

AN
ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES

AND THE

CITIZENS OF LOWELL,

JULY 4, 1848,

BY ELISHA BARTLETT.

PUBLISHED BY THE COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.

LOWELL:
JAMES ATKINSON, PRINTER.
1848.

E286

L9

1848

Office

515180

F19, 34

Rare Bk Room

ORATION.

There are many in this assembly who will not hesitate to believe, that it is no affectation when I say that I am overwhelmed and borne down by the emotions which this occasion inspires. Twenty years ago, this hour, my old friends and fellow-citizens, at your instance, I stood as I now stand before you, to do my humble part — to mingle my then untrained and inexperienced voice with yours, in social and patriotic commemoration of the birth-day of our National Independence. It was the dewy morning of my manhood; “time had not thinned my flowing hair,” — life, with its boundless hopes and its golden visions, spread far and fair before me; and cheered by your words of encouragement, and aided by your helping hands, — your associate and co-worker, and in your service, — a stranger, but welcomed with frank confidence and trust, — I had just entered upon its arduous and upward pathway. After the lapse of the fifth part of a century, — of two-thirds of the period of an entire generation, — and with the exception of short and flying visits, after an absence of several years, I find myself once more in my old home, surrounded by its various associations, and gladdened by the smiles of

its old familiar faces. I stand again in the presence of those with whom the busiest period of my life has been passed, who shared with me its early struggles, and from whose hands its first honors and rewards were received. I should be more or less than human, if I could remain unmoved in the scene, and amidst the circumstances that are about me; and you will pardon me, I know, for attempting in this imperfect manner, to give expression to the feelings that are awakened in my bosom. But other thoughts crowd themselves upon me, and struggle for utterance. The multitudinous stir of the present ceases,—its din and its tumult are hushed,—and I hear only the solemn sounds which come up to us from the depths of the receding and vanishing past. I listen, and it is the voice of the dead, and not of the living, that I hear; it is a vision, not of time, but of the dim eternity, that I see. It is impossible to stand, as we do here, and look back over the twenty years which separate us from the period of our former meeting, without being impressed and awed by the number of high and important places which death has left vacant amongst us. How many of those who started with us on the active journey of life, or who joined us at some of its subsequent stages,—whom we were wont to meet on occasions like the present,—who laid the broad foundations of our infant city, and who guided it onward in its rapid and vigorous career,—who watched over its welfare with the solicitude of paternal love,—how many of them, in the very strength of their years, have gone from their labors to their rewards! Not often, in so narrow a field, and in such brief space of time, has death garnered so rich a harvest. MOODY, and COLBURN, and APPLETON, and LEWIS,

and GLIDDEN, and KNOX, and BOOTT, and WALKER, and LAWRENCE, and MANSUR, and GOODWIN, and LOCKE, and DAVIS, and MEANS, and PHELPS, and ADAMS, with the fresh turf of yesterday above him. It is fitting that before entering upon the gayer and more joyous celebration of the day, we should thus pause for a moment to give another tear to their memories, and to hang a new garland on the urn that holds their ashes. As we turn from their graves to the duties and the pleasures before us, let us resolve while we cherish the remembrance of their virtues, to imitate and to make them our own.

The commemoration in which we are engaged has nothing of a sectarian or partisan character. And I am glad that it is so. We meet together, here, as American citizens, to celebrate, with one accord, moved by one common impulse, in one common spirit, the anniversary of our independence. We lay aside, not in mere formality, and in seeming only, but in real fact and earnest, our differences of opinion upon the thousand questions, social, religious, and political, which keep in constant but wholesome agitation, the public mind, in order that we may mingle together our mutual congratulations, that we are the free citizens of this free republic; and to render thanks to the great Giver of all Good, for the blessings and the benefits which this citizenship confers upon us. Leaving, for the day, each his narrow oratory of private devotion, we gather round the common altar of our country, to renew our vows, and to kindle afresh its fires; forgetting for the hour the shibboleth of our sects and parties, we join with one voice in the choral and swelling hymn that now rises from all the broad surface of the land in which we live.

We may witness, somewhere within our borders, every year, and almost every day, scenes that are made sublime by their moral significance and beauty, and there are few amongst them more striking than this. It is an extraordinary fact in the history of empires,—this universal attachment of twenty millions of people to their political institutions,—the entire and unquestioning loyalty with which they cling to the forms and the principles of the government which they have chosen. There are persons in every society, bereft of their reason; here and there, too, a crotchety individual may be found who denies the truth of the Newtonian system of philosophy, and the existence of material things; so, it may sometimes happen, that a man — or a woman — may be discovered amongst ourselves,—some staunch and uncompromising believer in the absolute and universal corruption of humanity, or some amiable but crazy-headed philanthropist, who raves at all institutions because they fail to make men angels, and do not at once bring back the Eden that we have lost,—who is dissatisfied with our general and local governments, and who would go back from them to some form of absolutism, or who would scatter them to the winds, and trust to chance and anarchy to evolve from the wreck and chaos some new Eutopia. But with these exceptions — so frivolous as to be not worth naming — I suppose that hardly a single person can be found amongst us — native or adopted citizen — the descendant of the Plymouth pilgrim, or the emigrant who landed yesterday on our shores, from whatever clime or country he may have come — who would wish to change, in its fundamental structure and principles, the government under which we live.

