"True and False Civilization."

AN ORATION

BEFORE

THE EROSOPHIC AND PHILOMATHIC

SOCIETIES

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA,

ON

THEIR ANNIVERSARY OCCASION,

JULY 12, 1858.

BY

EDWARD C. BULLOCK.

TUSCALOOSA:

"INDEPENDENT MONITOR" OFFICE.

1858.
CORRESPONDENCE.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA, JULY 13TH, 1858.

Hon. E. C. Bullock—Dear Sir:—At a meeting of the members of the Erosophic and Philomathic Societies convened in the Rotundo to-day, the undersigned were appointed a committee, to express the pleasure of these bodies at hearing the very able and eloquent oration pronounced by yourself this morning, and to request a copy of the same for publication.

We beg leave to add our personal and earnest solicitations that you will comply with the above request, and that you will not deny to the public a production which will be read with interest and instruction and which will add to your widely extending reputation.

Very Respectfully,

S. B. Johnston,
D. Jones,
J. C. Meadors,
H. C. Clark,
W. D. C. Lloyd,
A. H. Picket.

TUSCALOOSA, ALA., JULY 14TH, 1858.

Gentlemen:—Your note of yesterday, asking for publication the Oration which I had the honor to deliver before the Erosophic and Philomathic Societies, has been received. I cannot better express my gratitude to the Societies for the kindness for which I am indebted to them, than by complying with their wishes. I therefore place the accompanying copy at your disposal.

Very truly yours,

E. C. Bullock.

To Messrs. S. B. Johnston,
D. Jones,
J. C. Meadors,
H. C. Clark,
W. D. C. Lloyd,
A. H. Picket,

Committee of the Erosophic and Philomathic Societies.
ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE EROSOPHIC

AND PHILOMATHIC SOCIETIES:

The return of another anniversary sacred to learning, has convened this cultivated audience to testify their interest in its noble pursuit. Ingenious youth and venerable age, the loveliness of woman and manhood rejoicing in its strength, the chosen guardians of the University, and the learned Professors from whose ample stores of wisdom and experience it is your good fortune to be equipped for the great battle of life, are here to honor the occasion by their countenance and to mark the general sympathy with the common cause. Some of you are looking forward with generous ardor to the active duties for which you are soon to exchange the routine of college life, while on the other hand, not a few, way-worn and weary, are only too glad to find in these classic shades a brief respite from the cares which you covet. Whatever success the future may have in store for you, you will be happy beyond the common lot, if, from amidst the dust of the arena, you do not sometimes cast back a longing glance at their sweet and profitable repose. Identified as they are with the golden days of our youth and the better part of our nature, who is there, however estranged by time and adverse fate, that would willingly disown the pleasing though perchance too feeble
ties that bind him to the great brotherhood of scholars? It is in deference mainly to such feelings and recollections that one who is almost an alien from the commonwealth of letters, is here to-day, in obedience to your summons. Conscious how much better it would become me, in such presence, to sit a silent learner at the feet of others, I could not easily forgive my own rashness if I were actuated by any other motive than the earnest desire to discharge an honorable duty. An adopted son of the University, profoundly concerned in her fortunes, I could not gracefully decline the invitation to stand for the first time within her honored portals. A citizen of Alabama, looking with intensest interest to the educated sons who must so largely shape her destiny, I could not refuse the opportunity to strengthen the bonds of sympathy and fraternity that draw us together. And so, Gentlemen, I have made bold to lay upon this shrine of learning, the humble offering, which, while it cannot vindicate the wisdom of your choice, may at least serve to mark my gratitude for the partiality that prompted it.

In selecting a subject, in the consideration of which to occupy the brief hour that we shall pass together, I have thought that none would better become the time, the occasion and the audience, than some reflections suggested by that comprehensive term, "CIVILIZATION," about which so much is said and written, and of which, our ideas, when subjected to any close analysis, are really so vague and unsatisfactory. Reviewing the history of the world, we see men advancing from primitive barbarism, uniting in communities, multiplying wealth and the comforts of life, cultivating letters and the arts, growing into great nations whose fame fills the earth, apparently reaching the highest pinnacle of power and glory, only at last to be overwhelmed by rude conquerors, whose ignorance they despised while forced to yield to their superior strength and courage. It is thus that on the pages of history the great nations of antiquity move in melancholy procession before our wondering eyes, —the Assyrian falling under the attack of the Per-
sian,—the Persian yielding to the victorious Macedonian,—all Greece finally submitting to Roman domination, and at last the mistress of the world herself bowing her proud neck to the yoke of barbarian conquest, each in turn seeming to sink beneath the weight of its own civilization, emasculated by the very arts that made it great. The culminating point of what we call civilization in each was but the beginning of a fatal decline; and the noon-tide splendor upon which we love to gaze, was but too surely ushering in the night of desolation that was to succeed. The last days of Grecian glory were illustrated by the genius of Cimon and Pericles, the acute logic of Aristotle and the divine philosophy of Plato, and gave birth to those magnificent conceptions of art, the breathing statues and the glowing pictures, which, through all the mutations of time, continue to be ‘the pride of every model and the perfection of every master;’ and it was at the death-bed of Athenian liberty that were poured forth those incomparable orations which have been the admiration and the study of all succeeding ages. Contemplating that unrivalled literature the magnificent bequest of Athens to man, who can suppress a pang that such culture and such perfection should have been so closely allied to ruin and decay, and that the seeming bloom of vigorous health, which imparted such beauty to that lovely commonwealth, was but the hectic flush of approaching dissolution?

