may lay up provisions for the imbecility of our old age, and for the helplessness of children, we have been endued by our Maker with an instinct of acquisition, of accumulation; — or with a desire, as we familiarly express it, to lay up something for a rainy day. Thus a disposition, or mental
pre-adaptation, was given us, before birth, for these necessities which were to arise after it, just as our eye was fitted for the light to shine through, before it was born into this heaven-full of sunshine. Look at this blind instinct,—the love of gain,—as it manifests itself even in infancy. A child, at first, has no idea that there is any other owner of the universe but himself. Whatever pleases him, he forthwith appropriates. His wants are his title-deeds and bills of sale. He does not ask in whose garden the fruit grew, or by whose diving the pearl was fished up. Carry him through a museum or a market, and he demands, in perfectly intelligible, though perhaps in inarticulate language, whatever arrests his fancy. His whole body of law, whether civil or criminal,—*omne ejus corpus juris*,—is in three words, “I want it.” If the candle pleases him, he demands the candle; if the rainbow and the stars please him, he demands the rainbow and the stars.

And how does this blind instinct overlap the objects for which it was given! Not content with competency in means, and disdaining the gradual accumulations of honest industry, it rises to insatiate avarice and rapacity. From the accursed thirst for gold have come the felon frauds of the market-place, and the more wicked pious frauds of the church, the robber’s blow, the burglar’s stealthy step around the midnight couch, the pirate’s murders, the rapine of cities, the plundering and captivity of nations. Even now, in self-styled Christian communities, are there not men who, under the sharp goadings of this impulse, equip vessels to cross the ocean,—not to carry the glad tidings of the gospel to heathen lands, but to descend upon defenceless villages in a whirlwind of fire and ruin, to kidnap men, women and children, and to transport them through all the horrors of
the middle passage, where their cries of agony and despair outvoice the storm, that the wretched victims may at last be sold into remorseless bondage, to wear chains, and to bequeath chains;—and all this is perpetrated and suffered because a little gold can be transmuted, by such fiery alchemy, from human tears and blood! Such is the inexorable power of cupidity, in self-styled Christian lands, in sight of the spires of God’s temples pointing upward to heaven, which, if Truth had its appropriate emblems, would be reversed and point downward to hell.

Startle not, my friends, at these far-off enormities. Are there not monsters amongst ourselves, who sell their own children into bondage for the money they can earn? who coin not only the health of their own offspring, but their immortal capacities of intelligence and virtue, into pelf? Are there not others, who, at home, at the town-meeting, and at the school-meeting, win all the victories of ignorance by the cry of expense? Are there not men amongst us, possessed of superfluous wealth, who will vote against a blackboard for a schoolroom, because the scantling costs a shilling and the paint sixpence!

Nay, do we not see men of lofty intellects, of mind formed to go leaping and bounding on from star to star in the firmament of knowledge, absorbed, sunk, in the low pursuit of gain? and if, perchance, some of their superfluous coffers are lost, they go mad,—the fools!—and whine and mope in the wards of a lunatic hospital, because, forsooth, they must content themselves with a little less equipage, or upholstery, or millinery! Such follies, losses, crimes, prove to what infinite rapacity the instinct of acquisition may grow.

Again; there is the natural sentiment of self-respect, or self-appreciation;—when existing in excess, it is popularly called self-esteem. This innate tendency im-
parts to every individual the feeling that, in and of himself, he is of some mark and consequence. This instinct was given us that it might act outwards and embody itself in all dignity and nobleness of conduct; that it might preserve us, at all times, from whatever is beneath us or unworthy of us, though we were assured that no other being in the universe knew it, or ever would know it. For, when a man of true honor,—one who has formed a just estimate of the noble capacities with which God has endowed him, and of his own duty in using them,—when such a man is beset by a base temptation, and the tempter whispers,—"You may yield, for, in this solitude and impenetrable darkness, none can ever know your momentary lapse,"—his indignant reply is, "But I shall know it myself!" Without this elevating and sustaining instinct, existing in some degree, and acting with some efficiency, no man could ever hold himself erect, in the midst of so many millions of other men, each by the law of nature equal to himself. Without this, when surveying the sublimities of creation,—the cataract, the mountain, the ocean, the awful magnificence of the midnight heavens; or when contemplating the power and perfections of Jehovah,—every one would lay his hand on his mouth and his mouth in the dust, never to rise again.

