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An Oration, Delivered Before the Two Societies of the South Carolina College

James Henry Hammond

AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE TWO SOCIETIES

OF THE

SOUTH-CAROLINA COLLEGE,

ON THE

Fourth of December, 1849,

BY JAMES H. HAMMOND,

A Member of the Euphradian Society.

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EUPHRADIAN HALL,
Columbia, S. C., December 7th, 1849.

To the Hon. JAMES H. HAMMOND,
at the Palmetto House, Columbia, S. C.

DEAR SIR:

At a special meeting of the EUPHRADIAN SOCIETY, held on Thursday last, a Committee was appointed to request from you your Address for publication—feeling assured that in so doing we also express the wishes of the community at large, we trust that you will not refuse to gratify them, and reflect additional honor upon our Society.

Very respectfully yours,

ROBERT W. BARNWELL
GEORGE McW. WILLIAMSON,
JOHN S. RICHARDSON,
R. M. DURANT,
CHARLES E. MAYBIN.
Committee.

SILVER BLUFF,
December 17th, 1849.

GENTLEMEN:

Your letter of the 12th inst. reached me to-day. The one previously directed to me at the Palmetto House, I did not receive. To decline publishing my Address, when it is requested by the Society, would be such an unusual violation of custom, that it would appear an affectation. I have therefore scarcely any option but to send it to the Printer, which I will do immediately.

I beg you will tender to the Society my acknowledgments for the compliment conveyed in this request, and believe me to be, with much respect,

Very truly yours,

J. H. HAMMOND.

Mr. R. W. BARNWELL, Chairman, &c.

ADDRESS.

We are accustomed to regard the age in which we live not only as the most enlightened which the world has known, but one of unprecedented progress. The rapidity with which ideas and events disseminated by the press, fly on the wings of steam and electricity around the globe, lead us to suppose that the sum total of human knowledge is far greater than it ever has been, and the discoveries in art and science which are continually announced induce the belief that human improvement is advancing at a pace beyond all former example. These two conclusions, so universally prevalent, are fast conducting us to others of much higher import, and of much more doubtful truth. "We," said Bentham, repeating an aphorism of Lord Bacon, "We are the ancients," and the whole school of Utilitarians—by far the most numerous of our day, declare that there was little wisdom in the past, and that nothing is venerable in antiquity. The present then and the future we are taught, are alone worthy of our thoughts and cares.

Indeed a calm observer of mankind in our era might be led to think that the Utilitarians and most of the enthusiastic admirers of modern progress, believed that the seeds of it spontaneously germinated and could never fail; that discoveries and inventions are lucky incidents that will constantly recur; that the great events which influence the higher destinies of our species are the results of chance; and that the only task for man is to make the best use, each for himself, of whatever good fortune may throw in his way. But such absurd opinions no one will openly acknowledge that he entertains. All admit, when forced to reason that there must be causes for effects. And in general, the improvements of our age are attributed to the advance of physical and experi-

mental philosophy, of which Lord Bacon is referred to as the founder.

The opinion that modern progress dates from the era of Bacon, and rests upon the philosophy with which his name is now most associated, has of late been so widely diffused and so strenuously inculcated that it is becoming, even among the most intelligent, a fixed belief; and to look further back than to him and his doctrines is deemed unnecessary for any useful purpose of the present day. All beyond being matters of curious enquiry and fit studies for elegant leisure, but of little value to the earnest and practical man of our enlightened age. And in the same spirit we are taught to pass lightly by all moral theories, and treat with contempt all metaphysical discussion.

But the causes thus assigned for the progress of mankind during the last two centuries, are wholly inadequate, and to a very great degree untrue. And whoever limits his views to the consideration of these causes only, cannot possibly comprehend the civilization he enjoys, and is of course not capable of performing thoroughly his own part in the important affairs of life—much less of promoting the welfare of those who are to come after us.

It is well known that the Novum Organum of Bacon was a sealed book to his contemporaries. Even Hobbes, his amanuensis was not his disciple. The greatest admirers of this truly great man, to whom was vouchsafed the utmost intellectual capacity with which man can, so far as we know, be endowed—admit that this work has been more read within the present century than during the two previous—more since than before the time that Newton discovered the true theory of motion, that Lavoisier erected chemistry into a science, and Watt applied steam to useful purposes; while there is no reason to suppose that any of these illustrious men had been students of the new philosophy of Bacon. We owe a very large proportion of the discoveries and inventions of modern times to Italy, where this philosophy has not yet penetrated.

But Bacon himself lived in an age where progress had already made vast and rapid strides; when the grandest discoveries had been already effected in physics and verified by

experiment, and when the foundations had been laid for nearly all the improvements which have been developed to the present day. Paper, Gunpowder, the Mariner's Compass, and the art of Printing had long been in use. The Copernican system, though, probably unknown to Bacon, had been announced and Galileo had made a Telescope and demonstrated the truth of it. Harvey had discovered the circulation of the blood. Paracelsus had at least rescued chemistry from the magicians. Agricola had commenced mineralogy. Lionardo had suggested the very theory of Geology now most in vogue. Columbus and De Gama had revealed two new worlds to astonished Europe, and Sir Thomas Drake had sailed around the globe.