Rome too, after carrying her victorious eagles almost to the remotest parts of the known world, after enriching her annals with the noblest examples of virtue and true greatness, and becoming the grand and solitary figure in the great picture of ancient civilization, sank beneath the blows of barbaric manhood, and her descent to the tomb of nations was lighted by the torch of genius and eloquence. The period of greatness was the era of corruption; and the same page that records the foul conspiracy of Cataline is illuminated by the patriotic eloquence of Cicero. The last days of the dying republic witnessed the military achievements of Cæsar; the historical research of Sal-
lust, and the melodious verse of Horace and of Virgil; and long afterwards at a period of still deeper degradation, under the reign of her emperors, was brought to perfection the glory of that civil code, in which, though all else had been lost, her name and fame would have been forever perpetuated.

Such is the sad but splendid spectacle that ancient history offers to our contemplation, until weary of the constant recurrence of the same catastrophe, we are ready, like the sensitive and eloquent Rousseau, to seek relief from the vices of civilization, in the simplicity of primitive barbarism. Is it indeed true as some have fancifully supposed, that nations, like the individuals of which they are composed, must run their appointed course and die? Is the embrace of civilization sooner or later necessarily fatal, and is this the banquet of death to which it mockingly invites us? When the Roman conquerors of Greece consoled themselves for their intellectual inferiority by declaring that knowledge and taste seemed only to make men atheists and cowards and slaves, were they indeed uttering a truth of which they themselves were in turn to afford another signal example? To grope forever in ignorance or to be corrupted and enervated by progress:—is this the alternative that Infinite Wisdom offers to the nations of the earth? Should not civilization be to the State what education is to the individual, the drawing out, the harmonious development of all the various powers? The highest mental culture without moral training, is but a sword in the hands of a madman; and of what avail are both united, if accomplished by the wreck of the physical constitution? There are systems of education which by cultivating a portion of the faculties at the expense of the rest, may weaken and even destroy, instead of strengthening and improving. So a nation's circumstances may favor a like ruinous policy on a larger scale, and with a like disastrous issue. There are certain immutable laws of nature which neither nations nor individuals can disregard with impunity, and which sooner or later vindicate themselves; and impressed upon all her
works is this rule of harmonious development. To obey it, is strength. To trample on it, is weakness and death. Courage, fortitude, independence, physical strength,—all the sterner qualities, flourish in man's primitive state, and the cultivation of a more advanced period seems to be to a certain extent less favorable to their existence; but true civilization instead of destroying these high attributes, uniting them with the gentler virtues, will soften them by humanity, and dignify them by knowledge. Neither scholarship nor art, nor eloquence, nor wealth, nor rail roads nor telegraphs, can supply the absence of manhood. They are but its outward expressions, its accidents and its surroundings, valuable chiefly as they better enable it to fulfill its high destiny. To exhibit it in all its fair proportions, moral, physical and intellectual, is the highest office of all true progress. A civilization will, in my judgment, be true or false in precise proportion as it conforms to or violates this law of harmonious growth. False civilization may dazzle us for a time, by its precocious splendor, but necessarily involves deformity, disease and death; while true civilization, naturally slower, must possess greater permanence and vitality and secure the largest sum of human happiness. Adopting this test, was there not more of true well-developed manhood in the Roman nation at the close of the Second Punic War, when rising in their might from the terrible disaster at Cannæ, with Hannibal thundering at their very gates, they rolled back the tide that threatened to overwhelm them and drove their almost conquerors to sue for hard and ignominious peace, than even in that golden Augustan age, when the spirit of liberty had departed, when bad principles had begun to rule their counsels and bad faith to mark their actions? Was not the moderate culture, the noble simplicity, the manly virtue, the elevated patriotism of the earlier period, far preferable to the dazzling but corrupt splendor of the latter? So too, in Greece, were not the days of Marathon and Thermopylae more glorious than those of Chersonæ; and does not the latter stand a monu-
ment of false civilization, while the former tells of the
manhood that had been crushed beneath its progress?
How apt are nations like individuals to forget in the
day of their prosperity the means by which it was at-
tained. The great States of antiquity began by des-
pising wealth and ended by worshipping it.—
The sentiment of patriotism once so potent, was lost
in the thirst for gain. The purity and virtue, the
frugality and simplicity, the dignity and noble povert-
y of better days, gave place to those degrading pas-
sions, which civilization, while it develops, ought also
by increased moral culture to restrain. How plainly
does the voice that speaks from those crumbling ruins
proclaim the momentous truth

"Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay;"

and, how truly, adopting the language of inspiration,
might the fate of the eternal city be described in a
single sentence, "Rome gained the whole world and
lost her own soul!"

The striking feature of ancient civilization upon
which, it seems to me, sufficient stress has hardly been
laid, was the immense and overwhelming disproportion
between the population of the cities, and the country;
a disproportion which grew with the growth of the State,
and in which may be found one of the most powerful cau-
ses of both its rise and fall. Rome itself, originally a
mere municipality, became by its conquests little more
than a vast congregation of cities; all the monuments
of its greatness bear the unmistakable impress of
municipal character,—of having been intended to sub-
serve the purposes of a dense population, confined to a
single spot. There was little or nothing of the villa-
ges, the lonely settlements, the rural life, which in la-
ter times has assumed such importance. The city
was the State, and the same word was often used in-
differently to express both. The country was the mere
appendage, and its influence was scarcely felt in the
social system or in the public councils. It is a fact as
well authenticated as it is significant, that in the last
days of the Republic at the very time when hundreds of thousands of dependents, were drawing supplies of corn from the State, and when the State itself was obtaining its supplies from abroad, immense tracts of land were lying waste and uncultivated which might have been the abode of a flourishing agricultural population. The utmost efforts of some of the later emperors, by offering inducements to their settlement, proved unavailing, and the masses, who in the country might have contributed so largely to the prosperity of the nation, in the city only hastened its ruin. Choosing to be pensioners on the public bounty, rather than independent tillers of the soil, they furnished the material for the army of Cataline,—for every faction that convulsed the State,—and were the ready instruments of every aspiring demagogue and incendiary who claimed to use them. Far more than to any other cause in my judgment, was the fall of Rome due to the absence of those qualities peculiarly fostered by the solitude of country life, and to the fatal and overwhelming preponderance of the tastes and habits of the cities. Powerful indeed must have been these conservative elements, and consummate the skill, which with such an enemy gnawing upon the vitals of the State, so long postponed the inevitable hour! Let us rather wonder that Rome lived so long, than that she died so soon, and amid the genius and statesmanship that crowded her annals and for more than a thousand years, sustained the tottering fabric of ancient civilization!