We differ, sometimes widely enough, about measures of domestic and of foreign policy; about the constitution of a court; the mode of an election; the extent and the limits of the state and the national governments; but we are all republicans,—some of us more and others of us less radical and democratic,—but all republicans, with neither doubt nor reservation in our creed. Our wide-spread and swelling population is coming to be made up of very various, dissimilar, and heterogeneous materials. Our eastern and western walls are the two great oceans of the globe,—the fitting and magnificent boundaries of “Time’s noblest empire and its last;”—between our northern and our southern termini, we embrace every extreme and variety of climate; our inexhaustible abundance spreads out its stores to the famishing multitudes of Europe, our freedom proffers to the victims of oppression its fullest participation, and the entrance to this great asylum is thrown wide open to all who choose to come. It follows inevitably, that our people should be constituted of most miscellaneous, and in some respects, of jarring and discordant elements. How little in common is there between the lordly cotton planter of Louisiana, and the small but thrifty and independent farmer of the northern and eastern states, tilling his own acres with his own hard hands,—each the type and representative of a numerous class. The frugal Scotchman leaves his misty mountains, to find a home in a new Caledonia here, bringing Scotland with him, in the remembrance of its heathered hills, and in the poetry of Burns; the Celtic swarm flees from the wretchedness of its own unthrift, and the wrongs of its Saxon master; even the sturdy and unplastic Englishman

sometimes finds his way hither; the German seeks another and a kindlier father-land beyond the Alleghanies, or west of the Mississippi; the Italian finds that freedom under our glowing skies, which was denied him beneath his own; and many others, whom I have no time to enumerate,—the Spaniard, the Frenchman, the Pole, the Russian,—Jew and Gentile—Christian and Pagan—bond and free,—belonging to widely different races, professing various and mutually hostile religions, educated under dissimilar social and political institutions,—flock to our shores, and make their homes within our borders. But notwithstanding these diversities, in spite of all these circumstances, there is but one opinion in the land in regard to the essential principles and the practical working of the government under which we live. We have faith in its general justice, its efficiency, its beneficence. Like all work of human hands, it is imperfect; it may be faulty,—in some respects it is guilty of great wrong; but we would reform and perfect, not subvert and destroy it. This is the universal feeling and conviction. There are no elements of revolution amongst us. And in this respect, we are alone amidst the nations of the earth. The pyramid of our government stands upright and immovable upon its basis; with few and minor exceptions, those of the rest of the world are propped upon their apexes, or they are reeling and rocking on their edges, like ships on a stormy sea. England boasts of her stability; she looks out over the tempest that is now lashing the ocean into fury, and covering it with wrecks, breaking at her feet, and howling through her palaces;—she looks out, smiling serenely upon the wild war of the social elements,

proclaiming herself as secure in her strength as her island itself, fast-anchored amidst the waves. But what a contrast between her condition, and our own! Where and what are the security and the stability of which she boasts? Is there any human prescience that can foresee, ever so dimly, the doom and the destiny that are before her? Does she herself know, with any certainty, what changes, ten years, or a single year, may bring to her? Has she any surety for the future? Every day, are there not tongues of fire calling for the demolition of her throne, and the overthrow of her altars; and every night, do not millions of her subjects lay their unkempt heads upon their straw pillows, muttering curses and execrations upon the government and the rulers, under which they struggle and starve? Are these the elements of internal strength? Are these the conditions of security and repose? Are these the sentinels to watch over and to guard a nation's

“Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighborhood?”

On the contrary, is it not as certain as any thing of this nature can be, that England's future must inevitably be a future, not of change and of reform merely, but of radical and destructive revolution?

These reflections upon the stability of our political institutions, into which I have been led much further than I intended to go, when I commenced them, have been naturally enough suggested by this spectacle, presented to-day, throughout the whole length and breadth of the land, to which I have referred, of entire unanimity of conviction and of feeling in the celebration of our national festival.

In the further performance of the duty before me, I am embarrassed at the outset by the extent and va-

riety of the subjects which offer themselves to our consideration, and solicit our regard. The Fourth of July, 1776, was one of the great epochs of modern history; it has grown into one of the loftiest eminences ever reared along the pathway of the ages; and standing as we do to-day, on the sun-lit summit of its anniversary, not only is it difficult to take in with our feeble vision the broad horizon that stretches off into infinity, and mingles itself with it, but it is not easy to determine in what direction, and to what objects, we shall turn our gaze. I see Alpine pinnacles, steeped in sunshine, or shrouded in darkness, shoot up into the heavens; I see dreary wastes of desolation and of death, covered by brooding shadows, and ravaged by continual storms; I see green valleys, and wooded hill-sides, of more than Arcadian beauty, crowned with abundance, covered with lowing herds, and dotted over with secure and peaceful human habitations. But what new spectacle is this that bursts so suddenly upon our vision? From our lofty outlook, I see the whole hemisphere, along the eastern horizon, dark with eager and swarming masses of armed and unarmed men; I see, over almost a whole continent, the uprisen people; I see kings, and princes, and potentates, flying in abject and trembling terror from their regal and sumptuous abodes, for life and for shelter to alien shores; I see the prison walls of despotic tyranny battered down; I see the chains stricken from the limbs of the slave; and there comes to me, borne on the eastern breezes, a mingled and tumultuous sound of the wild shouts of freedom newly won, and the muffled and solemn roar,—like that of a distant avalanche on the Wetterhorn,—of shattered and falling thrones. And this wild turmoil of

the nations of Europe is closely linked, I see, with the day and the occasion that have called us together, — the faces of these excited multitudes are all turned hitherward.

I suppose it may be said, without any exaggeration, that never since the great act, seventy-two years ago, which made this day illustrious amongst the days, has it had an anniversary so full of interest as the present. And this interest, in great part at least, depends upon and grows out of these recent and stupendous occurrences to which I have alluded, in western and central Europe. It would be extravagant to say that they are entirely the offspring of our Declaration of Independence, but it is not so to say that they are more directly related to it than to any other single great era or event of history. If not the children of our revolution, they are its near kindred, — of the same faith and the same household, — born of the same spirit, and baptized with the same baptism of fire. It is natural then, that first amongst the subjects of our meditation to-day should be these occurrences. In no one of the thousands of similar assemblages, which this hour witnesses, — at no one of the thousands of festive boards, which are this day spread, will they fail to be noticed.