But the actual discoveries of Bacon were of little consequence; it is to his system of logic and his method of investigation that we owe, it is said, so much—to his Induction and "*experimentum crucis.*" If Bacon was the first author and expounder of Inductive reasoning, and first suggested that nature should be put to torture to disclose her facts, and modern improvements are due to these processess, to what do we owe the important discoveries before Bacon's time? Can it be that they were all accidents, and that there was no questioning of nature—no induction? Certainly not. Tubal Cain himself, if he discovered as well as wrought in metals, must have experimented in physics, and must have reasoned by rigid induction on the results. Aristotle minutely examed and characterised almost every thing in animated nature, and a century or more before the Novum Organum Lionardo declared, in almost the same words, that the phenomena of nature were to be solved not by theories, but a rigid investigation of the facts.

It is not true then that Physical Phylosophy and Inductive reasoning begun with Bacon. He propounded a system and collected facts; but it was not until recently—not until mens minds had been illumined by the light shed abroad by actual improvement that his facts were appreciated and his system comprehended—a system not wholly new in theory—and in some parts ancient in practice. The truth is that discovery has done more for Bacon than he has done as yet for it, since

it is only now that we begin to look with astonishment and admiration at the vast range and wonderful fore-shadowing of his mighty intellect. That he was himself, in some respects, overtaken and out run by the progress of his own age is sufficiently illustrated by the melancholy fact that he was the first English Judge tried and sentenced for receiving bribes—a practice which had been universal, and until his case, notoriously tolerated.

The close inquirer will often be amazed to find how true it is, that after all there is little new under the sun; to perceive from what remote sources and for what a period the greatest ideas, unrealized, unsystematized, almost unheeded have floated down the mighty stream of time—now far out in the current—now driven near the shore, and finally thrown on some propitious headland where they found a genial soil and bear the most precious fruit. Thales attributed the formation of the earth to the action of water, and gave a hint of electricity. Pythagoras said the sun and not the earth was the centre of the universe, and that the planets moved around it in elliptical orbits. The Roman Bakers stamped their bread. Aristotle believed that the explosive power of steam was sufficient to produce earthquakes. And Hero of Alexandria actually applied steam power to a toy machine two centuries before the christian era. So long ago were laid the foundations for discoveries, which have, in some instances, been fully developed only in our age.

But if Physical and experimental Philosophy is of much older origin than the seventeenth century, it is not less certain that it would have been utterly inadequate to produce the civilization we enjoy. The steam engine and power loom—printing and the mariner's compass, have undoubtedly made vast additions to the comforts, conveniences and enjoyments of the whole human family. And it is common to say of them and of other kindred inventions that they have been great civilizers. But this the language of metaphor. A language much too generally used and too literally interpreted in our times. They have indeed been powerful instruments of civilization, and in the hands of genius and enterprize, of men of refined and cultivated intellects, of pure

and noble sentiments, they have been of incalculable service in improving and elevating the condition of mankind. But what service could even such mighty instruments have rendered, if there had not been hands strong enough and wise enough to wield them? What would a steam engine avail a a Sioux? To what purpose would a Ghelanese apply a printing press? For unnumbered ages, nature in her grandest aspects has been familiar to those wild children of the sons of Noah. They have little else to study. Yet they have penetrated but few of her secrets, have appropriated but few of her blessings. What is it that has enabled the decendants of Japeth to conquer so many of her mysteries and control for his own ends, so many of her powers? To answer this question we must look back, and traverse a wide surface. We may for the most part readily tell who made this discovery, who was the author of that invention, but when we are asked what has brought the mind of the Caucasian race to its present high condition, what will keep it where it is; what will advance it still further in its glorious career? When these searching and necessary questions, on whose answers depend the whole solution of the great problem of human progress, are propounded, we cannot but see how puerile and absurd it would be to say, it is Physical and Experimental Philosophy—a philosophy essentially inert and dead itself, as matter, until life has been breathed into it by the cultivated intellect and refined imagination.

If we should say that it has taken all the past to make the present, we should state but the simple truth, and fall short of the whole truth, if we said any thing less. It has required every event of the past, every teaching of philosophy in all its forms—every discovery of science, every work of art—every experiment whether in physics or morals, in politics or religion, on individuals or societies, to bring our race to its present improved and enlightened condition. Whatever men have done or spoken in the whole tide of time, have produced effects, great or small, good or evil, which have continued to bring about the existing state of things, amid which it has been our fortune to be placed.

In looking back over the vast field through which the hu-

man family have made their long and momentous pilgrimage, it would be impossible to say that any incident of it could have happened otherwise than it did without effecting *us*. If the route had been varied, if more or fewer obstacles had impeded the march of those who have gone before us, we could not now occupy the precise position that we do. The most successful culture of a single art or science would be utterly insufficient to account for any but the lowest grade of civilization. Nor could any combination of kindred arts and sciences carried to the highest perfection approximate to the production of the grand and infinitely varied results by which we find ourselves surrounded.