"The Niobe of nations,  
Childless and crownless in her voiceless woe,"

her fallen greatness will command reverence and sympathy, wherever genius finds a votary or heroism an admirer.

Her sturdy conquerors, the well-chosen instruments of her destruction, brought with them the hardy virtues of which her enfeebled and degenerate sons were most strikingly destitute. Not more did their manly frames contrast with the physical inferiority of the
conquered race, than did their rude but manly qualities with their effeminate and slavish spirit. Frank, generous and brave, their advent was like the infusion of the invigorating breezes of the country into the corrupt and fetid atmosphere of some unhappy city over which the dread pestilence has long brooded. In their native woods had been nurtured that strong sentiment of personal independence, that love of individual liberty, which, contributing so much to the dignity of true manhood, gave to civilization one of its best elements. In their rude institutions may still be distinguished the original principles of present laws and manners, and from their loins sprang the great nations of modern Europe. Scorning the authority of rulers, they yet scrupulously respected the least of their own voluntary engagements, and in this fidelity and mutual attachment between chiefs and followers, originated those military ties which afterwards refined into the Feudal System. In their intense individuality, nice sense of honor and profound reverence for woman, lay the germs of that institution of chivalry which prevailed wherever the Feudal Spirit penetrated, and which is conceded to have played so important a part in the work of human improvement.

The first effect of the Feudal System, and one the importance of which can hardly be exaggerated, was by transferring a very large proportion of the population from the cities to the country, to inaugurate the ascendancy of the latter. The lords of the Territory, who had previously lived for the most part in the cities, each betook himself to the isolation of his own rural home. Separated by distance from old associations, his own family assumed new importance and here the virtues and graces of woman began first to exercise their legitimate and auspicious influence. The domestic ties gained new strength, and here were developed those inestimable home influences, which above all else, are the bulwarks of a people's virtues and the surest guaranties of a nation's pre-eminence. In Greece the condition of woman had been but little removed from that of slaves. In Rome, whose histo-
ry abounded in striking examples of female heroism, she was treated with far greater consideration; but the respect paid her bore rather a political cast and exalted her as a part of the State, as the patriotic companion and mother of citizens, rather than as simply a woman for her own sake. So too, in Rome, the liberty for which they struggled, was political liberty, the liberty of the citizen; and each citizen's importance was as a part of the State and not the dignity and importance of the man. But the isolated life of the baron strengthened individuality. Instead of reflecting the greatness of the State, he was himself the centre of his own system. The relations between him and his dependents fostered and brought into exercise the manly qualities; and hence it was that this great experiment of country civilization abounded in the noblest development of true manhood, in the most elevated sentiments and the loftiest achievements. It was from those baronial halls that issued the brave men who wrested from the hands of a reluctant monarch the great charter of English liberty, and it was under the wings of Feudalism that the first literary efforts of modern Europe were warmed into life. The subject of fierce denunciation as well as of warm panegyric, as the Feudal System has been, I think no candid man, who reverences the truth, will deny that it was admirably calculated to afford society the protection that it could not otherwise obtain; that, aided by religion, it increased the dignity and importance of woman, and strengthened the ties of family; that it exercised a more beneficial effect on the moral and intellectual nature of individual man, and was the fruitful mother of high thoughts and noble actions. It might puzzle its denouncers to show what human institution has done more.

Growing out of it and closely connected with it, was that great school of moral discipline, chivalry. Founded in the high sense of personal honor and the individual thirst for glory, marked by the keenest sense of justice, by ardent indignation against wrong, protecting the weak, defying the strong, inculcating reverence
for God and the tenderest and most respectful devotion to woman, full of lofty courtesy, of unbending rectitude, of contempt for fraud and meanness, how gloriously it illumined the darkness of the middle ages and how potently it aided in restoring the true manhood, which, in the close and crowded atmosphere of ancient civilization, had been almost suffocated. That darkness, it seems to me, was but the natural result of what had gone before. The human intellect unnaturally stimulated, while the moral and physical nature had alike deteriorated in the dense population of cities, the ignorance and violence of the dark ages were but the penalty for this unequal and monstrous development. Through that long night, exhausted manhood, returned to the rural solitude whence it sprang, was, by high physical and moral training, regaining the symmetry that a false civilization had destroyed. So conspicuous among the successful means employed was this noble institution, that, familiar as they are to us all, I yet cannot forbear the repetition of the immortal words in which one of the purest and greatest English minds at the close of the last century commemorated its virtues and mourned its departure:

"The age of chivalry," said Burke, "is gone; that of Sophists economists and calculators has succeeded, and the glory of Europe is extinguished forever. Never more shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the words of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honor, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil by losing all its greatness."

Let us hope that although the age of chivalry may have departed and that of economists and calculators have succeeded, Providence may yet have in store for us a better age than either; when the conflicting claims of both shall be recognized, when the progress of a true civilization shall exhibit in one glow of associated beauty, the richest fruits of intellectual cul-
ture, the highest physical perfection, the greatest tri-
umphs of the useful arts and the acknowledged sway
of the manly and the Christian virtues.

