

Human history is a record of oppositions and transformations. From time so remote that scholastic inquiry wearies in calculation, man has found in his fellow, an enemy or a deliberate antagonist. Distrustful, incredulous and relentless, humanity oftentimes seems wholly devoid of a single conscientious principle. An inherent conquering passion for exaltation seems to pervade its entire being, and he who dares contradict it, stands as at his peril.

Not alone for wealth, has this ambitious struggle been made. Invading the sacred domain of religious brotherhood, it has marred the beauty and spotless fountains of divinely established creeds. England, with threatening and menacing invectives strove to rivet upon her subjects the powerful chains of a state religion — made a forced confession, the prerogative of citizenship. Do you wonder that such infamy

should incite a revolution?

Emerging from the social stagnation of that despotic hierarchy: emanating from the feudal tendencies and centralizing instincts of that English government, the fathers of American thought inspired within themselves the hope of the establishment of a nation independent. Driven by the tyrannical onslaughts of crowned doctees, and assisted by the visionary impetus of an unrestrained freedom, the founders of our institutions, and the framers of our liberty stepped upon American soil. Nurtured in the atmosphere of temporary freedom, in them were implanted those mighty thoughts which have effected the erection of a nation.

Advancing with an almost miraculous rapidity during the colonial period, increasing in strength and stability, until that riotous revolution of '76 the people seemed to draw from their leaders, an

earnestness of purpose, and a conviction of mind and conscience, which enabled them to march triumphantly through that struggle which meant life or death to the new-born commonwealth.

Followed by a period of retrogression, the entire domain was weakened by the enormous loss of life and property. The condition seems more hazardous than before. After its immense outlay of strength and power, came a reaction more threatening than the menaces of England. The cessation of action was almost as sudden as the call to arms. The resulting satisfaction was so complete that it seemed to eradicate all thought of further progress. But the situation cannot remain thus. Necessity, with its urgent appeals, clamors for a more stable government. The turning-point in the development of political society in America is approaching. The events destined

to shape themselves in the next few years "were in a remarkable way germinal events, fraught with more tremendous alternatives of future welfare or misery: than can be comprehended. The existing confederation is too weak for the unfolding genius of the statesmen of the United Colonies. The fabric must be more securely bound and American thought is impressed into service. The consequent anxiety and excitement of the people permeate all classes of society, but the fully developed American mind, strengthened by the potent realization of the necessity of an inimitable national character, combines force with action, thought, with movement, and through the agency of that historical Federal Convention, was formed that "subtle organism" upon which has rested the prosperity of a nation. The Constitution of the United States is complete, and the government rallying its

diminished strength, stands upon the plane of true Republicanism.

The principles recognized in the Declaration of Independence, are truly legalized to the people; political freedom, and equality, before the law were made essentials to the standard of citizenship, and the "critical period in American history" is safely passed.

Under new conditions, progress is preëminent: new industries rise and flourish. Energetic spirit manifests itself in the strenuous efforts of the people to perfect a social system: education is taking its righteous exalted position, and the American school impresses its beneficent influence upon the warp and the woof of the land. A thousand churches in sublime grandeur, point to an Infinite Ruler of the universe. Ten thousand schoolhouses foster in a million minds the principles of devotion and patriotism. Man rises above his surroundings and

moves on with all his divinely intended responsibility. Growth is constant. For three-quarters of a century progress and consequent advancement are unrivalled; the varied political storms have been successfully outriddden, the financial crises have been consummately met, but new ideas are devolving upon the minds of the people.

Sentiment is becoming perceptibly weaker, conviction, fearfully stronger. Territorial bounds mark political opinions, and the opposition of views becomes the inevitable precursor of a conflict. Legislation seems purposeless, compromise, impossible, and a peaceful settlement, inconsistent with the dying principles expressed by the conflicting factions. An agreement formed in blood seems to be the ^{only} alternative. Demanded by one party, it is necessitated by the other, and questions of Liberty and Morality are to be

arbitrated by an appeal to arms. The North firmly believing in the principles of humanity, trusting in a God of justice, and relying upon the verdict of that impartial Tribunal, stands as the advocate of sacred freedom, moved by thought, — ardent, heroic, and patriotic. The South — selfishly blind, and cruelly heartless, deeming itself a competent judge of its own actions, serenely upholds licensed slavery of a nature never before equalled in human history. A remorseless conflict divests of 400,000 men, the vesture of life, but the restoration of a race of slaves marks a new era in American thought.

Another problem has been solved by force. Another devastation of power and property, and another whirlpool in American politics, confronted the Statesman's mind. The reaction again is safely met; that great interrogation in social history, has been surely and

forever answered, but the present tendencies of civilization—the results of pernicious habits and customs, are ever engaging the ability of the commonwealth.

Monopolies and combines, and the conflict of labor and capital, are receiving at the hand of retributive justice their righteous awards. The national mind is grappling with the theories and principles of self-government, and with an unselfish devotion, and a service given consciously and unreservedly, our institutions are becoming more popular, and our national character is exalting itself from its hordes of clinging parasites.

Education is becoming more liberal. The motives implanted in the character of the American youth will induce the nation to its higher and nobler impulses.

Culture is surely making possible the "brotherhood of man"

in its dignity is the brightest manifestation of divinity. Humanity bows at its tribunal, recognizing the scope of its influence and the sway of its power.

Religion has risen from contradicting creeds and doctrines to a plane of absolute belief and trusting faith. In vain have been the efforts to accomplish its overthrow. Scientists are becoming theologians; theologians are becoming scientists. Chemistry may resolve the physical universe into its elements, but what subtle art has analyzed a single human emotion? Biology may trace the descent of man, and reveal a plausible evolution, but who has found the germ of being? In the depths of every human soul, in every flower that lifts its head to heaven, in every rippling silvery stream — in every senseless inanimate clod, is a mystery far transcending scientific skill to comprehend

Let the incorruptibility of our statesmen become steadfast; let the blemishes and imperfections upon the body-politic become effaced, then may we justly become the criterion of the acts of civilized man, eminent in silent eloquence, and leader in the march of mind. The eyes of the world are upon the Anglo-Saxon, in him is recognized the exponent of liberty, the advocate of moral reform, the inaugurator of a true philanthropic spirit - the "defender of the rights of Christendom".

Politically the freest, morally the strongest, intellectually the deepest, and philosophically the mightiest, our structure shall stand, the reverts of American thought.

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