But this common propensity, like the others, is capable of infinite excess. There are no bounds to its expansiveness and exorbitancy. When acting with intensity, it seems to possess creative power. It changes emptiness into fulness. It not only reveals to its possessor a self-worthiness wholly invisible to others, but it so overflows with arrogance and pride as to confer an excellence upon everything connected with or pertaining to itself. The tyrant Gessler mounted his cap upon a pole, and com-
manded his subjects to pay homage to it. It had imbibed a virtue from contact with his head, which made it of greater value than a nation of freemen. It is said of one of the present British dukes, that he will give a thousand pounds sterling for a single worthless book, or for some ancient marble or pebble, provided it is known to be the only one of the kind in existence,—a unique,—so that his pride can blow its trumpet in the ears of all mankind, and say, “In respect of this old book, or marble, or pebble, I have what no other man has, and am superior to the rest of the world.” Constable was so inflated with the supposed honor of being the publisher of Sir Walter Scott’s novels, that, in one of his paroxysms of pride, he exclaimed with an oath, “I am all but the author of the Waverley novels!” Yes, he came as near as type-setter! It is this feeling which makes the organ blower appropriate the plaudits bestowed upon the musician, and the hero’s valet mistake himself for his master. It is this propensity that makes a man proud of his ancestors, who were dead centuries before he was born;—proud of garments which he never had wit enough to make, while he despises the tailor by whose superior skill they were prepared;—and proud of owning a horse that can trot a mile in three minutes, though the credit of his speed belongs to the farmer who reared, and the jockey who trained, and even to the hostler who grooms him, infinitely more than to the self-supposed gentleman who sits behind him in a gig, and just lets him go! Other selfish propensities play the strangest tricks, delusions, impostures, upon us, and make us knaves and fools; but it is the inflation of pride, more than any thing else, that swells us into an Infinite Sham.

I have time to mention but one more of this lower order of the human faculties,—the Love of Approbation.
As a proper self-respect makes us discard and disdain all unworthy conduct, even when alone; so a rational desire to obtain the good-will of others stimulates us to generosity, and magnanimity, and fortitude, in the performance of our social duties. It is a strong auxiliary motive,—useful as an impulse, though fatal as a guide. I think it is by the common consent of mankind, that the plaudits of the world rank as the third, in the list of rewards for virtuous conduct,—coming next after the smiles of Heaven and the approval of conscience. In this country, the bestowment of offices is the current coin in which the love of approbation pays and receives its debts. Offices, in the United States, seem to be a legal tender, for nobody refuses them. But if this desire becomes rabid and inappeasable, if it grows from a subordinate instinct into a domineering and tyrannical passion, it reverses the moral order, and places the applauds of men before the rewards of conscience and the approval of Heaven. The victim of this usurper-passion will find the doctrines of revealed truth in the prevalent opinions of the community where he resides; and the doctrines of political truth in the majority of votes at the last election,—modified by the chances of a change before the next. Under its influence, the intellect will plot any fraud, and the tongue will utter any falsehood, in order to cajole and inveigle a majority of the people; but should that majority fail, it will compel its poor slave to abandon the old party, and try its fortunes with a new one.

There are other original, innate propensities, which cannot properly be discussed on an occasion like this. Their action, within certain limits, is necessary to self-preservation, and to the preservation of the race; a description of their excesses would make every cheek pale and every heart faint.
IN A REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT.

Now there are a few general truths appertaining to this whole tribe of propensities. Though existing with different degrees of strength, in different individuals, yet they are common to the whole race. As they are necessary to self-preservation, their bestowment is almost universal, and we regard every man as so far unnatural, and suffering privation, who has not the elements of them all, mingled in his composition. As they are necessary to the continuance of the race, we must suppose, at least during the present constitution of human nature, that they will always exist; and that all improvements in government, science, morals, faith, and other constituents of civilization, will produce their blessed effects, not by extirpating, but by controlling them, and by bringing them into subjection to the social and the divine law. As we have a moral nature to which God speaks, commanding us to love and obey his holy will; as we have a social nature, which sends a circulating current of sympathy from our hearts around through the hearts of children, friends, kindred and kind, mingling our pleasures and pains and their pleasures and pains in one common stream; so, by these propensities, we are jointed into this earthly life, and this frame of material things.

Again; each one of these propensities is related to the whole of its class of objects, and not to any proportionate or definite quantity of them; — just as the appetite of a wolf or a vulture is adapted or related to the blood of all lambs and all kids, and not merely to the blood of some particular number of lambs and kids. Each one of them, also, is blind to every thing but its own gratification; it sallies forth, — if uncontrollable, — and seizes and riots upon its objects, regardless of all sacrifices, and defiant of all consequences. Each one of them is capacious as an abyss, is insatiable by indulgence, would consume
one of them. Millions of coveting eyes are fastened on the same object,—millions of hands thrust out to seize it. What ravenous, torturing, destroying, then, must ensue, if these hounds cannot be lashed back into their kennel! They must be governed; they cannot be destroyed. Nature declares that the germs, the embryos, of these incipient monsters, shall not be annihilated. She reproduces them with every human being that comes into the world. Nor, indeed, is it desirable, even if it were practicable, that they should be wholly expunged and razed out of our constitution. He who made us, knew our circumstances and necessities, and He has implanted them in our nature too deep for eradication. Besides, within their proper sphere, they confer an innocent, though a subordinate enjoyment. Certainly, we would not make all men hermits and anchorites. Let us be just, even to the appetites. No man is the worse because he keenly relishes and enjoys the bountiful provisions which Heaven has made for his food, his raiment, and his shelter. Indeed, why were these provisions ever made, if they are not to be enjoyed? Surely they are not superfluities and supernumeraries, cumbering a creation which would have been more perfect without them. Let them then be acquired and enjoyed, though always with moderation and temperance. Let the lover of wealth seek wealth by all honest means, and with earnestness, if he will;—let him surround himself with the comforts and the embellishments of life, and add the pleasures of beauty to the pleasures of utility. Let every honorable man indulge a quick and sustaining confidence in his own worthiness, whenever disparaged or maligned; and let him count upon the affections of his friends, and the benedictions of his race, as a part of the solid rewards of virtue. These, and kindred feelings, are not to be crushed,
extinguished. Let them rouse themselves in presence of their objects, and rush out to seize them, and neigh, like a war-horse for the battle,—only let them know that they have a rider, to whose eye no mist can dim the severe line they are never to pass, and whose arm can bend every neck of them, like the twig of an osier.

