

Spoken at Lumber Exhibition at Yale College April 13<sup>th</sup> 1893  
 Youth probationary to manhood —

As time is a probation to eternity so youth is the probation of manhood —  
 This is one of those natural truths, which the whole course of nature stands  
 pledged to sustain, as well the animate as the inanimate creation.

Each animal & vegetable existence before arriving at maturity, passes  
 a youthful period, in which its future developments receive their prin-  
 cipal direction. Even this world we inhabit, with its mindless & lifeless  
 matter, exhibits in its history, the workings of a similar principle —

And we cannot behold a thing, that once we give the most evi-  
 dent traces of having passed through a stage that has prepared us for  
 the one it occupies. And further, arguing the past from the present,  
 we have all reason to sustain us in the belief, that from the first instant  
 the Almighty conceived the vast purpose of creating worlds & peopling them  
 with impermanent intelligences, down through all the course that time  
 has since run, up to this present moment, the wheels of nature, both  
 great & small, thus set revolving, have been revolving round & on-  
 ward to the great goal proposed.

But leaving nature, that so clearly presents us the general plan of  
 Jehovah's working, let us come to the more direct testimony of history &  
 experience. It challenges history for an answer, on whose great note-book  
 are sketched the lives of the greatest, wisest, noblest & best of humankind.

Through the din of clashing armour & the shouts of rushing combatants  
 that rise with the noise of multiplied thunders, through her whole ex-  
 tent, still you can hear with distinctness, a voice, uttering with the  
 solemnity of the grave & the assurance of exemplar conviction, the solemn  
 truth — "As youth is so manhood will be" — I need not search  
 the pages of history to find the noble examples, I would rather than

open before you the whole of history, its every name is a pointed illustration

Point me to the name of any mighty hero & I will point you to his youth as the time when he made himself such - Show me any grand character in any respect & I will show you when in youth those grand proportions began to expand -

But clear & unambiguous as is the voice of history, there is another source of evidence that is stronger still - Though you may disregard the teachings of analogies; though you may deafen your ears to the united verdict of the millions that have lived; yet surely you will believe your own senses - Then open your eyes upon the world; unstop your ears to the rising voice of the living & the present - Contemplate the character of the first man that meets your eyes, or that rises to your thoughts & you will have an example bright enough to scatter the last shade of incredulity that hangs on the horizon of your thoughts

Bring your contemplations still nearer to your own self; interrogate that incorruptable witness within your own breast & if you drown not its voice in the uproar of passion & prejudice, the same response will be returned from this oracle of your own being -

We have here, a mighty truth, uttered by the united voice of <sup>analogy</sup> history & experience - Receive it then with the commission that it brings from the throne of eternal truth & listen to its teachings. Manhood is only youth matured - Our lives are consistent wholes - what we have been, has made us what we are, & what we now are is to make us what in the future we shall be - All the elements of our natures, now in youth so pliant & plastic, will become in manhood stem & unyielding

The little faults & failings of youth become the glaring blemishes & palpable deficiencies of manhood, So too, of whatever seed we sow, we shall then reap the fruit - As an inducement for us to do well & a punishment for doing ill, our natures have been so constituted that all

the actions both of our bodies & minds become easier by repetition, and as we advance along the pathway of life we shall find these actions clustering together & forming themselves into habits. And in future life we shall find that these petty tyrannies have sprung up throughout our whole nature & in their narrow realms exercising an authority almost supreme - Now then in youth is the time to decide who & what shall rule us -

Youth too is the time most appropriate to solve that greater problem in human life - "The weighing the future against the present". This is the true test of wisdom & who has solved it, has learned more than half the lesson of life - The evidence is clear that the same wisdom that is best to carry a man safe through this life, is also the best to carry him safe to another, for the man that can weigh the future against the present in this life is best able & will be most apt to weigh eternal realities against temporal vanities -

Come then & try this problem, weigh manhood against youth & thus find its worth. See how cheap you are bartering off your time & strength & energies, and while there are so many stations of honour & influence & usefulness, which lie within the easy grasp of moderate talents, properly directed, suffer not the vigour & energy of so important a period as youth to be squandered for nothing -