To know then where we are—to have any thing like a proper conception of the position that we really occupy, it is necessary for us to learn whence and how we came here, and to trace the mighty wanderings of our forefathers from the period when an offended Diety thrust our first parents from the gates of Eden. A task beset with difficulties from which utilitarianism shrinks. The voyager upon the shoreless ocean, and the traveller in the trackless desert, ascertain their situation by observation of the fixed and everlasting stars. But no such bright and steady lights shine out upon the boisterous sea of human affairs, or guide the adventurer through the wide waste of time. Truth, the only safe and certain guide, does not glitter from the heights, but casts up a feeble though unerring ray from the very depths of nature, and we must pass the prime of life in toilsome search for that before we can read aright, the dim traditions and mutilated and discolored records which pourtray the wonderful career of man.

But it is only when we have conquered, sacked and seized possession of the past and all the past, that we have real knowledge, and may then, so far as we are permitted to do it, comprehend ourselves—our civilization and our mission. Yet, to fulfil that mission, we must not only know the past, but we must judge it. We must mark its errors and its follies, its crimes and wickedness. We must note where philosophy has gone astray; where superstition has betrayed its votaries; where ambition, bigotry and ignorance have

shed their blights; where that wholesome restraint, without which, genuine liberty cannot exist, has been perverted into oppression, and where that just resistance to wrongs, which is the inherent right of all, has degenerated into factious warfare and ended in anarchy and ruin. And we must also ascertain what pursuits have most promoted the enlightened happiness and welfare of mankind.

Having thus armed ourselves with genuine knowledge, and learned these great and all important lessons from the past, we may be prepared to determine what our real state of progress is, and what shall be done to carry onward the mighty cause of civilization. And we cannot fail to perceive at once and to denounce the shallow falsehood of those vulgar and narrow, but too common notions of utility, which overlooking the great essential truths that man has passions as well as wants—sentiments and reason as well as appetites and muscles, attribute our present civilization to physical and experimental philosophy and inductive reasoning on their results, and teach that the highest objects of life, the most important duties to posterity are fulfilled by constructing steam engines, and rail roads, and electric telegraphs. If, indeed, we are constrained to admit induction and experimental philosophy to be of paramount importance, it will be as applied on a higher, broader and nobler scale, to the events of time—to the motives and actions of mankind. And this was an essential feature in Bacon's system, and that on which really rests all his usefulness and all his glory. For he himself denounced experiments made for "productive rather than enlightening" purposes. He declared that "the duties of life were more than life itself"—that "the Georgics of the mind" were worthy of being celebrated in heroic verse; and embodying profound truth in a striking metaphor; he said that "knowledges are as pyramids, whereof history is the basis."

It is perhaps given to no individual thoroughly to know himself; to bear in mind at all times the history of his own life, however obscure and short it may be; to comprehend precisely the exact position which he himself occupies in the drama of the world, or to anticipate all the consequences of

his own acts, however well considered. Much less probable is it therefore that any single person shall be able to sift and to digest the whole history of the past, to understand all the relations of the men and nations who compose the existing generations of his race, or to look forward to their future destinies with any absolute certainty. The great Creator and Ruler of the universe alone knows all that has happened, all that is doing, all that shall come to pass. Such perfect knowledge He reserves for himself, and holds fate in his mighty grasp. But he condescends to use His creatures as the instruments of his great works, and has not left them wholly blind. The genius of mankind has perhaps been equal, in all ages, and in all there have doubtless been wise men. The difference between our age and those that have preceded it, is, that while probably no individual may have greater capacity and knowledge than many of his predecessors; more minds are actively engaged in penetrating all the mysteries of creation, and ransacking all the archives of the past, while the facilities for disseminating knowledge which have never existed to any thing like the same extent before, and which we owe to various discoveries in the useful arts, spread it with unparalleled rapidity throughout the world. It strikes every where almost at the same time. Its effects are visible at once. No longer the night-blooming plant which produces its blossom but once an age—knowledge now vegitates like the orange in its genial climes, to which springtime and autumn, flowers and fruits are ever present together. Thus action and re-action are almost instantaneous. Only two centuries ago, it required a thirty years war to settle the religious and territorial disputes of a single empire. But we have ourselves just seen all Europe rise in arms; every government menaced, many shaken to the centre, some overthrown; and peace and order again apparently established within the space of twenty months. So swift has been the communication of intelligence that the people of two hemispheres have been actual spectators of the fields of conflict, and the public opinion of both has been heard and felt amid the storm of battle. And the combatants themselves on every side, not only thus influenced,

but guided by the light of all the experience of other days have promptly decided where to concede and how far to resist. How long this storm, which rose with bodings as terriffic as any that has ever broken on the repose of man, is destined to subside, is known to none; but can be best conjectured, not by those who transmit facts, nor even those who govern trade and finance; but by those who have made themselves most familiar with the true state of human progress, and are accustomed to read the future in the past.