But I must pass to the next topic for consideration,—the stimulus which, in this country, is applied to the propensities; and the free, unbarred, unbounded career, which is here opened for their activity. In every other nation that has ever existed,—not even excepting Greece and Rome,—the mind of the masses has been obstructed in its development. Amongst millions of men, only some half-dozen of individuals,—often only a single individual,—have been able to pour out the lava of their passions, with full, volcanic force. These few men have made the Pharaohs, the Neros, the Napoleons of the race. The rest have usually been subjected to a systematic course of blinding, deafening, crippling. As an inevitable consequence of this, the minds of men have never yet put forth one-thousandth part of their tremendous energies. Bad men have swarmed upon the earth, it is true, but they have been weak men. Another consequence is, that we, by deriving our impressions from history, have formed too low an estimate of the marvellous powers and capacities of the human being for evil as well as for good. The general estimate is altogether inadequate to what the common mind will be able to effect, when apt instruments are put into its hands, and the wide world is opened for its sphere of operations. Amongst savage nations, it is true, the will has been more free; but there it has had none of the instruments of civilized life, whereby to execute its purposes — such, for instance, as the
mechanic arts; a highly cultivated language, with the
general ability to read and write it; fire-arms; engineer-
ing; steam; the press, and the post-office;—and among
civilized nations, though the means have been far more
ample, yet the will has been broken or corrupted. Even
the last generation in this country,—the generation that
moulded our institutions into their present form,—were
born and educated under other institutions, and they
brought into active life strong hereditary and traditional
feelings of respect for established authority, merely be-
cause it was established,—of veneration for law, simply
because it was law,—and of deference both to secular and
ecclesiastical rank, because they had been accustomed to
revere rank. But scarcely any vestige of this reverence
for the past now remains. The momentum of heredi-
tary opinion is spent. The generation of men now enter-
ing upon the stage of life,—the generation which is to
occupy that stage for the next forty years,—will act out
their desires more fully, more effectively, than any gen-
eration of men that has ever existed. Already, the tramp
of this innumerable host is sounding in our ears. They
are the men who will take counsel of their desires, and
make it law. The condition of society is to be only an
embodiment of their mighty will; and if greater care be
not taken than has ever heretofore been taken, to inform
and regulate that will, it will inscribe its laws all over the
face of society in such broad and terrific characters, that,
not only whoever runs may read, but whoever reads will
run. Should avarice and pride obtain the mastery, then
will the humble and the poor be ground to dust beneath
their chariot-wheels; but, on the other hand, should be-
setting vices and false knowledge bear sway, then will
every wealthy, and every educated, and every refined in-
dividual and family, stand in the same relation to society,
in which game stands to the sportsman!
In a Republican Government.

In taking a survey of the race, we see that all of human character and conduct may be referred to two forces; the innate force of the mind acting outwards, and the force of outward things acting upon the mind. First, there is an internal, salient, clanging vigor of the mind, which, according to its state and condition, originates thoughts, desires, impulses, and projects them outwards into words and deeds; and secondly, there is the external force of circumstances, laws, traditions, customs, which besieges the mind, environs it, places a guard at all its outer gates, permits some of its desires and thoughts to issue forth, and to become words and actions, but forbids others to escape, beats them back, seals the lips that would utter them, smites off the arm that would perform them, punishes the soul that would send them forth by finding an avenue in every sense and in every nerve, through which to send up tormentors to destroy its hopes and lay waste its sanctuaries; and finally, if all these means fail to subdue and silence the internal energy, then the external power dismisses the soul itself from the earth, by crushing the physical organization which it inhabits. These two forces,—on the one hand, the mind trajecting itself forth, and seeking to do its will on whatever is external to itself,—and, on the other hand, whatever is external to the mind, modifying or resisting its movements,—these constitute the main action of the human drama. As a mathematician would express it, human conduct and character move in the diagonal of these two forces. Sometimes, indeed, both forces are coincident, sometimes antagonistic; but it is useless to inquire which force has predominated, as no universal rule can be laid down respecting them. In despotisms, the external prevails; in revolutions,—such as the French, for instance,—the internal. Why are the Chinese, for a hundred succes-
sive generations, transcripts and fac-similes of each other, as though the dead grandparent had come back again in the grandchild, and so round and round? It is because, among the Chinese, this external force overlays the growing faculties of the soul, and compels them, as they grow, to assume a prescribed shape. In that country the laws and customs are so inflexible, and the spirit of the people is so impotent, that their minds grow, as it were, into the hollow of a brazen envelope, whose walls are not removable nor penetrable; and hence, all growth must conform to the shape and size of the concave surface. By their education, laws, and penalties, the minds of the people are made to grow into certain social, political, and religious forms, just as certainly, and on the same principle of force, as the feet of their beauties are made, by small, inelastic shoes, to grow hoof-wise. In Russian Poland, a subject is as much debarred from touching certain topics, in the way of discussion, as from seizing on the jewels of the crown. The knout and the Siberian mines await the first outward expression of the transgressor. Hence the divinely-formed soul, created to admire, through intelligence, this glorious universe; to go forth, through knowledge, into all lands and times; to be identified, through sympathy, with all human fortunes; to know its Maker, and its immortal destiny, is driven back at every door of egress, is darkened at every window where light could enter, and is chained to the vassal spot which gave it birth,—where the very earth, as well as its inhabitant, is blasted by the common curse of bondage. In Oriental and African despotisms, the mind of the millions grows, only as the trees of a noble forest could grow in the rocky depths of a cavern, without strength, or beauty, or healing balm,—in impurity and darkness, fed by poisonous exhalations from stagnant pools, all upward and outward
expansion introverted by solid barriers, and forced back into unsightly forms. Thus has it always fared with the faculties of the human soul when caverned in despotism. They have dwelt in intellectual, denser than subterranean, darkness. Their most tender, sweet, and hallowed emotions have been choked and blighted. The pure and sacred effusions of the heart have been converted into hatred of the good and idolatry of the base, for want of the light and the air of true freedom and instruction. The world can suffer no loss equal to that spiritual loss which is occasioned by attempting to destroy, instead of regulating, the energies of the mind.