As if to remove all doubts of the benefits which
true civilization reaped from the barbarian contest
and the ascendancy of rural life and habits, produced
by the Feudal System, stands the fact of that portion
of Europe where they made the least impression and
where the dying embers of ancient civilization were
fanned into a brilliant but transient flame. In Italy,
the population of the cities had early acquired great
importance. Protected by their obscurity until they
defied opposition by their strength, the night of bar-
barism that enveloped in darkness the rest of Europe
was in Italy, to use the apt figure of another, the night
of an Arctic summer. The dawn began to re-appear
before the last reflection of the preceding sunset had
faded from the horizon. The feudal nobles became
identified with the mass of citizens, and old institu-
tions made a successful stand against the progress of
Feudalism. With wonderful quickness grew up a civ-
ilization whose splendor has even to this day hardly
been excelled. Painting, sculpture and architecture,
were all liberally encouraged. Admiration for genius
and learning, became a passion, and kings, nobles and
cardinals, vied with each other in their devotion to po-
ets and men of letters. The city of Florence alone
contained a population of nearly two hundred thou-
sand. The sails of her commerce whitened every sea.
Her banks conducted the mercantile operations of all
Europe, and the enterprise of her merchant princes has
scarcely been surpassed by the most gigantic projects of
our own time. Her schools were filled with thousands
of pupils, and the thirst for knowledge was universal.
Her revenue in the early part of the fourteenth cen-
tury amounted to the almost incredible sum of six
hundred thousand pounds sterlil, and her hundreds
of factories gave employment to tens of thousands of
workmen. In short, in commercial and manufactur-
ing greatness, in the successful accumulation of wealth,
in useful inventions, in the cultivation of the fine arts,
in the progress of elegant, learning in all the elements of what is called civilization, the eye may wander through all history and rest upon no lovelier or more promising scene than was afforded in these Italian States. Amidst the general darkness, they were the light of all Europe. Who supposed that what was so fair to behold, was in truth but a whitened sepulchre?—Who would not have preferred their splendid culture to the comparative barbarism of England, yet how certainly would another generation have reversed the mistaken judgment! The very causes of their greatness were the seeds of their dissolution. That preponderance of cities so favorable to the growth of literature and the arts and sciences, those habits which had established and sustained manufactures, diffused commerce and given life to finance, had destroyed the manhood of the State; courage, frankness and sincerity, had given place to fraud, hypocrisy and meanness; accustomed to accomplish every thing by superior intelligence, cunning had become the point of honor instead of courage, and the polished Italian who would not have scrupled to despatch his adversary by the skillful use of a subtle poison, was shocked at the brutality of a fair field and an open fight. The State unable to find protection in the arms of her coward sons, was forced to entrust her cause to professional soldiers, who fought indifferently on any side for pay. Rich in every thing but the 'men' that wealth could not buy, the Italian States sank under the first onset of the invader, into profound and irretrievable insignificance, another monument of false civilization.

Their history was but a repetition of the old experiment of city civilization. Their growth was as sudden as that of the prophet's gourd, and their destruction almost as swift. To herd men together in great multitudes, is to wear away their individuality by perpetual attrition, to make each but one of an innumerable flock, a link in an almost endless chain; to degrade manhood, to destroy courage, and to corrupt virtue. Under such circumstances, the intellect seems to gain morbid activity from the decay of the moral and
physical constitution, and the State suffers the penalty of precocious maturity in early decrepitude. They who covet dense population as indispensable to high civilization, have read to little purpose the history of the past, if they have not learned how essential are freedom of movement and room for expansion to individual growth and the existence of liberty. They forget that neither wealth nor numbers constitute a State.

"Not high raised battlements or labor'd mound,
Thick wall or monted gate,
Not cities proud with spires and turrets crowned,
Not bays and broad armed ports;
Where laughing at the storm rich navies ride;
Not starred and spangled courts
Where low bowed baseness wafts perfume to pride.
No; men, high minded men,

* * *

Men who their duties know
But know their rights and knowing dare maintain.

Even if we forget the teachings of history, we can hardly be unmindful of events that happen before our eyes, and more than once have we seen a populous city in our own country plunged into the abyss of revolution, while in the rural districts of the same State, there was scarcely a ripple upon the tide of public opinion.

Pre-eminent among the frightful evils which the progress of society has developed as the result of dense population, is one which constitutes the great problem of modern civilization. It is only in a savage condition that equality of wealth can be any thing but a dream. As society advances, capital necessarily accumulates in the hands of the few, for it is only by the subjection of labor to a great extent to the direction of capital, that the highest industrial success is achieved. But the increase of population enlarges the number of laborers, while growing competition diminishes the wages of labor. The accomplished historian of the middle ages, makes us acquainted with the fact, that the provisions which the daily wages of an agricultural laborer in England would purchase in the fourteenth century, at the close of the last could only be procured by the labor of from ten to twelve days. In
other words, the comforts which the laborer was able to command four or five hundred years ago, were several times as great as they are now. During the present century, wages have been by the operation of the same causes still farther reduced, until in many cases they scarcely suffice to support life, and it may be laid down as a proposition—generally true, that when the greatest amount of labor has been obtained for the smallest sum capable of sustaining the life and strength of the operative, the most favorable point for capital and the increase of national wealth has been attained. Whenever this state of things becomes fixed, slavery by whatsoever name known, is no longer profitable to the master, and servitude may be said to have ceased in those European nations where it no longer exists, not so much from considerations of abstract right and liberty, as because the increasing approximation to this result began to make its continued existence, of at least doubtful pecuniary advantage to the superior class.—The only effect of its abolition under such circumstances, is relief from the burden of protecting the helpless; and the laborer becomes a freeman in name, exchanging in fact, a master of flesh and blood and the ordinary sentiments of humanity, for that most terrible of all masters, "Hunger," whose inexorable decree promulgated every day is, "work, work for the pittance, that will support life and let your wife and little ones share your toil, at the expense of health, and it may be, of life itself, or else enjoy the liberty you all have, 'to starve if you see fit.' I will not weary and disgust you with details of suffering at which humanity revolts, found not in exaggerated works of fiction, but in official reports made to the British Parliament, by commissioners appointed to investigate the facts—of families suffering for want of the merest necessities of life, of women and children of tender years, pursuing their round of incessant toil, in the close air of factories, reeking with foul exhalations, or in mines shut out from the light of heaven, sometimes harnessed to carts with belts and chains, and under the lash of the overseer, for liberty too, alas, has its chains, its
lashes and its overseers, their bodies deformed by premature and excessive labor, their minds uncultivated, their souls polluted, without hope, ignorant of God, of religion, of everything in short but the work that never is done and the bread that is never to spare.—Nothing can add force to the simple truth as stated in the language of the witnesses examined before these Parliamentary commissioners, with the result of whose labors the English Reviews have for many years past abounded. They show that the great industrial triumphs of Great Britain have been marked by horrors hardly inferior to those which attend the victories of the battle-field. In the manufacturing districts of France too, one-half of the young men who arrive at the age of conscription, which is fixed at twenty, are, in consequence of deformity or disease, unfit for military service. Of the unhappy condition of Ireland I have said nothing, for by common consent she is left to her "heritage of woe."