I have said it is scarcely probable that any single individual can master all the past and thereby make himself completely conversant with all the present. Indeed it is impossible. Much that is valuable in history is lost to us forever—buried by the inscrutable dispensations of Providence in the impenetrable mist of time. The eager enquirer, of the day have rescued something from oblivion—enough to excite the keenest curiosity, but scarcely any thing to satisfy it. The arch hitherto supposed to be a modern invention, has been recently exhumed from the mounds of Nimroud, which were once the palaces of the Assyrian Monarchs—where structures, which for unnumbered centuries have disappeared beneath their own dust, are found to have been reared on others that had met the same fate before them. And hopes are entertained that if the arrow-headed characters still found on slabs amid these ruins can ever be decyphered, we shall recover glimpses of a thousand years, which have been hardly reckoned in chronology; and may learn something certain of that mighty Empire, which once overshadowed, according to tradition, all the East, and whose civilization we have now discovered to have been far higher than had ever been believed. The new world as well as the old has its mysteries too. We have as yet no clue to the builders of Palenque, nor to the hands that raised the extensive and well planned fortifications of the Scioto valley, both of which mark a degree of progress, to which the red man has never yet attained.

But still the diligent student will find more in the authentic annals of mankind than a single life can compass. And if we desire to continue to go forward in the career of im-

provement—if we even desire to remain stationary where we are—nay, if we do not desire to retrograde, the whole intellect of our time should be earnestly directed and incessantly stimulated to study the present and the future in the past; and to search through all its broad fields after knowledge, as after hidden treasure.

What is most desired by man is power. "I am famished," said Jason of Pheræ, "for want of empire." Such no doubt, has been the secret feeling of every human heart—certainly of every elevated soul. And this it is that drives us onward in our various pursuits. But men for the most part follow shadows. The only real and substantial power, is the power of knowledge. He who famishes for empire—let him grasp at that. And if he would build for himself a pyramid for future ages to behold, he must be sure to lay its foundations upon history—history in the broad sense of Bacon.

I have already indicated that even the useful arts have a history, reaching back far beyond the era of this great philosopher, under the shadow of whose perverted reputation drivelling utilitarianism seeks a refuge. But whoever would analyze the frame-work of modern society, and the political and religious elements which are its pillars, must study the history of events—of the acts and institutions of our ancestors. If he cannot trace the long wanderings of the grim Teuton, from his Bactrian cradle, through the deep forests and shaking morasses of the North, to the moment when he burst from darkness upon astonished Europe; he may at least take him up from the time when Alaric led him to the sack of Rome, overturned the decayed civilization of antiquity and rescued christianity from a race, which, having failed to destroy it by persecution, would have entombed it with itself. Here commences modern history and Teutonic ascendency, though four dark and agonizing centuries elapsed before their birth can be said to have been fully accomplished; centuries of incessant action and experiment, in which a grand and terrible philosophy was at work,—whose crucibles were heated by human passions, whose universal solvent was human blood, and whose *mortua capites* were the wreck of thrones and dynasties. If little great or lasting was established in

this period, much was tried, and the results, both good and evil, contributed invaluable experience. The broader and milder light of the civilization to which he gave consistency, shines upon the era of the gigantic Charlemagne; and we clearly perceive that when his powerful arm was withdrawn from it, the great experiment of Teutonic Monarchy failed in the hands of his successors, overwhelmed by the Feudal spirit of our ancestors. That spirit had yet to accomplish its mission of consecrating the hereditary principle, on the basis of indefeasible fealty and compensating protection from generation to generation, of the rulers and the ruled; and to foster still farther, a lofty sense of personal dignity and honor, while it promoted patriotism, social sympathy, learning and religion. It is an invaluable lesson to us; a lesson which even to this day has not been fully learned in Europe; that this same Feudal system—slowly and naturally as it had been builded up, rich as were its fruits, indestructible as seemed the well wrought chain, which stretching from prince to peasant, and penetrating all intermediate ranks, bound the whole structure of society in links of solid iron—fell beneath the bloodless blows of a ~~dispersed~~ *Bourgeoisie*. despised Two centuries of fanatical crusading had loosened many rivets, by sweeping off the flower of its chivalry, while the new and vast channels of commerce which those crusades opened and put in motion, and the golden flood of inestimable learning which poured in through them from the wise, old, superannuated East, awakened the middle classes to a knowledge of their rights, and gave them strength to strike these blows. And then commenced afresh the struggle and the movement, into which new and potent elements were introduced. The strife of knowledge was mingled with the strife of arms, and commerce and art unfurled their standards in the field. Schools, and colleges, and universities soon flourished, and broad and stable monarchies were founded. Philosophy and letters, inventions and discoveries, manufactures and trade, sound governments and the refining arts, all advanced side by side in the great march of progress. Religion lagged behind. The illustrious foster-mother saw all her glorious children pass before her, till Luther rose and broke the fet-

ters that impeded her. The clogging abuses of the Old Church were in a measure reformed, and a New Church sprang into existence, which has proved the prolific parent of an hundred more. And here opens a chapter, which, perhaps above all others, requires the attention of those who would fully understand our present condition. Religion has exercised more influence over the temporal affairs of man than all other causes combined, and since the foundation of christianity, no event has had greater influence on civilization than the reformation. For more than a century after it broke out, religious wars and controversies assaulted every tradition and opinion, and shook every institution of the times. And from these wars and controversies, sprung modern civil liberty; all sides contributing in turn to its development. Suarez boldly announced the Jeffersonian creed, that all men were born equal, and that all political power was derived from the people. Buchanan, anticipating Locke, declared that government was founded on a voluntary compact; and honest John Bodin, as far in advance of Priestly and Bentham as he was elevated above the whole utilitarian school, proclaimed that the object of political association was the greatest good of the whole. These doctrines, promulgated before Bacon's era, first took deepest root in England, and soon bred that terrible conflict, in which, for a time, the people trod rough shod upon kings and nobles; and finally ended in making Great Britain what she is to our day, a Republic, governed under Monarchial forms. Our first American forefathers left the old world in the very heat of this great struggle, and brought with them those religious and political principles, which have contributed much, very much more than any physical philosophy or utilitarian code, to make us what we are.