I do not possess, either the qualifications or the ability, even if this were a suitable time and occasion for such undertakings, for any elaborate study of these events. Their profound and philosophical analysis, the estimate and appreciation of their complex causes and relations, their tendencies and their results, constitute a task altogether above and beyond the reach of my humble powers, and which I have neither the folly nor the temerity to attempt. I can only look,

for a moment, at one or two of their more obvious and striking aspects; I can only endeavor to study one or two of their simpler and plainer lessons.

It was George Canning, if I am not mistaken, who said, soon after the overthrow of Napoleon, and the re-establishment of the old order of things on the continent, that the next general war in Europe would be a war between the aristocratic and the democratic elements of society,—between prescription and privilege on one side, and equality of right on the other. This is an old conflict—older than human civilization—almost as old as humanity itself. Power in the hands of the few has always arrayed itself against the rights of the many; and it has for the most part successfully maintained its usurpations. The particular trial of strength between these antagonist forces, which Mr. Canning foretold, and which it was impossible to foresee, has at last commenced in earnest. The campaign has opened,—the first great battle has been fought,—the first great victory has been won;—and we can hardly fail to be struck with the vastness and the splendor of the triumph, the wealth of the trophies left in the hands of the victors, and the smallness of the cost at which they have been obtained. Thrones that were reared in the middle ages, and which their fond occupants imagined were of iron and of adamant, have fallen to pieces, like the play-houses that children build of cards,—blown away in a night by the breath of the popular tempest, and utterly consumed by its fire;—dynasties that had grown up with the centuries, strengthened by wide and complex alliances, their strong-holds of power girt round and guarded, as they deemed in their fancied security, by loyal bayonets, and by impregnable fortresses, have

been scattered to the winds in an hour. Almost with a single voice,—in universal and spontaneous acclaim,—the people have demanded and have obtained,—first, entire freedom of speech and of the press,—the right to utter and to hear, for each and for all, whatever the free head may think, or the free heart may feel;—second, universal suffrage,—the selection, by themselves, of their own immediate lawgivers and rulers,—delegated by them to do their work, and responsible to them for the manner in which it is done;—and, third, their own armed organization,—the appropriation by themselves of the whole physical force of the state,—the necessary guaranty, and security from treachery and assault, of all their other interests and rights,—the new tripod, from which the sybil of modern democracy utters her startling and sacred oracles. There is nothing in the history of this European movement more striking than the entire unanimity, and the complete success, with which these three great elementary rights and powers have been asserted and maintained.

I have spoken of the smallness of the cost at which these conquests have been secured. I allude particularly to the few lives that have been sacrificed when comparison is made with similar struggles in former times. I know very well that this number may yet be fearfully augmented; and even if such should not be the case, I do not need to be told of the value of that which has already been lost. I have no desire to underrate it. I know that the young and gallant hearts which poured out their blood on the barricades of Paris and Berlin, were beating high with hope, and that the eyes which closed at noon forever, opened in the morning on a

future as full as yours of promise and of joy. I would not say a word that might be tortured into a vindication or an apology for war. The saddest sight in the history of man is that of his sanguinary fightings. Nineteen-twentieths of them have been the fruits of his baser passions,—unnecessary, wanton, and wicked. Love is the great, central, all-pervading power of the universe; I have faith in its final omnipotence, as well as in its present divinity. That God works by love, is a truth of wider application, and of deeper significance than it has yet entered into the hearts of most priests and theologians to conceive. It is by the silent sunshine, the soft summer showers, the gentle winds, and the dew distilled from the serene night air, that the beautiful mystery and miracle of life is evolved and carried on. But there is death as well as life, in the world; and in the present condition of things, I do not see how the sword can be altogether dispensed with. Force as well as love, is one of the instruments and agencies of nature. God works by it as well as by love; at least it is one of the occasional and stern necessities in his economy. He keeps the ocean sweet with the breath of his tempests, and he purifies the stagnant atmosphere with the fire of his forked lightnings. So, it seems to me, that in default of the sufficiency of milder measures, the old fortresses of wrong and iniquity in the world must be pulled down; if the tyrant refuses to unbar his prison doors, they must be battered open; if the oppressor will not unfasten the fetters of his victim, they must be snapped by the rude hand of violence asunder; rights that are not yielded to entreaty must be taken; harpies must be driven from their foul nests in the rocky fastnesses; bastiles must be demol-

ished, though it be with devouring flames, and their foundations washed away, though it be in rivers of blood. It would seem indeed to be almost a necessary condition, that great changes in the government and institutions of nations should be wrought in the midst of tumult and violence.

“For all the past of ~~Time~~ reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever thought hath wedded fact.”

* * * * *

“And yet, if Nature's evil star
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war —

“If New and Old, disastrous feud,
Must ever shock, like armed foes,
And this be true, till Time shall close,
That Principles are rain'd in blood ;

“Not yet the wise of heart would cease
To hold his hope through shame and guilt,
But with his hand against the hilt,
Would pace the troubled land like Peace ;

“Not less, though dogs of Faction bay,
Would serve his kind in deed and word,
Certain if knowledge bring the sword,
That knowledge takes the sword away.”

I have spoken of a work already accomplished, of a victory already won. These expressions, it is obvious enough, stand in need of much qualification ; — they are true only in part, and with many reservations. It is natural, and inevitable indeed, that in the first flush of triumphant success, we should magnify the extent of our achievements, and underrate the dangers and the difficulties which surround and await us ; it is only after the smoke of the battle has cleared away, that we can clearly see and comprehend them. Let us be careful how we suffer ourselves to indulge expectations that can terminate only in disappointment. It is important for us to remember that this European movement does not constitute the end and

consummation of the great work of human progress; it is only one of many steps which humanity has to take in her struggling and difficult career;—that bow of promise, to which the eyes of the nations are turned, is yet resting on a dark and stormy background. We are to remember especially that the present revolutionary movement must inevitably fail to accomplish all that it now hopes for and promises; and that it will be followed, necessarily, by a reaction and a retrograde movement, the extent of which will be measured by the amount of its own violence and excess. The labors of the Hercules of Freedom and Democracy are not finished, but begun only. He has throttled the serpents that were sent to strangle him in his cradle, and killed the Nemean lion; but there are Lernæan hydras also yet to be destroyed, and Augean stables to be cleansed,—and he himself is to be purified of the blood of the centaurs he has slain, not after but before the golden fruit in the garden of the Hesperides can be gathered.

