

The University of Maine

DigitalCommons@UMaine

Maine History Documents

Special Collections

1846

Might and Right: an Oration Delivered Before the Erosophian Adelphi of Waterville College, August 12, 1846

E. H. Chapin

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistory>



Part of the [History Commons](#)

This Monograph is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine History Documents by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

Archiv

Might and Right.

AN ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

EROSOPHIAN ADELPHI

OF

WATERVILLE COLLEGE,

AUGUST 12, 1846.

BY E. H. CHAPIN.

BOSTON:

ABEL TOMPKINS, CORNHILL.

MDCCCXLVI.

WATERVILLE COLLEGE, Aug. 13, 1846.

REV. E. H. CHAPIN :

DEAR SIR,—At a meeting of the General Society of the Erosophian Adelphi, on the evening of their anniversary, Aug. 12th, the undersigned were chosen a Committee to request a copy of the Oration delivered by you on that occasion, for the press.

It is believed that the publication of that Oration would not only gratify the members of the Society, but would confer a favor on many who had not an opportunity of listening to you.

In the hope that you will see fit to comply with our earnest solicitations, we remain,

Respectfully yours,

A. PULLEN,
A. GAMBLE, jr. } *Committee.*
J. H. TOWNSEND,

GENTLEMEN :

Agreeable to your request, I herewith submit my Oration to your disposal.

Respectfully,
E. H. CHAPIN.

MESSRS. A. PULLEN, A. GAMBLE, jr., J. H. TOWNSEND.

ORATION.

GENTLEMEN :

THE general current of discourse, upon an occasion like the present, is predetermined. The position of the scholar, the value of learning, the power of knowledge in every department of human life and action, are not only admitted, but central facts, to which every illustration must apply, and from which every argument takes its tone. There must, then, be a sameness in performances of the kind that you expect from me, which I would not avoid if I could. Instead of seeking some method which might divert you by its novelty, I would assist in deepening that impression which others have made—the impression that the possessor of truth, the seeker after knowledge, stands upon high and sacred ground ; that he is bound to re-present, in life and action, the great ideal which he sees and knows ; and to be, from his purer atmosphere, the conductor of celestial forces to his fellow-men.

In seeking an appropriate topic for the present occasion, I have also considered the fact that every age has its claims upon the thinker. He is, to a

certain extent, its Conscript—it will enlist him for a set purpose. It may be his wisdom, and his duty, to resist a particular tendency ; and, if he cannot turn back the stream, to pour into it a healing element. But, either by way of protest or approval, he must bear the mark of that time with which he comes in contact. He cannot wholly abstract himself. He does not occupy a point so independent of the moving mass, as to be himself unmoved. There is a power—call it the spirit of the age, or what you will—there is a power that has wrought out, and that propels, this general movement. He cannot curb it. It oversweeps his individual agency. It is a power not human, but Divine. It is the resistless drift of Providence !

What I shall say, then, at this time, will have reference to present tendencies ; to the movements which, in our day, set, or seem to set, towards a better epoch—an epoch in which freedom, love, and holiness shall be realized upon the earth. My theme is suggested in these two words—MIGHT and RIGHT. I shall speak, *First*, Of different conceptions of Might, or Power, which have been cherished by the human mind. *Second*, Of Power as it is practically developed in the present period. And, *Finally*, Of the scholar's opportunity for establishing the true idea of Power, as identical

with Truth and Love ; and, therefore, his obligation to do so.

I. Though we may reject, as fanciful and irreligious, any hypothesis of gradation, or development, which blends the great distinctions of *genera*, resolves mind into matter, or confounds God with His Laws, it is undeniable that a Divine ordinance runs through both worlds, the material and the spiritual, by which each thing, after its kind, comes gradually to perfection, from the zoophyte to the man—from the saurian epoch to the human—from the twilight of barbarism, to the open day of Christian civilization and the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

Nor can we deny another ordinance, which is inwoven with all being ; that, in proportion to the essential value and the destiny of anything, it is slow in coming to maturity. The shining insect of the pools is born and perishes in a day. The alchemy of soil and air, of wet and sunshine, is long in bringing the oak to its climax. Our mortal body, this curious casement of the soul, grows, decays, and dies, while a star, the home of many souls, beats around its orbit, and fulfils but one of its stupendous years.

If this be the law, then we must expect that

mind will be long indeed in coming to maturity. In fact, it has never reached perfection, even in the rarest individual instances. And its inexhausted capacities, its unsatisfied desires, suggest what Revelation has confirmed—that this is but its introductory state, and that it goes hence to the scope of immortal action. But if it be thus with mind individually and absolutely, there is a *mind of the race*—a social developement of mind, which may attain comparative perfection here. We may prophesy for it a condition in which it shall be more harmoniously adjusted to its sphere, better balanced in itself, and illuminated with a Diviner Wisdom.