But the earnest inquirer into our present state of civilization, its causes and its prospects, would fall far short if he limited himself to filling out, however fully, the outline I have sketched. If Gallileo was led to the study of astronomy by reading Ariosto, as he confessed he was, how much may we not, and do we not owe to Dante and Petrach, to Shakespeare and Milton. If the inventor of the electro telegraph,

and Fulton and Lionardo were painters, what inspiration may not have been derived from the immortal works of Raffaelle, and Michael Angelo. Whatever stirs the heart or stimulates the imagination will arouse the intellect and quicken it to action, and whoever fails to examine and estimate every thing that influences to any extent the conceptions and emotions of mankind, must fail to comprehend the problem of their progress.

It is, as I have already said, the fashion of a large and prominent modern school to decry "the wisdom of the ancients," and account it folly to investigate antiquity. But as thoroughly as the civilization of ancient times has been destroyed, and as essentially as it differed from our own, the debt we owe it is immense; and it would be impossible to trace to their sources and fully understand, ideas and institutions familiar to our daily life, and deeply effecting our feelings and our interests, if we should close our vista of the past at Alaric and his barbaric followers. The revival of letters was due in a great measure to the renewed study of the classics. From their pages our immediate ancestors learned to love liberty, and we ourselves, and our posterity in all future time may still gather from them deepest wisdom.

Hume said a century ago, that no portion of modern history was perhaps wholly new; aud Dr. Arnold has recently said that ancient history affords political lessons more applicable to our times, than any part of modern history previous to the eighteenth century. These remarks are profoundly true. So long as republics exist, the tragic story of the fall of Athens, as recited by the vigorous and eloquent Thucydides, will be looked to as the most pathetic and instructive example of the folly and insanity of faction; of the evils of ill regulated ambition; of the inevitable fate of every people who put their trust in demagogues. So long as empires shall survive, mankind may learn from Tacitus; may see with their own eyes on his unfading canvass, the servility, the profligacy, the amazing treachery and appalling wickedness which surround despotic thrones, and crush the intellect and energy of the bravest and the best. So long as conspiracies shall flourish, the record of the keen and scrutinizing

Sallust will expose their acts and crimes, and warn them of their end. So long as any government whatever shall be maintained, we must look to Aristotle for the principles on which to erect it, and the maxims by which it is to be conducted. That great philosopher having examined and analyzed the constitutions of more than a hundred and fifty commonwealths, drew from this treasury of experiments, results which enabled him to erect politics into a science. From his immortal work the whole host of modern writers on government, from Macchiavelli to Paley, and the present day, have borrowed largely; and no one can pretend to real statesmanship, who has not mastered it. The student of Aristotle will be surprised to find how few fundamental improvements have been effected in the science and practice of government, since his time. Even the compromise between wealth and population, so lately and so happily introduced into the Constitution of this State, and never, I believe, adopted any where before, was suggested and discussed by him.

In poetry, ancient genius exhausted every type of the ideal. It is impossible that Homer ever can be equalled, or that Horace can ever be surpassed. The Illiad, following Orpheus, perhaps, mounting higher, fixed the religion, and in a great measure formed the manners of the Greeks, and of the Romans after them; and its influence is felt to this day. Demosthenes and Cicero are still the unrivalled masters of eloquence, whom we strive in vain to imitate. No second Venus or Apollo has ever been produced, and these yet stand the admiration and the models of the world of art; and few ambitious piles have been reared in modern times, that have not copied from the Pantheon or the Parthenon. Even our own State House, though so unlike it in materials and exterior ornaments, exhibits the precise dimensions of the latter.

It has been well and truly said, and generally admitted, that history is but an illustration of philosophy. Action is in the main the result of thought, and to comprehend it thoroughly we must penetrate the minds of men, and analyse their workings. To trace and understand our civiliza-

tion, then, we must not only have the knowledge of the events of time, and of the deeds, and institutions, and experiments of mankind, and their ideal conceptions in poetry, and art, and oratory,—but we must study the history of Thought. Metaphysical and moral philosophy ~~has~~ have in all enlightened ages embodied the most important ideas of the present and the past, and developed the tendencies of men's minds in their varying but unremitted efforts to penetrate the future. But here as in common history, we find, apart from revelation, but little new in modern times. The philosophers of antiquity made the first charts of the human mind, and so complete were they, that all inquiries since have been mainly guided by them. The great Sensual school, which has prevailed so extensively for the last century and a half, and of which Locke is called the founder, may be referred directly to Aristotle, who first boldly taught that all our knowledge comes through the senses. All other schools that deserve the name, are based on one portion or another of the ideal philosophy of Plato. All philosophic theories, even the wildest and most delusive broodings of the imagination, if made by subtle reasoning to assume a consistent shape, are replete with interest and instruction, since they teach the illusions of the ages and the races, and exhibit to us the weakness and blindness of our nature, and the absurdities to which we are forever prone. But the two great schools of the Lyceum and Academy, were founded on imperishable elements in human nature, and until the second advent shall shed perfect light, they will, after all the wheat is separated from the chaff; after the momentous truths of Revelation and the mighty facts which time developes shall have been recorded over the acknowledged errors of philosophy, still, as they have so long done, divide between them a vast, unknown, and deeply interesting realm, through which all must travel, as all have travelled to whom have been given reason, feeling, and imagination. Whoever believes that all our ideas are derived from external sources through the senses, and all real knowledge from experiment; that God has given man the peculiar faculty of reason, as the only safe guide through the perilous paths