In endeavoring to estimate the issues and results of the recent revolutions, we must be guided, principally, by the general condition of the peoples and communities that have accomplished them. They may be in some degree affected—hindered and disturbed, or favored and promoted—by external and foreign forces and influences, but their upshot and destiny must depend chiefly upon this general condition. With the experience and convictions, which we in this country have acquired, it has become only a truism to say, that self-government,—popular, free, and democratic institutions,—can be secured, and made to work successfully and well,—fully accomplishing their great and beneficent ends,—only by the general intelli-

gence, and the general uprightness of the people — the rulers and the ruled. It seems plain enough, in the very nature of things — from the principles and laws of humanity — that this must be so. An individual who is ignorant, and corrupt, and idle, is disqualified for the management of his own concerns, and they consequently fall into disorder, and end in ruin; the same thing is true of a family — of a neighborhood — of an empire. It may be difficult to say with how small a modicum of this general mental and moral elevation, the forms of free government may be maintained, and some of its ruder benefits enjoyed — witness the republics of Mexico, and of South America — but it is quite clear that the extent and degree of these benefits will be in proportion to the extent and degree of this intellectual and moral culture.

Brought to this standard, and tried by this test, we may properly and profitably enough inquire, what the probabilities are, in regard to the progress and results of the political and social changes, of which I am speaking. In attempting to answer this inquiry, the first thing that meets us is the fact of the wide differences which exist in the physical and moral condition of the people of the different countries and communities where these changes have taken place. They have spread through nations variously and widely diverse, in their culture, their civilization, their experience, their institutions, their usages, their religion, and in race.

Occupying the centre of this movement, and leading its van, is France. It is for her especially that our sympathies are excited; she was the ally of our own revolution, she stood by us in the day of our

adversity, when we needed her aid; and she has been struggling for more than half a century for the prize that is now within her reach. In regard to her, my own hopes are stronger than my fears. She has activity, a good degree of intelligence, and industry. The masses of her people are the proprietors of her soil; they till it with their own hands; they are mostly free from extreme wretchedness and poverty, and they are warmly attached to their frugal and contented homes;—they are rarely seen in the train of the emigrant. She is homogeneous; pervaded by an intense feeling of nationality; proud of her achievements in art and in arms; and not distracted and weakened by separate castes in society, by rival religions, or by differing races. She has a more entire and profound conviction of the brotherhood of humanity,—of the fundamental and absolute equality of human rights,—irrespective of color, or race, or condition,—than any other nation in the world. The aristocratic element is feebler in France than it is anywhere else. She believes what Pope and his countrymen sing very well, but do not believe:—

“Honor and shame from no condition rise,—
Act well your part — there all the honor lies.”

She defers less than we do to conventional celebrities, and to the vulgar power of wealth. She burnt up in the fire of her first revolution the very rags and tatters of these tyrannical and shabby absurdities. She has, of necessity, her weaknesses and defects. She is over-fond of glory, and of military fame. She has a childish passion for spectacles,—she loves to be dramatic. Every occasion must be *feted*—with all possible pomp and circumstance— with martial music, and with streaming banners,—from the establishment

of a club of patriot Amazons, to the apotheosis of a hero, or the inauguration of a state. Worst of all, she lacks the rugged strength, especially amongst her more highly educated and polished classes, that comes from the union of a deep religious faith, and a stern morality. But it is a mistake, I think, to call her frivolous; they are wide of the mark who look upon her as a nation of dancing-masters and fiddlers. The work that she has done, and the names that grace her annals, in art, in literature, in science, in philosophy, of which England herself might well be proud, and in which she has held in doubtful equipoise the supremacy of the haughty mistress of the seas, ought forever to give the lie to this unworthy and contemptuous estimate. Furthermore, it is the testimony of all observers, that she has made, since the period of her first revolution, great improvement in all those qualities of character, wherein she was most defective. And, certainly, the love of order, the mingled moderation and firmness, the clemency, and the generous forbearance, which have marked her conduct, during the stormy and perilous transition through which she is now passing, furnish the strongest possible guaranty of her ultimate success. Her people have shown themselves prepared for their newly acquired freedom; and Providence has raised up leaders worthy of them, and of their own high mission. There is hardly any thing in the records of civic greatness, more imposing and sublime, than that brilliant improvization of historic renown, in the modern Athens, by its better Pericles,—the great, the heroic, the now immortal Lamartine.

Of Germany, as a whole, it is difficult to speak with any precision, so various and dissimilar are the

states and communities that enter into her confederation; and lack of time, even if there were no other reasons, would prevent me from attempting to do so with any considerable detail. Some portions of her people are, at least in some important respects, better prepared for the establishment and maintenance of popular institutions than the French; others are in all respects vastly less so. Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria, Baden, and perhaps some of the smaller powers—the duchies and free cities—belong to the former class;—the greater part of Austria proper and its heterogeneous dependencies, belong to the latter. The better elements of the German character are superior to those of the French; its texture, if less flexible, has more of the toughness and endurance that belong to the Northern races. The old Germanic stock, though of slower growth than the French, strikes its strong and vigorous roots into a deeper, richer, and more genial soil. More than all, there is in Germany a deeper religious faith than in France, a purer morality, and everywhere, giving new strength, as well as gracefulness and beauty to the character, and to life, a finer and wider development of the domestic affections. Nothing could be more striking, and at the same time more characteristic, than the contrast presented by one little incident, during the revolutions in France and Prussia. The patriots of Paris followed the remains of their fallen comrades to their last resting-place, under the column of July, on the site of the Bastille, singing on their way the words of the beautiful but Pagan song,—

Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori;—

the young students and the sturdy burghers of Berlin accompanied, amidst lamentations and tears, the fu-

neral procession of their slain brothers, to their final home in God's acre, chanting, as they went, the solemn and lofty choruses of Luther's Christian hymn.