Since the Christian epoch, great has been the change in Christian countries between the relative strength of the mind, acting outwards, and the strength of outward things, repulsing and stifling the action of the mind. Christianity established one conviction in the minds of thousands and tens of thousands, which other religions had established in the mind of here and there an individual only. This conviction was, that the future existence is infinitely more important than the present; — the difference between the two being so great as to reduce all mere worldly distinctions to insignificance and nothing. Hence it might have been predicted from the beginning, that the human mind, acting under the mighty stimulus of Christianity, would eventually triumph over despotism. The interests of despotism lie in this life; those of Christianity, not only in this, but in the life to come. It was, therefore, mortality at one end of the lever, and immortality at the other. When one party contends for the blessings of life merely, while the other contends for blessings higher than life, the latter, by a law of the moral nature, must ultimately prevail.

Although many of the ancients had a belief in a fu-
ture state of existence, yet it was apprehended by them so dimly, and its retributions were pressed home so feebly on their consciences, that the belief appears to have had but little effect upon the conduct of individuals, or the administration and policy of states; and, for all practical purposes, it would hardly be too strong an expression to say, that immortality was first revealed by Christ. During the first three centuries of our era, the knowledge of this discovery,—so to call it,—was widely diffused among men. Then, by the union of Church and State, under Constantine, the civil power came in, and attempted to appropriate the benefits of the new discovery to itself, so that it might use divine motives for selfish purposes. And, had the throne and the priesthood sought to govern men by the motive of fear alone, they might have retained their ascendancy,—we cannot tell for what period of time. But they found a natural conscience in men, a sense of responsibilities to duty, which they were so short-sighted as to enlist in their service;—I say, short-sighted, for, when they aroused the sentiment of duty in the human soul, and used it as a means of securing obedience to themselves, they called up a power stronger than themselves. The ally was mightier than the chief that invoked its aid. Hence the uprisings, the rebellions of the people against regal and ecclesiastical oppression. Rulers attempted to subdue the people by persecutions, massacres, burnings, but in vain; because, though they could kill men, they could not kill conscience. After a conflict of sixteen centuries, the victory has been achieved. Mind has triumphed over the quellers of mind,—the internal force over the external. When mankind shall be removed by time to such a distance that they can see past events in their true proportions and relative magnitude, this struggle between oppression on the
one side, striving to keep the human mind in its prison-house, and to set an eternal seal upon the door; and, on the other hand, the convulsive efforts of that mind to dis-inthrall itself, and to utter its impatient thoughts; and to form, and to abide by, its own convictions of truth,—this conflict, I say, will be the grand, central, conspicuous object, in the history of our era. The history of wars between rival dynasties, for the conquest or dismemberment of empires, will fade away, and be but dimly visible in the retrospect; while this struggle between the soul and its enslavers will stand far out in the foreground,—the towering, supereminent figure on the historic canvas.

It has not been in accustomed modes, nor with weapons of earthly temper only, that this warfare has been waged. As the energies of the soul, acting under the mighty impulses of a sense of duty and the prospect of an endless futurity, waxed stronger and stronger, tyrants forged new engines to subdue it. Their instruments have been the dungeons of a thousand Bastilos; the Inquisition, whose ministers were literally flames of fire; devastations of whole provinces; huntings of entire communities of men into the mountains, like timorous flocks; massacres,—in one only of which, thirty thousand men and women were slaughtered at the ringing of a signal-bell; and, after exhausting all the agonies of earth and time, they unvaulted the Bottomless Pit, and, suspending their victims over the abyss, they threatened to hurl them down into the arms of beckoning demons, impatient to begin their past-time of eternal torture. But, impasive to annihilation; though smitten down, yet, with recuperative energy, springing from its fall; victorious over the sufferings of this world and the more formidable terrors of another,—the human soul, immortal, invulnerable, invincible, has
at last unmanacled and emancipated itself. It has triumphed; and here, in our age and in our land, it is now rising up before us, gigantic, majestic, lofty as an archangel, and, like an archangel, to be saved or lost by its obedience or its transgressions. Amongst ourselves it is, that this spirit is now walking forth, full of its now-found life, wantoning in freshly-discovered energies, surrounded by all the objects which can inflame its boundless appetites, and, as yet, too purblind, from the long darkness of its prison-house, to discern clearly between its blessing and its bane. That unconquerable force of the human soul, which all the arts and power of despotism,—which all the enginery borrowed from both worlds,—could not subdue, is here, amongst ourselves, to do its sovereign will.