of life; and that to do the right thing in the right place, Το ΕΥ και ΚΑΛΩΣ is the highest human wisdom,—he is a follower of Aristotle. Whoever, on the other hand, yields himself to a belief in innate ideas; whoever confides in the exalting faith that there is "a Divinity that stirs within us," and that despite "this muddy vesture of decay that hems us in," the Author of our being holds direct communion with our souls, regulating our impulses, guiding our instincts, and infusing into us that "longing after immortality" which sustains the struggling spirit through the great Μαχη Αθανατος of the universe,—he is a disciple of Plato the divine.

The truly wise, the genuine christian, will perhaps endeavor in his practice to unite the virtues of both systems, and in conformity with the Apostolic injunction perfect his faith by works, and thus consummate the civilization of mankind.

After all that can be said for the progress of the last ten centuries—their brilliant epochs, their illustrious characters—it cannot be denied that we must still look to antiqity for the noblest deeds and grandest thoughts that illustrate the race of man. There were not only full-grown men, but giants in those days. And however the study of them may be decried, whoever would become a statesman or philosopher, a poet, an artist, an orator, or a divine; whoever would understand the human character, its capacity and weakness, its failures and its triumphs, to what it has attained and what it may accomplish yet,—must drink deep and drink often of the precious waters of those virgin fountains which were unlocked in Nature's first-known cycle. The solitary student who seeks knowledge for the love of knowledge, and luxuriates in the rare felicity of a conscious expansion of the mind and elevation of the soul, will wander among them day and night, and make the converse of his life with those mighty spirits who yet hover around the Hill of Mars, and linger in the deep shadows of the Egerian Grove.

Our civilization is the civilization of Christianity. And Christianity alone has made all the difference between the ancient and the modern mind and manners. The questions

of the deepest and most abiding interest to man in every age have been: Whence came he? why is he here? whither is he going? who was the author of creation, and what is its design? To these questions ancient philosophy could give no satisfactory answer. And the great men whose immortal ideas and achievements have come down to us, disgusted with the shallow mythology of the popular superstition, either wrought in ignorant and stern indifference to an accountability beyond the grave, or devoted their genius in its prime of strength, to unavailing efforts to solve those mysteries of Being, which God in his providence still kept concealed. But when He came who brought life and immortality to light; the real Λογος whom Socrates and Plato sought so ardently to comprehend, all was changed: Not suddenly, but gradually; so gradually that we are yet in the very midst of the change, and it requires incessant study and consummate knowledge to know precisely where we are, and what it is that each and all of us should do to fulfil the purposes of our existence. While the utilitarian values the christian dispensation chiefly because it fosters peace, and has taught us to regard as honorable and cultivate assiduously those pacific arts which promote our temporal happiness,—the truly wise, the genuine friend of progress takes a more exalted view, and reads in the momentous Revelation of a Soul to Man, a Divine Command that all his earthly pursuits and aims, his social and political organizations, shall tend to the high and glorious end of soul-developement. The ancients endeavored to develope the soul without a Revelation and without a command. If they failed, the effort was a grand one, the means employed were noble, and the examples they have set are worthy of our study, our admiration, and often of our imitation.

I have attempted to shew that we do not owe our progress in improvement exclusively to the successful cultivation of physical and experimental philosophy, as is too generally believed; and that other causes infinitely numerous, infinitely varied, and vastly influential, have contributed in just proportions to the great results of which we are now enjoying the benefit. I have glanced in a hasty and imper-

fect manner at some of these causes, with a view to make it manifest that whoever would comprehend our civilization, and so comprehend it as to be able for any wise purpose to command the present, and so far as permitted, shape the future, must sweep the whole circle of the past, and take, as Bacon himself did, "all learning for his province." And I may add, that if like that great genius, he fails to accomplish all—as fail he must, since universal empire is impossible—he may like him accomplish much, and leave a name inwrought with flowers and fruits upon that peaceful ensign of the nations, under which we are taught that all shall one day lie down in safety.