On the other hand, the Germans are less plastic than the French; they are more firmly wedded to old usages, habits, and institutions, and less ready to adapt themselves to new circumstances; — the culture and spirit of the higher and middle classes have not penetrated, in any considerable degree, into the lower; their society is still pervaded by the aristocratic element, and millions of the masses throughout wide regions of the empire are still sunk in the most abject degradation. We must conclude, then, it seems to me, on the whole, that Germany is yet but partially and imperfectly prepared for thoroughly popular institutions; so far as this matter is concerned, she is in healthy and vigorous growth, but still in the childhood of her career. Her better states may have reached the period of their political majority; but those who hope to see Austria proper and her Slavonic appendages enter at once upon the full possession of democratic liberty, with safety and advantage to themselves, are sure to be disappointed.

Very similar remarks may be made in regard to Italy. Its different states are as diverse in their condition as are those of Germany. While the people of Tuscany, and of some other portions of Northern Italy are, for the most part, physically well off, and in some degree intelligent, nothing within the range of European civilization can exceed their ignorance and poverty in others. The Italian race has magnificent powers, and a fine organization; but the elements of its character have not been kindly mingled, and its discipline and culture have been any thing but friendly

to private happiness, or social order. Nowhere in the world can there be found nobler examples of individual excellence,—finer combinations of all that is great, and good, and graceful in humanity; but these are, unhappily, rare instances,—scattered oases in a wide desert,—solitary pharoses amidst the black and weltering waters. Italian history has been for ages, one dark tissue of monstrous and multiform crime,—written all over with cruelty, and treachery, and guile. Poisoning and assassination have been her familiar deeds; *aqua Tofana*, and *stiletto*, are words of her own coining, for secret and deadly weapons of her own manufacture. Her freedom has been the wild license of lawlessness; her religion has been bigotry, and her morals but a name. This gloomy picture is but partially relieved by the single examples of which I have spoken, or by the splendor of her achievements in the sciences, in poetry, and in art. Great changes for the better have, I know, been gradually and in some regions pretty rapidly taking place; but it requires a long period for such changes to be thoroughly wrought;—a nation does not transform itself in a day, nor in a century. The people of Tuscany,—the citizens of Leghorn, and Genoa, and Milan, with their neighbors,—may be qualified for the freedom of popular institutions; but I cannot believe that this is the case with those of Naples, and some of the smaller duchies,—corrupted and degraded and oppressed, as they have been, for successive generations, by profligate and tyrannical rulers. This may seem like a harsh judgment on this loveliest of lands,—

“The master-mould of Nature’s heavenly hand,
Wherein were cast the heroic and the free,
The beautiful, the brave — the lords of earth and sea.”

May it prove to be so. To no foreign clime, not linked to us by ties of kindred or of race, do our sympathies more spontaneously and warmly turn. She was the romantic dream of our boyhood; her story was one of its earliest lessons; the names of Washington and Bunker Hill are not more familiar to us than are those of the Cæsars and of Rome. She has at least, we may hope and believe, cast off, utterly and forever, the odious domination of the Austrian, and thus prepared the way for the better days that are in store for her;—a deliverance that may well content one generation. I do not forget neither, that the voluntary herald and pacific leader of this European movement was the occupant of the Pontifical chair; and I should disappoint your just expectations, and do violence to my own feelings, did I suffer this occasion to go by without rendering hearty homage to the great, the good, the wise, the liberal, the Christian, Pope Pius the Ninth. The prayers of the nations go up to heaven for his protection, and their blessings wait upon his name. He has won for himself a brighter diadem than his triple crown.

The central region of which I have been speaking is in great part surrounded and hemmed in by a circle of nations, into which the ideas and principles by which the former is agitated, have but very partially entered, or not at all. Let us rapidly sweep round this mighty segment, beginning at its southern extremity. We find here the contiguous and kindred nations, Spain and Portugal. They once led the way in all perilous and romantic achievement, and the chivalrous valor of Castile was rung in praises through every land. The new world received them into its

virgin bosom, and poured its lavish treasures into their lap. But they are shorn of their strength, and their glory has departed. Their people have now the worst elements of the Romanic character in excess, and almost none of its redeeming qualities; their very virtues have degenerated into vices. They have been so long neglected and oppressed by effeminate and profligate rulers,—kings in the shape of imbecile simpletons,—and queens in that of intriguing women, or weak and ignorant girls,—aided by licentious favorites, or military adventurers, and by an intolerant and exacting priesthood,—that their old virtue and manhood have all gone out of them. I see no hope for them, unless God in his love shall raise up some paternal guardian and guide, like the Roman Pius; or set over them in his merciful wrath, some stern but beneficent despot,—one of their own Francias or Tacons,—who shall purge the land as by fire, of its corruptions, send life into the stagnant death that broods over it, and so open the way at least for a better order of things.

Of Mohammedan Turkey I will only say, that she has made more substantial progress in reform, and in ameliorating the condition of her subjects, than many of her Christian neighbors.

The whole eastern arc of the segment is occupied by the vast sweep of the Russian dominions. This colossal power is the great material and outward bulwark of despotic rule. The masses of her people are but just emerging from the night of barbarism. An iron tyrant now occupies her throne. Her best hope is in a succession of wise, humane and paternal rulers. The day of her democratic redemption is yet afar off.