Heathenism fixed the golden age in the past; and philosophical speculation, in our day, predicates a higher stage of civilization in the earliest epoch of humanity. But Christianity casts its broadest light upon the horizon of the future. Through its influence, we have acquired faith in a law of Progress, and believe that man, through all the ages, has been advancing, though it may be by a spiral method, in which even retrogression is ascension. That this law of developement, which obtains in the physical world, is also the law of the moral world, and that the slowness of advancement, is because of the magnitude of the result, is a belief which is the spring of the noblest efforts and the

most animating hopes. In this faith the philanthropist toils, the reformer strives, the Christian prays, the martyr bleeds. This links, by a golden clue, the past to the present, explains the enigmas of the social state, and reveals the Providence of God in history.

But this law of advancement is in nothing more manifest, than in the different conceptions of POWER, which men have entertained. Power, in one form or another, is the chief object of man's aspiration; and therefore, his highest conception of it embodies his ideal of excellence, and commands his best effort. The earliest notion of power was gross and material. The mythus and the legend are filled with dim and giant shapes, contending amid war and chaos—with prodigies of Titanic and Cyclopean effort. It was natural that this should be so. Man stood intimate with young and robust nature, ere art had softened its ruggedness, or philosophy had interpreted its mysteries. His untried senses experienced the full vigor of the elements. Their enormous forces darted and roared around him. He was constantly surprised by some new wonder, breaking from the yawning earth and the flaming mountain. But not only was he the spectator, or victim, of a mighty energy in nature. He was obliged to strive against its stubborn inertia, or its

active force—to wrestle with flood and flame—to vanquish wild beasts and to subdue forests. The most royal endowments were the stout heart and the iron sinew. The most potent sceptre was the muscular right arm. The highest power was physical power.

Nor did this idea essentially change, when weapons were substituted for the naked limbs, and skill took precedence of mere brute force. For skill was valued only as a better application of manual strength, or as furnishing more terrible agents of attack and destruction. The idea of power was extended, however, to a wider range. It was demanded, not merely by the hostilities of nature, but by the passions of men. The long reign of violence began—a reign which is not yet abolished. Power was vested in armies, in skillful generalship, in ability for war. Its rewards were the blood-bought victory, the trophies of the conqueror. Its grandest theatre was the embattled field. Its great representative was the armed warrior.

Or, if the priest shared sway with the warrior, it was because he was deemed the oracle of a mysterious fate—one intimate with the hidden powers of the universe—the agent of a capricious deity, drawing down, at will, the hot thunderbolt and the blasting plague. And this leads me to remark, that

according to man's knowledge of God, so is his conception of power. In those early ages, the most majestic utterance of God was in the awful thunder, and his justice came winged and visible in the swift lightning. This idea characterizes all heathenism, at least in its primitive meaning. We may throw over the old mythology, the veil of Grecian allegory, and the beauty of Grecian art ; but the Pantheon is filled with this idea of Divine power. It is throned in the sinewy and colossal Jupiter.

But man has conceived a higher idea of power than this. The watchers on the plains of Chaldea, the dwellers by the Ganges and the Nile, perceived behind the *order* and *beauty* of nature, an infinite Intelligence. And it must have been impressed upon them, that the Wisdom which framed yon celestial architecture, and gave to this seemingly diversified universe an arterial unity, throbbing with the pulses of a common life, is greater than nature, and stronger than any material force. But we know not the dawn of this conception. Sufficient is it that men have felt and enunciated the sublime doctrine that '*Knowledge is Power*'—that, as mind is superior to matter, so are ideas more potent and enduring than prodigies of physical might. Archimedes' thought is stronger than his lever. The

mind that planned the pyramids was more powerful than the hands that piled them. The inventors of the mariner's compass and the telescope, have outdone the Macedonian, and won new worlds. And the influence of the Cesars seems mean and narrow beside the imperial dominion of the Printing Press. Physical force is sectional, and acts in defined methods. But knowledge defies gravitation, and is not thwarted by space. It is miraculous in the wonder of its achievements, and in its independence of precedent and routine. 'Knowledge is power!' Man gains wider dominion by his intellect than by his right arm. The mustard-seed of thought is a pregnant treasury of vast results. Like the germ in Egyptian tombs, its vitality never perishes; and its fruit will spring up after it has been buried for long ages. To the superficial eye, the plain of modern history is merely an arena of battle and treaty, colonization and revolution. To the student, this modern history, so diversified and mutable, indicates more than this. Luther and Cromwell, Pilgrim-Rock and the Declaration of Independence, are the results of an invisible but mighty power,—a leveling and exalting power—a power which, with no mere Cyclopean effort, no fitful Etna-convulsion, but with silent throbbings, like some great tidal force in nature, is slowly un-