The political economists tell us that the wages of labor can never fall below the living mark, for death, by then diminishing the number of laborers, would increase their value; but they make no allowance for the lingering death by inches, for the privation and want which, stopping short of actual starvation, yet produce disease and premature dissolution. But is humanity content to repose on this cold calculation? Is this the end of civilization and of hireling labor? Are the penury and the rags of St. Giles, the inevitable price of the splendor and refinement of St. James? and do we find in the rapid accumulation of National wealth, reparation for decayed manhood, blighted womanhood and deformed childhood? Is liberty an abstraction to be worshipped for itself, or is it dear to us for the blessings that it confers? If the former, the hireling laborer may find in a name an equivalent for the substantial comforts he has lost. If the latter, how gladly would he exchange the freedom to starve for contented serfdom, with its ample fare, its exemption from care and the protection which it gave him a right to claim. "The slave," said a European writer nearly
a century ago, "was maintained when he could not work, but the free laborer who is badly paid when he does work, what is to become of him when he does not? Who is there to trouble himself about his lot?—Whom does it cost anything when he perishes of languor and misery? Who is there consequently that is interested in hindering him from perishing? The slave was precious to the master on account of the money which he had cost him. But the free laborer costs the rich voluptuary who employs him, nothing. In times of servitude the blood of men had some price; they were worth at least what they brought in market. Since they are no longer sold, they have really no intrinsic value. In an army, a wagon horse is of much more value than a soldier, because the horse costs dear and they can get the soldier for nothing. The suppression of slavery has caused this calculation of war to pass into ordinary life."

The experience of nearly a hundred years has only added weight to these striking observations. During all that period the experiment has been going on. More than a seventh of the population of England have become paupers, beggary has been reduced to a science and still men grope on in the dark, vainly trying to solve this great problem of free society; and with the exception of those who boldly propose to remedy the evil by plunging headlong into the whirlpool of socialism, and thus, as it were, terminate a miserable existence by a still more miserable suicide, no genius has soared higher than the merest palliative. British statesmanship seems to have exhausted itself in the enactment of a poor law, which, in effect, delivers each laborer, who is unable to support himself by his own wages, into the custody of the law and makes him the slave of its officers. The public authorities add so much at the expense of the parish to his wages as will suffice to keep body and soul together, and as a condition of this protection he is forced to take any service they may designate, and his operations are confined to his own parish alone. This is the refuge that hope holds out to the English laborer as the probable termination of his
career! Alas for the philanthropy that begins by emancipating the black and ends by enslaving the white!

Our ancestors in exchanging the old for the new world, brought with them the civilization of the nations whence they came, and found an almost boundless field for its development. There was no barbarous ingredient to be harmonized. The savage inhabitants gradually receded before the march of the white man, forming no element in society. It was but the transplanting of European civilization to a virgin soil and a territory of indefinite extent. It would be difficult to conceive of conditions more favorable to success, and accordingly the world has stood amazed at our unexampled progress. But while there is so much cause for pride in the past, and for hope in the future, there is too much reason to fear that the history of a great portion of even this favored land, will form no exception to the disastrous experience of free society in the civilized nations of Europe. Already in the Northern States we begin to see painful evidences of that fierce conflict between labor and capital, which seems to be the unavoidable bane of all hireling communities; the first faint and fleeting clouds that herald the coming storm. Already strikes of laborers have become no uncommon occurrence, and a great State has been shaken to its centre by the fell spirit of agrarianism. We have seen a hungry multitude in the city of New York, suddenly thrown out of employment by the recent financial panic, pointing with menacing hands to the depository of government treasure, with those ominous and suggestive words, “there are twenty millions and we have not bread!” Even during the last month, the municipal authorities of one of the most flourishing cities of the North West, have been forced to turn a deaf ear to the importunities of hundreds of laborers clamoring for work at prices barely sufficient for the scantiest subsistence. What but that safety valve of inestimable power; the abundant lands of the West, has saved the hireling laborer of the North from the fate of the English pauper? Suppose New
England to have been cut off from this wonderful resource and all her discordant elements pent up within her own narrow limits—what would have been her condition to-day? What will be the condition of Northern free society, when a dense population covers the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific? It may be that they who sow the wind will one day reap the whirlwind, and will learn how easy is the transition from the principles upon which they have inaugurated a crusade against an institution older than civilized society, and a right of property as sacred as any that ever received the sanction of law, human and divine, to the bold avowal of the great French socialist, that “all property is robbery.”