The mutually related and adjacent countries, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, are legitimate branches of the old Teutonic stock; they will bear its fruit, and share its destiny. They will follow in the steps of their Germanic kindred.

Finally, we complete our circuit with the British islands,—the seat and centre of the British empire. I shall not be guilty of the presumption of attempting to cast the horoscope of her destiny; this has been done often enough, by men both wiser and foolisher than myself,—with what success, it needs not to be told. I can only say what some of the more obvious aspects and appearances are, in her condition and prospects, which strike us, as seen from our present point of view — the American Fourth of July, eighteen hundred and forty-eight. She looks to us here, like a nation of enormous and infinite contradictions. She is the richest and the poorest country in the world,—the fullest of wealth and the fullest of pauperism. She is covered with glory, and steeped in shame. Her limbs are decrepid with age, while her brow is radiant with the manhood of a young Apollo. She stands before us, like the great image seen in a vision by the king of Babylon,—“whose brightness was excellent, and the form thereof terrible,” and whose head was of fine gold, but whose feet were part of iron, and part of miry clay. Her literature and her science are amongst her richest treasures — her highest titles to glory; but the men who have created these treasures, and won these titles, she has always held in an inferior social position; and she has often suffered them to languish in obscurity and want. Newton, and Shakspeare, and Burns, if they were now living, would be admitted only on suffer-

ance, to sit for a permitted hour by the side of lordlings and Croesuses, at their princely tables; —

“The learned pato
Ducks to the golden fool.”

She fills the islands that sit in darkness with the light of Christian civilization, and leaves worse than Pagan multitudes to perish at her own threshold, for lack of the bread of life. She arrays the religion of Him who had not where to lay his head, in regal pomp and magnificence, and her successors of the poor fishermen of Galilee are clad in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day. Her legislature votes, almost in the same breath, paltry hundreds for the education of her ignorant children, and lavish thousands for the stables of the husband of her queen. She rightfully claims to have been the parent of constitutional government; and she recognizes the will of the people as the real and ultimate sovereignty of the state; but she turns pale at the name of democracy, and she clings with the tenacity of a death-grasp to the most monstrous inequalities. Her loyalty is as intense and bigoted, as her feeling of nationality; — to us it seems amazing, that a people of such high civilization, of such strong Saxon sense, of such true appreciation of justice and right, bred in the school of freedom, disciplined and tried in the service of humanity, enlightened by philosophy, and possessing a form of Christianity that asserts the right of private judgment, and protests against the dictation of a supreme central authority, should, not merely tolerate as a necessity, but cherish as the very ark of their safety, and the very elements of their strength, — a hereditary aristocracy, endowed by the law with enormous and exclusive privileges; — an opulent and

aristocratic priesthood, supported by the state; — and the childish bauble of a crown, with its costly and wasteful appendages. She seems to be hardly less in love with the abuses and defects of her system, than she is with its excellencies. She gazes with hardly less pride upon the gnarled knots and the decaying branches of her glorious old oak, than upon its sturdy stem, and its green, and wide-waving foliage. She not only exhibits, but all her institutions encourage and render permanent, the widest extremes of human condition. The highest civilization, — luxurious and elaborate refinement, — various learning, — every attainable enjoyment and good — physical and intellectual — are the inheritance, more or less generally, of her upper classes; — her lower, — and that too in millions that outnumber by twenty to one the former, — are fastened and left in the foulest depths of degradation and shame. Her very soil is not the property of her people; they are forever shut out from its possession; — tenants at will, and not proprietors; — their homes are not their own. She is loaded with a frightful burden of taxation, under which she stoops and staggers at every step, — the drain of that stupendous debt for which she has nothing to show. I do not see what can save her from the rock towards which she is, slowly it may be but irresistibly drifting, but the abolition of her hereditary aristocracy and her exclusive privileges; the withdrawal of a corrupting and iniquitous state patronage from a particular form of religion; and the speedy curtailment of her enormous national expenditure, — all which, until the day comes, when she shall regard the happiness and welfare of her people as of more importance than the greatness of

her name, and the extent of her dominion and power, is not very likely to happen. God grant that these apprehensions, and the forebodings of some of her own wise men may prove to be unfounded and imaginary. May she see the dangers that are before and around her, and escape them. The world owes to her a debt of gratitude which it can hardly repay. She lighted, far back in the ages, the earliest signal-fire of true liberty; and although she has shut in and confined its light, she has guarded and defended it valiantly and well. Her language, her literature, her religion, are our own; we came from her vigorous loins, and her free blood circulates in our veins. We indulge towards her no feelings either of envy, or prejudice, or hate. Our best wishes wait upon her, our best prayers attend her, and our hope is that she may show herself worthy of her power, her position, and her race.

“ Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
And, king-like, wears the crown :

“ Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears ;

“ That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes.”

I could linger much longer in these various fields, through which we have so cursorily rambled, but the flying minutes, and your patience, which is likely soon to be turned to impatience, if my steps are suffered to loiter, warn me to hasten on.

My task would be left unfinished, if I did not turn, at least for a moment, to our own country, before I close; but the sands of my allotted hour have already

run out, and my words must be brief and few. The first thing that strikes us, in our hurried survey, is the wondrous growth of the American Union, in extent of territory, in power, in wealth, in resources,—in population, which has taken place since the period of my former address. I shall not weary you with statistics; it is enough for me to say, that her immense domain has been enlarged by nearly a quarter of its entire area;—the line of her Pacific coast now almost rivals in extent her old Atlantic shores, and the spreading plains of her far west are beheld no longer from the ridge of the Alleghanies, but from the summits of the Cordilleras and the Rocky Mountains. Her population has almost doubled; and on the azure field of her banner, six new stars have been emblazoned,—almost half its original number.