dermining all falsehood, and heaving the mass of humanity upwards. But to dwell upon the power of knowledge, intellect, thought, is to run into trite declamation. The scholar, who has wrung this power in toil and sacrifice, knows it full well. He sees it, in secret places, distilling as the dew, and dropping as the gentle rain from heaven, and every where diffusing its potent spell. He experiences its superiority over nature and brute force. He knows its conquests in the past and in the future.

But is it true, absolutely, that knowledge is power? I answer, that this proposition may stand until we find a higher principle, and then, as with all other facts, we must revise it in the light of the more general law; and set it down not as an absolute, but as a relative truth. In the broadest view, we see that knowledge is power in so much as it partakes of a moral element—in so far as it reveals and confers the Right and the Good. Thought is permanent and triumphant only by virtue of the Truth there is in it. Falsehood may accomplish its work. Error may live for a season. But they are not everlasting. That which survives and never dies, and triumphs in the end, is the right, the true only. In the quaint and forcible words of another, ‘One strong thing I have found here below; the

just thing, the true thing. My friend, if thou hadst all the artillery of Woolwich trundling at thy back in support of an unjust thing ; and infinite bonfires visibly waiting ahead of thee, to blaze centuries long for thy victory in behalf of it—I would advise thee to call halt, to fling down thy baton, and say
 * * * “ No ! ” * * * * It is the right and noble alone that will have victory in this struggle : the rest is wholly an obstruction, a postponement, and fearful imperilment of the victory. * * The heaviest will reach the centre.’*

We are led, then, to look for a higher power than mere knowledge, even as knowledge is higher than mere brute force. I have said that the clearer man’s knowledge of God, the more exalted and spiritual will be his conception of power. If we adopt this criterion—and shall we assume a lower?—then we must decide that the highest power in the universe, is moral power ; for the Being who buoys up and sustains all things is a moral Being. Once this great truth was revealed to men. They saw the highest Power embodied in a sacred Personality. It shamed the brawny grandeur of heathen Jove, and paled the intellectual glory of Plato. God, whose power is but symbolized in these material forces, the procession of whose

* Carlyle.

thought is the order and beauty of the universe, is in himself Love, which is the synonyme of all righteousness. And he who would climb to the highest knowledge, and share something of this absolute power, must ascend not by intellectual formulas, but by rectitude of heart and affinity of spirit. The mightiest power in the universe is not dynamic but moral, not that which acts upon physical elements, but upon mind, exalting it to its highest state, and expanding it to its richest culture—a power which operates through conscience, in the dictates of the Just ; through the reason, as the True ; through the affections as the Good. ‘We can be subdued,’ says Coleridge, ‘by that alone which is analogous in kind to that by which we subdue—therefore by the invisible powers of our nature, whose immediate presence is disclosed to our inner sense, and only as the symbols and language of which all shapes and modifications of matter become formidable to us.’ Thus is man moved—thus is the universe moved. Before this, all other power is inefficient, and must give way. This is the only absolute power ; and, in the last analysis, Might and Right are one !

II. But Might and Right are not yet united in human action, generally. And with this remark I

pass from a recital of the different conceptions of power which men have entertained, to notice the practical developement of power, which appears in the present period.

Human conceptions must, of course, fore-run human conduct, and ages may separate the ideal from the practical. Else, there would be no Prophets, who, standing above the present, discern a brighter promise in the future. There would be no Reformers, whose labors are a protest against the real and an effort for the ideal. There would be no Martyrs uttering truths which their own time is not prepared to receive, and which will not be received, until the sons shall build the sepulchres of those whom their fathers slew. If the true idea of power was gradually conceived, then, according to that law of progress to which we have referred, the race must advance slowly to its realization. I shall not attempt to portray the different stages of that advancement. I would dwell briefly upon the highest practical realization of power at the present day. We are in a transition-epoch—a Middle-age—with a grosser past behind us, and a better future before. The power of the present period is MONEY POWER, the power of wealth and enterprise, the power of knowledge to some degree, though not of knowledge applied to the noblest results.