In looking around us upon the acting drama of life, we cannot but perceive how utterly contrasted these conclusions are with those by which a vast majority of the existing generations seem to be governed in their conduct. Action, not learning, appears to be the watchword of this excited age, and its beau ideal is the Practical Man. Wealth and Office are the only sources of power that are generally acknowledged, and we are strenuously taught by precept and example, from our cradle up, to clutch at gold and cater for popularity. The spirit of the age prescribes these means of improvement, of renown and happiness; and the strongest intellects, too rarely able to break from the bondage of custom and opinion, fall into the routine, and succumb beneath it. The individual of high endowments—capable of what is great—who listens to such shallow and delusive counsels, and surrenders himself to such vulgar uses, must inevitably run a career of the sorest trials and bitterest disappointments. The people who erect no higher standards, must surely—no matter what for a time may be appearances—go backwards from the goal of progress.

Action is indeed the foundation of all greatness; but it must be action, curbed, and regulated, and directed, by profound knowledge and consummate judgment. Incessant and impulsive action is fatal to man and to society. Anarchy, exhaustion, and premature decay are its legitimate and necessary consequences. It is no paradox to say that permanence—that permanence which is created by a just, and

wholesome and somewhat stringent restraint of action—is the starting point of genuine progress, national and individual, and marks every footprint in the true line of march. That too restless spirit, which, in our day, sends almost half mankind roving to and fro upon the earth, and is breeding rash and rapid change through all its borders, can scarcely be the Spirit of Progress. If God in his providence intends it to prevail, it would rather seem that He means it as the instrument for breaking up the superstructure of our present civilization as He did that of antiquity, to establish a broader and purer system in His own good time.

The practical man—who is, on the other hand, with no uncommon inconsistency held up to admiration—is the type not merely of permanence, but of absolute fixidity. The truly practical man is undoubtedly the greatest of all men. To thorough knowledge he adds well directed enterprise; and works earnestly, manfully, and hopefully for high and noble ends, with little thought of consequences to himself. He seeks no selfish reward, and immediate and personal success are no necessities to him. Socrates was a practical man, though he failed in his time to crush the Sophists, and forfeited his life by his attempt to overthrow the popular superstitions of Athens. Archimedes was a practical man, though he could not save Syracuse, and was slain while solving a problem amid the sack of the city. Galileo was a practical man, though imprisoned and persecuted for his discoveries, and compelled to renounce them. Bacon, too, was a practical man, though he fell from his high office and threw away his life in a trivial experiment. Yet all these men were regarded by most of their contemporaries as visionaries, as enthusiasts and dreamers: and so they would doubtless be regarded now, if they belonged to our era. What is generally meant by a practical man in these days —perhaps it was so in all days—is a successful man. But life is short, and truth and virtue bear fruits so slowly that great immediate results are rarely achieved without a violation of their precepts. Intrigue, corruption, and force are the usual means by which practical men on a large scale advance themselves at the expense of others, and too often

athwart the line of progress. The practical man of the more common and vulgar stamp—the genuine utilitarian—succeeds by dint of energetic selfishness. Distrustful, unfeeling and narrow, he cautiously and vigorously pursues his own ends, regardless of those of the rest of the world. He risks nothing in a cause not directly his own. While others less prudent, or more generous and brave, seek to make discoveries, to introduce improvements, and carry on the great warfare against ignorance, and prejudice, and vice,—he but follows the camps; and when a battle is fought keeps aloof from the danger, and plunders the field. A thousand generations of such men would leave the world exactly where they found it.

But the accumulation of wealth, it is thought, is unquestionable progress, and a source of real power as well as happiness to individuals and nations. Of mere riches these things are by no means true. The treasures of India have always been proverbial, yet the civilization of India has been stationary from the dawn of history. She has again and again fallen a prey to conquest, and is at length perishing miserably under a foreign yoke. China has been for ages absorbing the precious metals of the world in exchange for luxuries that have been consumed; is the most populous now, and was once the most advanced nation of the earth. But China has been conquered too, is now insulted and trampled on within her own borders by invaders from the antipodes, and has made little or no progress for thousands of years. For its individual possessor wealth will secure comfort, will command the limited service of others, may win admiration from the weak, and may purchase the homage of parasites and flatterers. But all this confers no real power and little happiness, since it scarcely compensates for the cares and anxieties which riches impose, and the envy and hostility which they engender. Wealth as an instrument in the grasp of genius, and learning, and enterprise, may be made the means of accomplishing wonders. It may give vast power, and become a most effective agent in promoting the welfare and improvement of mankind. But then all that is achieved by it must be referred directly

to the wisdom which controls and designates its uses. In this the actual power resides, and no rational happiness can be derived from any other than a wise employment of wealth.

Bacon said that "men in great places were thrice servants: servants of the State, servants of fame, and servants of the people," and moreover that "the rising into place is laborious, the standing slippery, and the downfall a regress, or an eclipse, at least." These are truths familiar to observers in all times, and perhaps more frequently exemplified in our own than any other. Yet men still continue anxious seekers after office. The noblest intellects and purest characters are still seduced by the idea that office confers power in proportion to its importance, and that by this means "the servant of fame" may take a great and glorious part in promoting the welfare of his race. This has indeed happened, and may sometimes, though rarely, happen yet. But wherever our civilization has shed its full light, public station, even if hereditary, and the possessor can be divested of it only by a revolution, enables him under ordinary circumstances, to exercise but a small portion of real power. Most of the Kings of Europe are now-a-days the merest cyphers, and hereditary legislators have become the foot-balls of the commons. And whoever holds office by the suffrage and at the sufferance of that commons, has usually undergone such drudgery, and incurred such obligations in rising into place, that he has neither strength, nor time, nor means to do more than prevent his own "downfall and eclipse," and may be esteemed most fortunate if he succeeds in that. In fact it is scarcely ever possible for him to sustain himself in office for any length of time against the storms which envious adversaries, self-seeking demagogues, and his own inevitable errors will surely raise against him, unless he seeks refuge in some faction, sinks the statesman in the partisan, and instead of controlling and leading the people to a higher stage of civilization, prostitutes himself to their caprices. But were it possible for an individual to attain high office without corruption or deception, and hold it without concessions—could he, like Macchiavelli's model patriot, consolidate all authority