Let us now turn for a moment to see what means and stimulants our institutions have provided for the use of the mighty powers and passions they have unloosed. No apparatus so skilful was ever before devised. Instead of the slow and cumbrous machinery of former times, we have provided that which is quick-working and far-reaching, and which may be used for the destruction as easily as for the welfare of its possessors. Our institutions furnish as great facilities for wicked men, in all departments of wickedness, as phosphorus and lucifer matches furnish to the incendiary. What chemistry has done, in these preparations, over the old art of rubbing two sticks together, for the wretch who would fire your dwelling, our social partnerships have done for flagitious and unprincipled men. Through the right,—almost universal,—of suffrage, we have established a community of power; and no proposition is more plain and self-evident, than that nothing but mere popular inclination
lies between a community of power and a community in every thing else. And though, in the long-run, and when other things are equal, a righteous cause always has a decisive advantage over an evil one, yet, in the first onset between right and wrong, bad men possess one advantage over the good. They have double resources,—two armories. The arts of guilt are as welcome to them as the practices of justice. They can use poisoned weapons as well as those approved by the usages of war.

Again; has it been sufficiently considered, that all which has been said,—and truly said,—of the excellence of our institutions, if administered by an upright people, must be reversed and read backwards, if administered by a corrupt one? I am aware that some will be ready to say, “We have been unwise and infatuated to confide all the constituents of our social and political welfare to such irresponsible keeping.” But let me ask of such,—of what avail is their lamentation? The irresistible movement in the diffusion of power is still progressive, not retrograde. Every year puts more of social strength into the hands of physical strength. The arithmetic of numbers is more and more excluding all estimate of moral forces, in the administration of government. And this, whether for good or for evil, will continue to be. Human beings cannot be remanded to the dungeons of imbecility, if they are to those of ignorance. The sun can as easily be turned backwards in its course, as one particle of that power, which has been conferred upon the millions, can be again monopolized by the few. To discuss the question, therefore, whether our institutions are not too free, is, for all practical purposes, as vain as it would be to discuss the question whether, on the whole, it was a wise arrangement on the part of Divine Providence, that the American continent should ever have
been created, or that Columbus should have discovered it. And let me ask, further, have those who believe our institutions to be too free, and who, therefore, would go back to less liberal ones,—have they settled the question, how far back they will go? Will they go back to the dark ages, and recall an eclipse which lasted centuries long? or will they ascend a little higher for their models,—to a time when our ancestors wore undressed skins, and burrowed in holes of the earth? or will they strike at once for the institutions of Egypt, where, though the monkey was a god, there was still a sufficient distance between him and his human worshipper? But all such discussions are vain. The oak will as soon go back into the acorn, or the bird into its shell, as we return to the monarchical or aristocratic forms of by-gone ages.

Nor let it be forgotten, in contemplating our condition, that the human passions, as unfolded and invigorated by our institutions, are not only possessed of all the prerogatives, and equipped with all the implements of sovereignty; but that they are forever roused and spurred to the most vehement efforts. It is a law of the passions, that they exert strength in proportion to the causes which excite them,—a law which holds true in cases of sanity, as well as in the terrible strength of insanity. And with what endless excitments are the passions of men here plied! With us, the Press is such a clarion, that it proclaims all the great movements of this great country, with a voice that sweeps over its whole surface, and comes back to us in echoes from its extremest borders. From the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Lakes to the Gulf, men cheer, inflame, exasperate each other, as though they were neighbors in the same street. What the ear of Dionysius was to him, making report of every word uttered by friend or foe, our institutions have made this
land to every citizen. It is a vast sounding gallery; and from horizon to horizon every shout of triumph and every cry of alarm are gathered up and rung in every man’s dwelling. All objects which stimulate the passions of men are made to pass before the eyes of all, as in a circling panorama. In very truth we are all hung upon the same electrical wire, and if the ignorant and vicious get possession of the apparatus, the intelligent and the virtuous must take such shocks as the stupid or profligate experimenters may choose to administer.