But if the lands of the West have in this respect postponed the evil day, it is quite certain that they have not availed to prevent those other ills, which are incidental to dense population. Take for instance the New England of revolutionary days, and compare her with New England as she is. Books have multiplied, education has penetrated every household, wealth has accumulated, learning is idolized, and yet are we not met on every side by the evidences of impaired manhood and decayed virtue? Her great statesmen driven into retirement to make way for pedants and philanthropists by trade! The old cradle of liberty closed against her brightest intellect, because he dared to uphold the inviolability of a solemn compact against the assaults of the higher law; and Faneuil Hall, that once reverberated with the eloquence of Otis and of Samuel Adams, sunk into the echo of the insane drivellings of Exeter. The ermine of justice stripped from the shoulders of a judicial officer, the only charge alleged against whom, was, that he had sinned against the commonwealth by keeping his oath of office instead of obeying the mandates of an infuriated mob! A systematic repudiation of the organic law to which she pledged her honor and under whose protecting wing she has reaped such golden harvests, more infamous than ever made Punic faith detestable! Ministers of the Gospel of peace abandoning their pulpits, and vener-
able professors their chairs, to send forth the peculiar missionaries of New England christianity with Sharpe's Rifles in their hands for the slaughter of brethren whose only crime was, that they aspired to some share in the common territory. Arrant cowardice suffering merited punishment for wanton slander, crowned with the honors of heroism and martyrdom! Congressional reports blackening, with the charge of having sold for money the vote that belonged to his constituents, the hands of a chosen representative of the very land of steady habits itself! An assembly, not of fugitive Red Republicans from the capital of France, but of Massachusetts scholars and gentlemen, in letters and speeches, sounding the praises of cold blooded assassination! Scholarly essays, and conventions with any amount of choice rhetoric, to prove the intolerable tyranny of the moral law, and the imperative necessity for overturning society, church and State, and practically reducing man to a level with the brute! Those whom nature designed for men, feeling the burden to be more than they can bear, vainly endeavoring to be women; and women, despairing of the attractions of their own sex, struggling to supply the deficiency with the abdicated manhood of the other. Search creation round, and where on earth have been seen such evidences of a restless, unhappy, discontented people, or of a social system so inharmonious, monstrous, deformed and out of joint? More forms of excess than ever before marked the decline of falling States, made only more hideous by the rare culture and scholarship, the wealth and splendor, and the morbid mental activity with which they are so closely intertwined! Consuming passion for novelty; insatiable appetite for all those 'isms' the foul brood of modern infidelity; unconquerable repugnance to all moderate, just and conservative views! If, on the mysterious wires that connect us with that spirit world with which they profess to have daily communication, could be borne just one brief message from those sturdy old puritans, who with all their faults, and they had many, were yet every inch men, how would its withering condemnation blight the mys-
tical, skeptical, transcendental and dyspeptical generation that disgrace their ancestry!

The older Northern, and especially the New England States, present us with one of the fairest possible illustrations of the effects of population largely distributed into towns and cities, under the most favorable circumstances, upon the habits and character of a people. The same excessive mental activity, the same moral obliquity and the same physical degeneracy, which have marked its predominance elsewhere, are already too obvious to be ignored. Let those who seek a different solution of the extraordinary phenomena which characterize the present condition of that remarkable people, explain if they can, the striking coincidence between their development and the existence of this cause. The people of New England were once like ourselves, a purely agricultural people. They were distinguished for sound practical sense, for sturdy morality, for manly strength. During the last half century, circumstances have directed their industry into different channels, and one-half of the inhabitants occupy the towns. Within that period, these phenomena have all exhibited themselves, in seeming contrast with their antecedents. The final issue, when the causes which have produced these results are indefinitely multiplied, as in the ordinary course of events they will be, defies all calculation.

In the South on the other hand, sparsely settled with a rural people, scarcely one-tenth of whom dwell in towns, with an institution unfavorable to dense population, we have one of the fairest illustrations, of the slow, steady, uniform, legitimate growth of country civilization. The terrible problem of free society does not vex us, but melts away in the fact that here labor is capital. The fearful competition between the two is lost in a harmonious relation, which reconciles the rights of both. The very argument by which the institution is assailed, the superior cheapness of hiring labor, is itself an admission that the slave receives a larger portion of the products he raises than the boasted laborer of freedom. To this extent the prop-
osition may be true, but the error consists in making no allowance for the difference between labor directed by superior skill, compelled to reasonable and proper, but steady and regular effort, and labor left to its own uncertain and wayward movements. How well the negro is fulfilling his destiny and subserving the purposes of civilization, in producing the great staples upon which the commerce of the world and the comfort of mankind to so great an extent depend, all the statistics of life and health and happiness proclaim in tones only less authoritative and commanding than the voice of God itself. Compare him not only with his emancipated brethren of the West Indies, or of the Northern States, or with the barbarism of his native Africa, but with the laboring classes of our own race and blood in other lands,

"Where hirpling millions toil in doubt and fear,
For food and clothing all the weary year,
Content and grateful if their masters give
The boon they humbly beg, to work and live.
While dreamers task their idle wits to find
A short hand method to enrich mankind;
And Fourier's scheme and Owen's deep device
The drooping hearts of listening crowds entice
With rising wages and decreasing toil,
With bounteous crops from ill-attended soil.
If while the anxious multitudes appear
Now glad with hope, now yielding to despair,
A seraph form descending from the skies
In mercy sent should meet their wondering eyes,
And smiling promise all the good they crave,
The homes, the food, the clothing of the slave;
Restraint from vice, exemption from the cares
The pauper hirpling ever feels or fears;
And at their death, these blessings to renew
That wives and children may enjoy them too;
That when disease or age their strength impairs
Subsistence and a home should still be theirs;
What wonder would the promised boon impart,
What grateful rapture swell the peasant's heart.
How freely would the hungry listeners give
A life long labor thus secure to live!
And yet the life so unassailed by care,
So blest with moderate work, with ample fare,
With all the good the pauper hirpling needs,
The happier slave on each plantation leads,
Safe from harassing doubts and annual fears,
He dreads no famine in unfruitful years;
If harvests fail from inauspicious skies,
The master's providence his food supplies;
No paupers perish here for want of bread,
Or lingering live by foreign bounty fed;
No exile, trails of homeless peasants go
In distant climes to toll their tale of woe.
Far other fortune, free from care and strife
For work of bread, attends the negro's life;
And Christian slaves may challenge as their own,
The blessings claimed in fabled States alone."