The period of Money-Power! If we trace its history, and consider attentively its features, we shall see that, in many respects, it is a great and glorious epoch. It is the most complete and conspicuous, though by no means the most excellent development, of those great principles which, from the fifteenth century until now, have agitated and changed the face of the world. It sprung into activity with the Printing-Press and the Reformation; with mighty efforts for civil and religious freedom. It is so involved with these as to appear partly a cause, partly an effect. We cannot tell when these movements commenced; nay, they were always ripening in the womb of time; but we know that there was a period, when they broke forth as it were with a chrystalizing or, rather, up-breaking movement, rending new fissures in the monotonous plain of history; and this is a vein which darted farther and opened more conspicuously than the rest, which advance more slowly. It is more directly the offspring of maritime enterprize, and the rise of towns. It broke down the barriers of Feudalism, that huge strong-hold of the idea that physical might makes right—that the armed right-hand should rule. It abolished its moated exclusiveness, and bridged a highway for a better epoch than its own. It is not all a period of prosaic utilitarian-

ism. It has its romance. Chivalry had grown rusty and uncouth in its armor, and the young and robust power that assailed it, was the champion of humanity, in its day. It was a grand crisis when the industrial classes arose, when the purse was cast into the scale, and weighed down the sword, when the Merchant said to King and Baron—'lo ! I have a broader domain than you. The sea, and the four quarters of the globe are mine. Behold my white-winged servants ! They come and go, night and day, they girdle the world, they fan the hot simoom, and the icy blast, they cross the line, they double the Cape ; they bring the smoothest silks, the richest spices, the gold and the ivory, and pour them at my feet.' It was a great epoch, when he could say, 'I too am a King ! Here is a dominion which came to me not by inheritance, nor by the sword ; a bloodless but potent dominion, earned by toiling brain and valiant enterprize. I too must make laws, and share in government. I must have a man's portion in the earth, not the exclusive heritage of King or Priest, but the gift of God to all men.'

And who can adequately describe the triumphs of Labor, urged by this potent spell of money ? It has extorted the secrets of the universe, and trained its powers into a myriad forms of use and beauty.

From the bosom of the old creation, it has developed a new, the creation of industry and of art. It has been its task and its glory to overcome obstacles. Mountains have been levelled and vallies exalted before it. It has broken the rocky soil into fertile glebes, it has crowned the hill-tops with fruit and verdure, and bound around the very feet of ocean ridges of golden corn. Up from sunless and hoary deeps, up from the shapeless quarry, it drags its spotless marbles, and rears its palaces of pomp. It tears the stubborn metals from the bowels of the globe, and makes them ductile to its will. It marches steadily on, over the swelling flood, and through the mountain clefts. It fans its way through the winds of ocean, tramples its hoarse surges, and mingles them with flakes of fire. Civilization follows in its path. It achieves grander victories, it weaves more durable trophies, it holds wider sway, than the conqueror. His name becomes tainted, and his monuments crumble ; but Labor converts his red battle-fields into gardens, and erects monuments significant of better things. It rides in a chariot driven by the wind. It writes with the lightning. It sits crowned as a queen in a thousand cities, and sends up its roar of triumph from a million wheels. It glistens in the fabrics of the loom, it rings and sparkles from the steely

hammer, it glows in shapes of beauty, it speaks in words of power, it makes the sinewy arm strong with liberty, the poor man's heart rich with content, and crowns the swarthy and sweaty brow with honor, and dignity, and peace.

This, then, is one glorious result of the Money-power. It has projected those great achievements of free labor and industrial enterprize, which have beautified the earth, revealed and applied new forces, opened new departments of activity, meliorated the condition and elevated the nature of man.

But this is, by no means, the highest good which it has wrought. It has been the chief occasion of those splendid revolutions in the last two centuries, which have effected the progress of humanity. It has been almost the only power strong enough to cope with and overcome feudal despotism. I do not call it the great principle of these movements, but it was the medium through which great principles acted,—it made an issue for great principles. Unjust exaction, pressing upon property, drove to the last resort that spirit which repels wrong. Ship-money and Tea-tax were the immediate agents of Marston Moor and Bunker Hill. And, however lofty the aspirations with which theorists have gone into the strife, it will be found that the most practical and irritating motive of all

that have precipitated our modern revolutions, has been taxation—an attack upon the Money-power.