Mark how the excitements which our institutions supply have wrought upon the love of gain and the love of place. Vast speculations,—such as in other countries would require not only royal sanctions and charters, but the equipment of fleets, and princely outfits of gold and arms,—are here rushed into, on flash paper, by clerks and apprentices, not out of their time. What party can affirm that it is exempt from members who prize office, rather than the excellence that deserves it? Where can I be,—not what can I be,—is the question suggested to aspirants for fame. How many have their eyes fixed upon posts of honor and emolument which but one only can fill! While few will be satisfied with occupying less than their portion of space in the public eye, thousands have marked out some great compartment of the sky for the blazonry of their names. And hence it is, that, wherever there is a signal of gain, or of power, the vultures of cupidity and of ambition darken the air. Young men launch into this tumultuous life, years earlier than has ever been witnessed elsewhere. They seek to win those prizes without delay, which, according to Nature’s ordinances and appointments, are the rewards of a life of labor. Hence they find no time for studying the eternal principles of justice, veracity, equality, benevolence,
and for applying them to the complicated affairs of men. What cares a young adventurer for the immutable laws of trade, when he has purchased a ticket in some lottery of speculation, from which he expects to draw a fortune? Out of such an unbridled, unchastened love of gain, whether it traffics in townships of land or in twopenny toys, do we not know beforehand, there will come infinite falsehoods, knavery and bankruptcy? Let this state of things continue, and he will be a happy man who dares to say of any article of food or of apparel, which he eats or wears, that it has not, at some period of its preparation, or in some of its transfers, been contaminated by fraud. And what a state of society would it argue, in other respects, if the people at large should ever become indifferent to the question, whether fraud be, or be not, inwoven into the texture, and kneaded into the substance of what they daily consume, — whether what they eat or drink or wear be not an embodiment of the spirit of lies!

So the inordinate love of office will present the spectacle of gladiatorial contests, — of men struggling for station as for life, and using against each other the poisonous weapons of calumny and vituperation; — while the abiding welfare, the true greatness and prosperity of the people will be like the soil of some neutral Flanders, over which the hostile bands of partisans will march and countermarch, and convert it into battle-fields, — so that, whichever side may triumph, the people will be ruined. And even after one cause or one party has prevailed, the conquered land will not be wide enough to settle a tithe of the conquerors upon. Hence must come new rallying's; new banners must be unfurled, and the repose of the land be again broken by the convulsions of party strife. Hence, too, the death-grapple between the defenders of institutions which ought to be abolished, and the
assailants of institutions which ought to be preserved. Laocoön cries, “My life and my children are mine.” The hissing and inwreathing serpents respond, “They are ours.” If each party espouses and supports whatever is wrong on its own side, because such a course is deemed necessary to union and strength; and denounces whatever is right in the plans of its antagonists, because such are the approved tactics of opposition; if each party sounds the loudest alarms, when the most trivial danger from its opponents is apprehended, and sings the gentlest lullabies over perils of its own producing, can seer or prophet foretell but one catastrophe?

Again; we hear good men, every day, bemoaning the ignorance of certain portions of our country, and of individuals in all parts of it. The use often made of the elective franchise, the crude, unphilosophical notions, sometimes advanced in our legislative halls on questions of political economy, the erroneous views entertained by portions of the people, respecting the relation between representative and constituent, and the revolutionary ideas of others in regard to the structure of civil society,—these are cited as specimens and proofs of the ignorance that abounds amongst us. No greater delusion can blind us. This much-lamented ignorance, in the cases supposed, is a phantom, a spectre. The outcry against it is a false alarm, diverting attention from a real to an imaginary danger. Ignorance is not the cause of the evils referred to. With exceptions comparatively few, we have but two classes of ignorant persons amongst us, and they are harmless. Infants and idiots are ignorant; few others are so. Those whom we are accustomed to call ignorant, are full of false notions, as much worse than ignorance as wisdom is better. A merely ignorant man has no skill in adapting means to ends, whereby to jeop-
ard the welfare of great interests or great numbers. Ignorance is blankness; or, at most, a lifeless, inert mass, which can, indeed, be moved and placed where you please, but will stay where it is placed. In Europe, there are multitudes of ignorant men,—men into whose minds no idea ever entered respecting the duties of society or of government, or the conditions of human prosperity. They, like their work-fellows, the cattle, are obedient to their masters; and the range of their ideas on political or social questions is hardly more extensive than that of the brutes. But with our institutions, this state of things, to any great extent, is impossible. The very atmosphere we breathe is freighted with the ideas of property, of acquisition and transmission; of wages, labor and capital; of political and social rights; of the appointment to, and tenure of offices; of the reciprocal relations between the great departments of government—executive, legislative, and judicial. Every native-born child amongst us imbibes notions, either false or true, on these subjects. Let these notions be false; let an individual grow up, with false ideas of his own nature and destiny as an immortal being, with false views respecting what government, laws, customs, should be; with no knowledge of the works or the opinions of those great men who framed our government, and adjusted its various parts to each other;—and when such an individual is invested with the political rights of citizenship, with power to give an authoritative voice and vote upon the affairs of his country, he will look upon all existing things as rubbish which it is his duty to sweep away, that he may have room for the erection of other structures, planned after the model of his own false ideas. No man that ever lived could, by mere intuition or instinct, form just opinions upon a thousand questions, pertaining to civil society, to its juris-
prudence, its local, national and international duties. Many truths, vital to the welfare of the people, differ in their reality, as much from the appearances which they present to uninstructed minds, as the apparent size of the sun differs from its real size, which, in truth, is so many thousand times larger than the earth, while to the untaught eye it appears to be so many thousand times smaller. And if the human propensities are here to manifest themselves through the enlarged means of false knowledge which our institutions, unaided by special instruction, will furnish; if they are to possess all the instruments and furtherances which our doctrine of political equality confers; then the result must be, a power to do evil almost infinitely greater than ever existed before, instigated by impulses proportionately strong. Hence our dangers are to be, not those of ignorance, which would be comparatively tolerable, but those of false knowledge, which transcend the powers of mortal imagination to portray. Would you appreciate the amazing difference between ignorance and false knowledge, look at France, before and during her great revolution. Before the revolution, her people were merely ignorant; during the revolution, they acted under the lights of false knowledge. An idiot is ignorant, and does little harm; a maniac has false ideas, and destroys, burns and murders.