Behold, ye well-meaning philanthropists, that fierce multitude, rising upon their rulers in some overgrown European city. Hark for the first word that breaks upon the ear! Is it liberty? Alas it is from liberty to starve, that they are praying to be delivered! It is not with shouts for freedom, but with cries for bread that the air resounds! "Certainly," says Carlyle, "emancipation proceeds with rapid strides and might give rise to reflection in men of serious turn. West Indian blacks are emancipated and refuse to work. Irish whites have long been emancipated and nobody asks them to work, finding them potatoes. In the progress of emancipation, are we to look for a time when the horses are to be emancipated? Cut every human relation which has anywhere grown uneasy sheer asunder; reduce whatsoever was compulsory to voluntary; whatsoever was permanent among us to the condition of Nomadic. In other words, loosen by assiduous wedges in every joint the whole fabric of social existence, stone from stone, until at last all being loose enough, it can, as we already see in most countries, be overset by sudden outbursts of revolutionary rage, and lying as mere mountains of anarchic rubbish, solicit you to sing fraternity over it and to rejoice at the new remarkable era of human progress that we have arrived at. My friends, I grieve to remind you, but it is eternally the fact, whom Heaven has made a slave, no parliament of men nor power on earth can make him free. He is chained by fetters which parliaments with their millions cannot reach. You can label the African free; yes, and it is but labelling him a solecism, bidding him to be the parent of solecisms wheresoever he goes."

How well have the disastrous experiments of the two great nations of Europe illustrated these sound
and impregnable views! Great Britain sacrificed her West Indian colonies, a burnt offering on the altar of sentimentality. After expending twenty millions sterling to ruin the planter and restore the negro himself to the barbarism from which slavery had rescued him, she vainly endeavors to repair the wrong to both races and to the cause of civilization by the importation of Coolies from China. A provisional government of socialists and red republicans in France, abused their brief authority for a like purpose, and after the lapse of only ten years, if recent accounts are to be credited, her tri-colored flag gives sanctity and protection to a practical renewal of the worst horrors of the middle passage.

I have alluded to the institution of domestic slavery, and the sparse population, which it tends to secure, as among the strongest safeguards of true civilization.—How closely it has been identified with human progress, in all ages of the world, history abundantly attests. It was by its hands that the great monuments of antiquity, the pyramids of Egypt, the temple of Solomon, and those stupendous works of Roman improvement, that still resist the decay of ages, were reared. It was by its aid, that Rome was so long enabled to withstand the drain of foreign war and to roll the great tide of conquest from South to North, and it was the vigor of a slave-holding people that rolled it back again from North to South. It is to the slave-holding States of antiquity, that we still look for the mightiest creations of the human mind. Turning our eyes to the South, it is only slave-holding Brazil that, in spite of a bad government, gives signs of vitality and advancement, while Mexico and the non-slaveholding republics of North America, conspicuous only for their feebleness, have all proved miserable failures. Would you behold the difference between the masters of slaves and those who, for the want of them, have become slaves themselves; contrast the ancient Roman with the degenerate race that inhabit modern Italy, or compare polished Athens and brave Lacedæmon with the feeble and half civilized people that now swarm in "the
isles where burning Sappho loved and sung.” If today we hesitate to declare that permanent and successful republican government is only compatible with a sparse population and the institution of domestic slavery, it is not because of any voice of encouragement that comes up to us from the ruins of the buried past, or the busy scenes of the present, but only because it is not for mortal ken to penetrate the secrets of the future.