in his own hands—the power he could wield, the blessings he could confer on mankind and their posterity, and the renown he might achieve for himself beyond embalming his name in the catalogue of Kings, or Presidents, or Ministers, would depend entirely upon the greatness of his genius, and the knowledge and the wisdom he had acquired by its assiduous cultivation.

Thus if we should pass in review all the pursuits of mankind, and all the ends they aim at under the instigation of their appetites and passions, or at the dictation of shallow utilitarian philosophy, we shall find that they pursue shadows and worship idols, or that whatever there is that is good and great and catholic in their deeds and purposes, depends for its accomplishment upon the intellect, and is accomplished just in proportion as that intellect is stored with knowledge. And whether we examine the present or the past, we shall find that knowledge alone is real power—"more powerful," says Bacon, "than the Will, commanding the reason, understanding, and belief," and "setting up a Throne in the spirits and souls of men." We shall find that the progress of knowledge is the only true and permanent progress of our race, and that however inventions, and discoveries, and events which change the face of human affairs, may appear to be the results of contemporary efforts or providential accidents, it is in fact the Men of Learning who lead with noiseless step the van-guard of civilization, that mark out the road over which—opened sooner or later—posterity marches; and from the abundance of their precious stores sow seed by the wayside, which spring up in due season, and produce an hundred fold; and cast bread upon the waters which is gathered after many days. The age which gives birth to the largest number of such men is always the most enlightened, and the age in which the highest reverence and most intelligent obedience is accorded to them, always advances most rapidly in the career of improvement.

And let not the ambitious aspirant to enrol himself with this illustrious band, to fill the throne which learning "setteth up in the spirits and souls of men," and wield its absolute power, be checked, however humble he may be, however

unlikely to attain wealth or office, or secure homage as a practical man or man of action, by any fear that true knowledge can be stifled, overshadowed, or compelled to involuntary barrenness. Whenever or wherever men meet to deliberate or act, the trained intellect will always master. But for the most sensitive and modest, who seek retirement, there is another and a greater resource. The public press, accessible to all, will enable him, from the depths of solitude, to speak trumpet-tongued to the four corners of the earth. No matter how he may be situated—if he has facts that will bear scrutiny, if he has thoughts that burn, if he is sure he has a call to teach—the press is a tripod from which he may give utterance to his oracles, and if there be truth in them, the world and future ages will accept it. It is not Commerce that is King, nor Manufactures, nor Cotton, nor any single Art or Science, any more than those who wear the baubles-crowns. Knowledge is Sovereign, and the Press is the royal seat on which she sits, a sceptred Monarch. From this she rules public opinion, and finally gives laws alike to prince and people,—laws framed by men of letters; by the wandering bard; by the philosopher in his grove or potico, his tower or laboratory; by the pale student in his closet. We contemplate with awe the mighty movements of the last eighty years, and we held our breath while we gazed upon the heaving human mass so lately struggling like huge Leviathan, over the broad face of Europe. What has thus stirred the world? The press. The press, which has scattered far and wide the sparks of genius, kindling as they fly. Books, Journals, Pamphlets, these are the paixhan balls—moulded often by the obscure and humble, but loaded with fiery thoughts—which have burst in the sides of every structure, political, social and religious, and shattered too often, alike the rotten and the sound. For in knowledge as in every thing else, the two great principles of Good and Evil maintain their eternal warfare "Ὁ αγων αντί παντων αγωνων"—a war amid and above all other wars.

But in the strife of knowledge, unlike other contests—victory never fails to abide with truth. And the wise and virtuous who find and use this mighty weapon, are sure of

their reward. It may not come soon. Years, ages, centuries may pass away, and the grave-stone may have crumbled above the head that should have worn the wreath. But to the eye of faith, the vision of the imperishable and inevitable halo that shall enshrine the memory is forever present, cheering and sweetening toil, and compensating for privation. And it often happens that the great and heroic mind, unnoticed by the world, buried apparently in profoundest darkness, sustained by faith, works out the grandest problems of human progress: working under broad rays of brightest light; light furnished by that inward and immortal lamp, which, when its mission upon earth has closed, is trimmed anew by angel's hands, and placed among the stars of heaven.

ERRATA.

Page 6, third line from bottom, for "*when*," read "*where*."
" 9, " " " " for "*contributed*," read "*continued*."
" 15, nineteenth line from bottom, for "*despised*," read "*dispersed*."
" 18, first line from top, for "*arts*," read "*acts*."
" 19, fifth " " " for "*have*," read "*has*."