Looking again at the nature of our institutions, we find that it is not the material or corporeal interests of man alone that are here decided by the common voice;—such, for instance, as those pertaining to finance, revenue, the adjustment of the great economical interests of society, the rival claims between agriculture, commerce and manufactures, the partition and distribution of legislative, judicial and executive powers, with a long catalogue of others of a kindred nature; but also those more sol-
emnu questions which pervade the innermost sanctuary of domestic life, and, for worship or for sacrilege, enter the Holy of Holies in the ark of society: — these also are submitted to the general arbitrament. The haughty lordling, whose heart never felt one throb for the welfare of mankind, gives vote and verdict on the extent of popular rights; the libertine and debaucher give vote and verdict on the sanctity of the marriage covenant; the atheist on the definition of blasphemy. Nor is this great people invited merely to speculate, and frame abstract theories, on these momentous themes; to make picture models, on paper, in their closets; they are not invited to sketch Republics of Fancy only, but they are commissioned to make Republics of Fact; and in such Republics as they please to make, others, perforce, must please to live. If I do not like my minister, or my parish, I can sign off, (as we term it,) and connect myself with another; if I do not like my town, I can move out of it; but where shall a man sign to, or move to, out of a bad world? Nor do our people hold these powers, as an ornament merely, as some ostensible but useless badge of Freedom; but they keep them as instruments for use, and sometimes wield them as weapons of revenge. So closely indeed are we inwoven in the same web of fate, that a vote given on the banks of the Missouri or Arkansas may shake every plantation and warehouse on the Atlantic, and, reaching seaward, overtake and baffle enterprise, into whatever oceans it may have penetrated.

Such, then, is our condition. The minds that are to regulate all things and govern all things, in this country, are innately strong; they are intensely stimulated; they are supplied with the most formidable artillery of means; and each one is authorized to form its own working-plan,
its own ground-scheme, according to which, when the social edifice has been taken to pieces, it is to be reconstructed;—some are for going back a thousand or two thousand years for their model; others, for introducing what they consider the millennium, at once, by force of law, or by force without law.

And now, my friends, I ask, with the deepest anxiety, what institutions exist amongst us, which at once possess the power and are administered with the efficiency, requisite to save us from the dangers that spring up in our own bosoms? That the propensities, which each generation brings into the world, possess terrific power, and are capable of inflicting the completest ruin, none can deny. Nor will it be questioned that amongst us, they have an open career, and a command of means, such as never before co-existed. What antagonist power have we provided against them? By what exorcism can we lay the spirits we have raised? Once, brute force, directed by a few men, trampled upon the many. Here, the many are the possessors of that very force, and have almost abolished its use as a means of government. The French gendarmerie, the British horse-guards, the dreadful punishment of the Siberian mines, will never be copied here. Should the government resort to a standing army, that army would consist of the very forces they dread, organized, equipped and officered. Can laws save us? With us, the very idea of legislation is reversed. Once, the law prescribed the actions and shaped the wills of the multitude; here, the wills of the multitude prescribe and shape the law. With us, legislators study the will of the multitude, just as natural philosophers study a volcano,—not with any expectation of doing aught to the volcano, but to see what the volcano is about to do to them. While the law was clothed with majesty and power, and
the mind of the multitude was weak, then, as in all cases of a conflict between unequal forces, the law prevailed. But now, when the law is weak, and the passions of the multitude have gathered irresistible strength, it is fallacious and insane to look for security in the moral force of the law. As well might the man who has erected his dwelling upon the verge of a cliff overhanging the deep, when the equilibrium of the atmosphere is destroyed, and the elements are on fire, and every billow is excavating his foundations, expect to still the tempest by reading the Riot-act. Government and law, which ought to be the allies of justice and the everlasting foes of violence and wrong, will here be moulded into the similitude of the public mind, and will answer to it, as, in water, face answereth to face.

But, if arms themselves would be beaten in such a contest, if those who should propose the renewal of ancient severities in punishment would themselves be punished, have we not some other resource for the security of moderation and self-denial, and for the supremacy of order and law? Have not the scholars who adorn the halls of learning, and who almost a hallowed serenity to dwell in their academic shades, — have they not, amongst all the languages which they speak, some tongue by which they can charm and pacify the mighty spirits we have evoked into being? Alas! while scholars and academists are earnestly debating such questions, as whether the name of error shall or shall not be spelled with the letter u, the soul of error becomes incarnate, and starts up, as from the earth, myriad-formed and ubiquitous, and stands by the side of every man, and whispers transgression into his ear, and, like the first Tempter, entices him to pluck the beautiful, but fatal fruit of some forbidden tree. Our ancestors seem to have had great faith that the alumni
of our colleges would diffuse a higher order of intelligence through the whole mass of the people, and would imbue them with a love of sobriety and a reverence for justice. But either the leaven has lost its virtue, or the lump has become too large; for, surely, in our day, the mass is not all leavened.