“There is,” said one of the most brilliant British orators and most philosophical of British Statesmen, discussing the probabilities of resistance to the demands of the mother country by the Southern colonies, “another circumstance attending these colonies, which makes the spirit of liberty still more high and haughty, than in those to the northward. It is that in Virginia and the Carolinas, they have a vast multitude of slaves. These people of the Southern colonies are much more strongly and with a higher and more stubborn spirit attached to liberty than those to the northward. Such were all the ancient commonwealths; such were our Gothic ancestors; such in our day were the Poles; and such will be all masters of slaves, who are not slaves themselves. In such a people the haughtiness of domination, combines with the spirit of freedom, fortifies it and renders it invincible.” Inestimable as have been the advantages derived from slavery in developing the dignity and the virtues of true manhood, they were nevertheless in the ancient commonwealths, among the Gothic nations, and still later among the Poles, the privilege of the few purchased by the degradation of great numbers of the same race. It was the reproach of ancient slavery and European servitude, that they asserted a social falsehood, the slaves possessing equal capacity for improvement with their masters; and Grecian and Roman history sometimes exhibited the abhorrent spectacle of really great men doomed to the servile state in the hands of inferior masters. But it is the glory of our peculiar civilization that it is founded, not on the puny artificial distinctions of man, but upon those differences of race which the hand of the
Great Creator himself has indelibly fixed upon His creatures. With no patent of nobility save that which He has stamped upon the Caucasian brow, and no badge of inferiority save that which he who runs may read, in the African face, the improvement of the superior race is obtained by the just and predestined subordination of the inferior—a subordination that not only does not degrade but absolutely redeems the African from the grossness, ferocity and idleness of barbarism. With this impregnable basis of Republican equality, with a climate in which nature has been so bountiful, in latitudes which have been illumined by the brightest triumphs of mind and in which were embraced nearly all the great seats of ancient empire and art, in almost undisputed control of the great staple, whose rise and fall even agitate the civilized world, where has any people possessed equal advantages? In which of the elements of greatness are we wanting? Is it that with restless enterprise, we have not penetrated every clime? There has been something better for us to do at home. History does not exhibit such an example of agricultural energy as the wonderful growth of the cotton culture. For more than half a century the science and capital and enterprise of the world, have been employed, exhausting the capacities of water and steam for the improvement of machinery, for its manufacture, and for adapting to it all the great inventions of the age, and still they lag behind the productive skill and industry of the planter. If we have not been so expert in parading dividends and figuring out seductive calculations on paper, or in manufacturing buttons and clocks, or in building palaces, is it not enough that we have supplied the life blood that sustains the trade and finance of the world? If the fruits of intellectual culture have not been so profuse among us, have we not been more fortunate in the development of the whole man, and may not the horseback exercise and the habitual use of the deadliest weapon of modern warfare, to which we are trained from our youth, be fairly set off against some of that curious learning which exhausts itself in the effort to overturn the Ark of our
fathers, and to commit the hopes of mankind to the
phantom ship of an infidel philosophy? How much
we lose by the absence of that immense production of
books in which the prolific Northern mind so rejoices,
I will not undertake to determine. Certainly the
stream that spreads over so much surface must lose
something in depth, and it is better to digest a page
than to devour a volume. The old adage warned us
to beware of the man of one book, and by parity of
reasoning, there is little to fear from the adversary who
dissipates his mind on too many. If we have not
grown frantic over woman’s rights, where has she re-
ceived more of that grateful homage, the spontaneous out-
pouring of every manly heart? Do you to-day de-
mand the evidences of her ascendancy and her influ-
ence; I might reply in the apt words which made the
fame of the great architect of St. Paul’s, immortal—
“Si monumentum quaeris, circumspeice.” If we have not
abounded so much in that ‘telescopic philanthropy’
which overlooking the misery of its own neighborhood,
is severely exercised about the suffering of distant
lands, have we not been more successful in cultivating
the home virtues and the sweet charities and courtesies
of life? In the highest fruit of true civilization, the
best examples of God’s own image, where have we
been excelled? From that Southern matron who in
revolutionary days doomed her own splendid mansion
to the flames, less it might afford a refuge to the ene-
mies of her country, to that other Southern matron
who in our day, triumphing over the pangs of disease
and the weakness of her sex, has almost rescued from
profanation the tomb of Washington, have we not fur-
nished to the annals of true womanhood some of its
fairest chapters? From the august and peerless chief
who led our revolutionary armies, to the great military
genius who conducted our victorious troops in triumph
to the halls of the Montezumas, from the comprehen-
sive mind of Jefferson to the acute and prophetic in-
tellect of Calhoun, from the forest-born Demosthenes of
Virginia to the magnificent eloquence of Clay, on
every field and in every council, have we not contrib-
uted our full share to the glory of the Confederacy? And how truly does the South behold her jewels in that sturdy republican yeoman nobility, the invaluable fruit of rural solitude and plantation life, whose superiors the world has never seen! Compare us not with the Utopia of poetry nor the Model Republic of philosophy, but with the world as it is; sift the statistics, weigh well every thing that goes to make up the sum of human happiness, and where is man, slowly and steadily, but more certainly and successfully, fulfilling his destiny? When, in the high council of the Union, we were taunted with the declaration that the sceptre was about forever to depart from us, how overwhelming in reply was the simple majesty of truth: "It may be, but do not forget,—it can never be forgotten, it is written on the brightest pages of human history—that we, the slaveholders of the South, took our country in her infancy, and after ruling her for sixty out of seventy years of her existence, we shall surrender her to you without a stain upon her honor, boundless in prosperity, incalculable in her strength, the wonder and admiration of the world. Time will show what you will make of her, but no time can ever diminish our glory or your responsibility."

For a quarter of a century the most unceasing efforts have been made to sow the seeds of dissatisfaction to our social system, and yet profound peace reigns within our borders and contentment smiles on every hand. Still, we are a satisfied people, asking only the poor privilege of being let alone, and of working out our own destiny, in our own way.

I have endeavored, gentlemen, how feebly and imperfectly no one can be more painfully sensible than myself, to exhibit before you the pictures of true and false civilization; and, as the best example of the former, to hold up to your admiration the peculiar civilization of the South; and where could I more appropriately have engaged in such a task, than before this assembly of her patriot scholars? The fair fabric of Southern civilization, strong in its foundations, harmonious in its proportions; how proudly it defies the tide
that rolls at its base! How touching its mute appeal to those who have been reared to manhood around its hearth-stone! There is that in it which may well excite—not the transports of youthful enthusiasm nor the ardor of maturer years, but which may well kindle a glow of admiration in the chill bosom of age itself!—If we are true to ourselves, the day will surely come when the same indomitable energy that rescued this fair land from primitive wildness, shall plant Southern civilization on the banks of the Amazon and the Orinoco, and when, instead of being cramped and cribbed, a territorial empire shall own its mild and genial sway.—Never until we cease to cherish the principles and to be moved by the examples of our brave ancestors, until we are no longer distinguished by reverence for God, respect for age, obedience to the salutary restraints of law, and by that union of the gentler and sterner virtues in which dwells the perfection of manhood, shall those terrible words, inscribed on the tombs of the buried nations of the past, “thou hast been weighed in the balance and found wanting,” be the epitaph of a fallen South! If that dread day should ever come, which may Heaven forbid, the fall will be not ours only, but the fall of rational liberty and of true civilization,—for confided to our custody, are the best hopes of both. You, gentlemen, come to the service of your native land at a most critical period. Be earnest and faithful. Scorn luxurious ease and tread the high and rugged path of duty. Let the manly robes with which you are soon to be invested, cover brave and manly hearts. May you be equal to every emergency, and at the close of a well spent life, marked by the successful acquisition of that “wisdom” which truly “exceeds every thing,” and dedicated to the cause of “virtue and your country,” your sight cheered by a record, no line of which you would wish to blot, may you each realize the sublime benediction which the pious French Abbe pronounced on his country’s dying King,

“Son of St. Louis, Ascend to Heaven!”