In looking at our internal condition, our ardor is chilled and our first exultation is lowered by the presence of one contradiction, greater and more flagrant, than any that I have attributed to England. You will all understand me. In some of the states of the Union, certain portions of the population are held in compulsory bondage by the rest. Slavery is one of their established institutions. It would be foreign from the design and purpose of my address, to enter into its general discussion, even if I had time to do so. I can only admit its inconsistency with the principles of our government; deplore its existence as an evil and an anomaly; disclaim for ourselves any share in its responsibilities, and hope, by the co-operation of all true lovers of humanity and of their country, at the North and the South, in a spirit of justice, forbearance, and love, for its gradual amelioration and final removal.

With the qualification now stated, I do not see any thing in our condition and our prospects, which we may not regard with a reasonable degree of complacency, and with confident hope. We are not exempt from the weaknesses and imperfections of humanity, and we make no claim to be so. There is rudeness enough amongst us; but there is also, every day, a higher and wider refinement, a more general and genial culture, and all the wide wilderness will yet blossom like the rose. There is poverty enough; but less than in any other land under the sun,—nowhere else is there such general and boundless plenty. There is ignorance enough; but its amount is daily diminishing, and no object of public concern is regarded with more favor or promoted with more zeal, than the universal and improved education of the people. There is irreligion and vice enough; but there is also as general and vital a faith as is anywhere to be found, and a high and pure morality. There is crime, as there must be wherever human passions are at play; but nowhere are more diligent and successful efforts made for its repression, and for the reformation of its perpetrators. We have the deaf, the blind, the insane, and the idiotic; but all over the land are scattered asylums for their solace and their cure. Our physical and external activity; our material prosperity; the general diffusion of competence, and the rapid accumulation of wealth; the almost exclusive appropriation of labor and capital, not to the gratification of the luxurious wants of the few, or to the support of idle pageantry and power, but to the advancement of the moral and physical well-being of the whole,—all this is unparalleled in the history of the world.

These remarks are applicable, more or less entirely,

to the whole country. But I wish to say a word of more limited application; I must speak for a moment of Massachusetts alone. And I single her out from the other free states, not because she is unlike them, but because she exhibits and sums up their several better qualities, and because I am standing upon her soil. Besides, she is the oldest amongst them,—

“I said an older soldier, not a better.”—

She has had the longest experience,—in her bosom are the graves of our fathers; she has drunk, longest and deepest, vigor and immortal youth from the old Puritan fountain; she has felt the refining with almost nothing of the corrupting influences, which flow from a large and opulent city; and she has been elevated in wisdom, and learning, and virtue, by her venerable and excellent university. These circumstances have placed her in some respects somewhat in advance of her younger sisters. I may say this without any danger of being charged with arrogance; I do not intend to make any invidious or unbecoming comparisons. I am the native citizen of a state which claims, and justly too, to have been her far forerunner and teacher in the great cause of religious toleration and religious freedom. The other states, which may not be in all respects her equals, are in some her superiors, and they are all following close in her footsteps. I say then, with these preliminaries,—and I am guilty of no extravagant rhapsody— I am indulging in no exaggerated and empty rhetoric,— I am speaking my sober and deliberate convictions, the soundness of which it seems to me no intelligent man can doubt or deny,— that never since the dawn of human civilization has the world witnessed so grand a spectacle of human good,— of general happiness, prosperity, intel-

ligence, freedom, virtue, and progress,— of social order and individual well-being,— as that which is now presented by this glorious old commonwealth. The masses of her people live,— not in cellars, and huts, and cabins, and shanties,— but in their own well-built and comfortable houses, furnished always with the conveniences of every-day life, and graced often with the adornments of cultivated and polished society,— their tables covered with the newspapers, the magazines, and current volumes of the day, and their book-cases filled with the standard learning and literature of the old and the new world. Can this be said,— could it ever before have been said of any nation or people under the sun? I know, as everybody knows, that small classes may be selected from the upper ranks of life, in almost every country of Europe, more learned than we are, with a higher culture of the sensuous nature, of the imaginative, and, as the Germans say, the æsthetic faculties; better drilled in the conventional usages of society, and the graces of the drawing-room; but in the great elements of human good that I have enumerated, shared by the entire mass of the population, I say again, that she stands, with her kindred states, alone and unapproachable; — they have not now nor ever had either parallel or rival.

I must bring my oration to a close. I do not know that I can do so in any way more appropriately, than with the mention of three great truths, amongst many others, that we have demonstrated,— three great lessons that we have taught to the world.

The first of these is the primary and fundamental truth of the capability of man for what is called self-government. This had never been shown before on

any considerable scale of extent or duration. The republics of antiquity, and of Italy in the middle ages, so far as they taught any thing, taught the contrary truth. They were almost constantly tossed to and fro between a turbulent and lawless democracy, and a corrupt and despotic, even if elective, oligarchy, in both which the rights and interests of the citizen were alike forgotten and disregarded. The entire people never secured to themselves justice, equality, and freedom, resting upon and guarded by law. This great problem it has been left for us to solve. The conditions of its solution, in the intelligence and virtue of the people, I have already stated. We have demonstrated the stability, the safety, the efficiency, and the economy of popular government. Nowhere in the world are person and property better protected, or more secure, than they are here, and nowhere else does this protection cost so little. It is worthy of remark, as a most striking and significant fact, that the general confidence in this capability has been steadily increasing ever since the organization of our government. Our faith grows every day stronger and not weaker. Our fears are dissipated, and our hopes are confirmed. That "tide of successful experiment," of which Jefferson spoke years ago, has met with no check, and has had no ebb. We are constantly enlarging the sphere of the direct action of the people in the administration and conduct of public affairs. Nothing can be more obvious than this democratic tendency and progress, in all parties, and amongst all classes, and the daily strengthening of this democratic faith.