I speak with reverence of the labors of another profession in their sacred calling. No other country in the world has ever been blessed with a body of clergymen, so learned, so faithful, so devout as ours. But by traditionary custom and the ingrained habits of the people, the efforts of the clergy are mainly expended upon those who have passed the forming state; — upon adults, whose characters, as we are accustomed to express it, have become fixed, which being interpreted, means, that they have passed from fluid into flint. Look at the ablest pastor, in the midst of an adult congregation whose early education has been neglected. Though he be consumed of zeal, and ready to die of toil, in their behalf, yet I seem to see him, expending his strength and his years amongst them, like one solitary arborist working, single-handed and alone, in a wide forest, where there are hundreds of stooping and contorted trees, and he, striving with tackle and guy-ropes to undouble their convolutions, and to straighten the flexures in trunks whose fibres curled as they grew; and, with his naked hand, to coax out gnarls and nodosities hard enough to glance off lightning; — when, could he have guided and trained them while yet they were tender shoots and young saplings, he could have shaped them into beauty, a hundred in a day.

But perhaps others may look for security to the public Press, which has now taken its place amongst the organized forces of modern civilization. Probably its political department supplies more than half the reading of
the mass of our people. But, bating the point, whether, in times of public excitement, when the society and thoughtfulness of wisdom, when severe and exact truth, are, more than ever else, necessary,—whether, at such times, the press is not itself liable to be inflamed by the heats it should allay, and to be perverted by the obliquities it should rectify;—bating this point, it is still obvious that its principal efforts are expended upon one department only of all our social duties. The very existence of the newspaper press, for any useful purpose, presupposes that the people are already supplied with the elements of knowledge and inspired with the love of right; and are therefore prepared to decide, with intelligence and honesty, those complicated and conflicting claims, which the tide of events is constantly presenting, and which, by the myriad messengers of the press, are carried to every man’s fireside for his adjudication. For, of what value is it, that we have the most wisely-framed government on earth; to what end is it, that the wisest schemes which a philanthropic statesmanship can devise, are propounded to the people, if this people has not the intelligence to understand, or the integrity to espouse them? Each of two things is equally necessary to our political prosperity; namely, just principles of government and administration, on one side, and a people able to understand and resolute to uphold them, on the other. Of what use is the most exquisite music ever composed by the greatest masters of the art, until you have orchestra or choir that can perform the pieces? Pupils must thoroughly master the vocal elements, musical language must be learned, voices must be long and severely trained, or the divinest compositions of Haydn or Mozart would only set the teeth of an auditory on edge. And so must it be with our government and laws;—the best
will be useless, unless we have a people who will appreciate and uphold them.

Again, then, I ask, with unmitigated anxiety, what institutions we now possess, that can furnish defence or barrier against the action of those propensities, which each generation brings into the world as a part of its being, and which our institutions foster and stimulate into unparalleled activity and vigor? Can any Christian man believe, that God has so constituted and so governs the human race, that it is always and necessarily to be suicidal of its earthly welfare? No! the thought is impious. The same Almighty Power which implants in our nature the germs of these terrible propensities, has endowed us also with reason and conscience and a sense of responsibility to Him; and, in his providence, he has opened a way by which these nobler faculties can be elevated into dominion and supremacy over the appetites and passions. But if this is ever done, it must be mainly done during the docile and teachable years of childhood. I repeat it, my friends, if this is ever done, it must be mainly done during the docile and teachable years of childhood. Wretched, incorrigible, demoniac, as any human being may ever have become, there was a time when he took the first step in error and in crime; when, for the first time, he just nodded to his fall, on the brink of ruin. Then, ere he was irrecoverably lost, ere he plunged into the abyss of infamy and guilt, he might have been recalled, as it were by the waving of the hand. Fathers, mothers, patriots, Christians! it is this very hour of peril through which our children are now passing. They know it not, but we know it; and where the knowledge is, there rests the responsibility. Society is responsible; — not society considered as an abstraction, but society as it consists of living members, which members we are. Clergymen are
responsible; — all men who have enjoyed the opportunities of a higher education in colleges and universities are responsible, for they can convert their means, whether of time or of talent, into instruments for elevating the masses of the people. The conductors of the public press are responsible, for they have daily access to the public ear, and can infuse just notions of this high duty into the public mind. Legislators and rulers are responsible. In our country, and in our times, no man is worthy the honored name of a statesman, who does not include the highest practicable education of the people in all his plans of administration. He may have eloquence, he may have a knowledge of all history, diplomacy, jurisprudence; and by these he might claim, in other countries, the elevated rank of a statesman; but, unless he speaks, plans, labors, at all times and in all places, for the culture and edification of the whole people, he is not, he cannot be, an American statesman.

If this dread responsibility for the fate of our children be disregarded, how, when called upon, in the great eventful day, to give an account of the manner in which our earthly duties have been discharged, can we expect to escape the condemnation: "Inasmuch as ye have not done it to one of the least of these, ye have not done it unto me"?