The second of these truths is that of the entire absence of any necessity, in a free state, for a standing

army. The theory and practice of government have always been, that internal order and external security could only be maintained by a constant and formidable array of force,—that its own subjects could be kept in subordination, and other nations at bay, only by bristling bayonets all over its surface, and all round its frontiers. The treasuries of the nations have been drained, and the people of all Europe have been impoverished, for ages, by the enormous waste and consumption of these idle, corrupt, and worse than worthless armies. The Christian nations of the world—as they call themselves—have always presented, and they still continue to present, this strangest of spectacles,—general toil and poverty and wretchedness borne for continuous generations—in order that they may be armed to the teeth for the triple purpose, of guarding and sustaining the exclusive privileges of the few; coercing the rest into submission; and invading or repelling the invasions of their neighbors. We have shown all this to be as unnecessary as it is costly, corrupting, and oppressive. We have shown that the only peace establishment, requisite for the security of order and good government, and for the maintenance of our rights, is the civil police on the land, and an armed police on the sea; and that, with an adequate number of educated leaders, the most efficient of all war establishments is a citizen militia,—a soldiery springing voluntarily from the ranks of industry and labor, for the defence of the country when this defence is called for, and returning to the same ranks when their work has been accomplished.

In the third place, we have shown, that the highest of all human interests, those of religion, are most positively secured, and most efficiently promoted, by

separating it wholly from the state, and leaving it, so far as the state is concerned, entirely to itself. The patronage of government is only a fetter on its free limbs, and poison in its veins. I am not speaking of religious freedom and toleration merely. The outrageous and impertinent tyranny of an enforced conformity to certain prescribed forms and dogmas — that atrocious violation of the most sacred rights and instincts of the human soul — we long ago resisted and cast off. I am not speaking of this, but of that later-discovered truth, that God is sufficient for himself; that the progress of His kingdom upon the earth is not advanced but hindered by the direct interference of human governments; that the relations between Him and His creatures are multiplied, and strengthened, and drawn closer, when they are left to arrange themselves in spontaneous obedience to His laws, and not under the coercion of ours.

These truths are of infinite value. Their general recognition would regenerate the world. They will be denied and rejected at the peril of all that is best and greatest in the condition and the destiny of man. I can hardly help saying, in conclusion, that some of our transatlantic commentators and revilers, — critic flies, peering with microscopic vision into the flaws and inequalities on the dome of St. Peter's, — might be better and more profitably occupied, in the study of these truths, and the other aspects of our position, which I have mentioned in this address, than in maudlin and cockney lamentations over the bowie-knife of a backwoodsman, or the idiom of a Yankee rustic.

I have spoken of the prospects of our country. I know well enough how easy it is to cherish extravagant and ridiculous anticipations, and how often we

ourselves have been charged with this facile infirmity. But I do not see how it is possible for us to contemplate this subject and not kindle into the glowing ardor of enthusiasm and exultation. It seems to me that a grander and more magnificent destiny awaits — not probably but inevitably — this American Union, than was ever before vouchsafed to any nation or people of the earth. The historic glories of the Assyrian, the Greek, and the Roman name shall “pale their ineffectual fires” before the advancing splendor of her noon-day sun. She has within herself more potent and gigantic elements of moral and material greatness than were ever before brought together in kindly co-operation. Her swarming population shall cover the continent; and her censuses shall be reckoned by hundreds of millions. Peace shall be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces; her sons shall be brave, and her daughters virtuous; and her children shall rise up and call her blessed. And in the indulgence of these high expectations, my thoughts are limited by no narrow horizon; nor are they founded upon any brief experience, or any principles of merely local application. They are world-wide in their embrace, and they rest in the eternal order of things. I do not believe in any natural and necessary decay and dissolution of empires; I have an unalterable faith in the steady advancement of humanity: —

“I doubt not thro’ the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.”

Prophecy and philosophy alike declare, that the kingdom of God shall yet come to us here below. The problem of human good shall be solved; the great destiny of humanity shall be finally wrought out;

oppression, and tyranny, and wrong, shall cease; the reign of justice and right shall be established,—

“And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapped in universal law.”

In regard to the destiny of our own republic, there is one great contingency, to which I must allude; I mean that of the dissolution of the Union,—the disruption of the bond that holds these confederated states together. This has been looked upon by our wisest men, and by our people generally, sometimes as the most imminent, and always as the most fearful and momentous, of the perils that await us. It and the downfall of our greatness have been written together. It may happen. I should lament if it did; but I do not believe that it will. I devoutly trust, that our proud nationality — with its common remembrances, and its common hopes — will never be destroyed. But if in the ordering of Providence, or through our own folly, this evil should fall upon us, I would still hold fast to my confidence and my faith. There is a direr calamity than this,—the dying out from the great heart of the people of its manhood and its virtue,—and there is no other that is irretrievable and final. Some years ago, when this possible catastrophe seemed nearer and more threatening than it ever has since, I listened with some few others who are here, to one of those magnificent perorations of the great American orator, which swell upon the ear, now like the trumpet of doom, and now like the jubilant song of the seraphim. So far as I know, it has never been published. He was standing, he said, upon the brink of a yawning gulf, full of unfathomable darkness; he turned his eyes to the heavens, and he saw the firmament breaking up, and, in his own words — not easily forgotten — from amidst the gloom.

of its shattered fragments, the federal stars, like those once beheld in the great Apocalyptic vision, falling together, from their serene elevations, down into the blackness of the chasm at his feet. With my stronger faith, though with feebler sight, I could see, it seemed to me, another and a different vision. I saw the shattered fragments re-adjust and re-unite themselves; the gloom that wrapped them in darkness was dispelled; and I saw these stars of the northern hemisphere, jostled only from their orbits, arranged in new systems, and marshalled into new constellations,—still wheeling in the eternal spaces,—never to set,—and to be blotted out only in that hour when the heavens themselves shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the Angel of the Lord shall proclaim that it is finished.