But more than this. The Money-power has been an agent of Peace. Increasing the acquaintance-ship and multiplying the mutual dependencies of nations, it has also quickened their sympathies—it has ‘grappled them together with hooks of steel.’ Extending its fibres of interest around the globe, it shrinks with extreme sensitiveness from aught that would rupture them. It has made this motive of interest more powerful than a false chivalry. It has forts upon every mill-stream and garrisons in every factory, which are dedicated to peace ; and its ships are freighted with something more potent than munitions of war. For the Money-power has the upper hand in human affairs. Let us ascribe to it, then, all the good that belongs to it. It indicates human progress. It is an advance upon the ages of physical might. It is a manifestation of the power of knowledge, though, as I said before, not of knowledge applied to its highest uses. It shows us that thought, and skill, and shrewdness, are stronger than sinews, or sword, or sceptre. The power of Watt, and Fulton, and Whitney, is mightier than the power of Ajax and Achilles, Cœur de Lion, or Simon de Montfort.

But it is not the highest power. It is not the

identity of Might and Right. There is another side to this picture of the Money-power. Reformers are copious upon the abuses of which it is the root and main-spring. If we consider it attentively, we shall see that, although it has wrought much good, it is a two-edged instrumentality. Has it propelled that enterprize which has explored the earth, and tamed the elements, and developed countless forms of use and beauty? So, by these very pursuits, has it sensualized man, and, obscuring every high ideal, closed him in with an iron materialism. It has excited in him an insatiable lust for gain, which has overleaped every moral restraint, and violated every right. It has preserved peace, when peace has been its interest; but, for the same reason, it has been the prime agent of strife. Indeed, its synonyme is—‘the sinews of war.’ And it has caused the most abominable wars; for they have been urged in the light of better conceptions. There was something noble in old battle. A gallant spirit throbbed in the bosom, and generous blood gushed from the veins, when sinews were braced against equal sinews, when Hector met Achilles, and it was fair fight, and the best had it. But there is not even the grandeur of evil in the wars of the Money-power. When a nation, cradled in the light of civilization, with all the

amenities of culture around it ; nurtured by martyrs whose blood has sealed the truth ; taught by prophets whose kindling vision has made the future beautiful ; baptized into the holiest influences of religion—when such a nation, smitten with avarice, throws off its purple and fine linen, and becomes a mighty man of war against some poor and timid people, because of their soil or their treasure, the conflict which it wages is not only wicked but mean, and differs from old battle as Milton's Satan differs from Mephistopheles.

The Money-power, upon the issue of taxation, has striven for liberty. Does it strive for liberty now ? I will not drive the question into specifications too delicate for the present occasion, but I ask, are 'the sinews of war' also the sinews of freedom ? Is the Money-power leagued on the side of the oppressed, with that great force which throbbed in Hampden's heart, and spoke from Sidney's scaffold, and rocked Faneuil Hall ?

The Money-power !—let some of its works bear witness to it. They do testify, in ancient blood-marks on the soil of Peru, in fresh bones that lie drifted in the jungles of India. They shriek from the middle-passage of the slave-ship, they groan in cane and rice fields ; and sharp-faced men, and brutalized women, and dwarfed children, in mines

and factories, say—‘ We, too, could speak with our white lips, but we dare not !’

Gentlemen, do not accuse me of over-heat, or fanaticism. I have made no home-specifications, let my words suggest what they may. In the prosecution of my design, I have simply demonstrated that we have not yet attained the highest practical manifestation of power. In human conduct, Might is not yet Right. The Money-power cannot effect this identity ; because, as I have said, it sensualizes man. It wins him to embody his highest ideal of excellence in a material good. Dazzled by this, he has no spiritual prospect. To him, there is no reality in this doctrine of abstract right. It is all fine talk. It is poetry. He does not know that, in so styling it, he renders it the highest compliment ; for truth, in its most original expression, is always lyrical. It is the prime mark of insanity, to treat the unreal as if it were actual ; therefore he who sacrifices his interest to the right, is, in his eyes, foolish and fanatical. He is unconscious that *he* is the monomaniac, the one-idea man—that there are other realities than those that he knows. But he sees as far as he can. He is deficient, not in motive, but in original power. Inwardly smitten by sensuality, he says and does only the sensual. We must explain a good deal of human conduct in

this way. Many things are done which are not violations of individual conscience, but come from a lack of moral spontaneity.

A young man goes into the world, with every fresh and generous feeling. His notions of rectitude are high—his integrity unimpaired. He takes his place in life. He becomes engaged in business. How soon he deviates, not from conventional, but from absolute right ! How soon it is evident that interest has warped him ! And yet, there is no apparent struggle in his bosom with the dictates of conscience. Every thing is done as a cool, calm matter of course. It is evident that love of money has worn away, or petrified, those delicate fibres which once were so quick in his bosom. He may have yielded gradually—but he yielded. It was a potent, all-absorbing charm that mastered him. And, now, his is not a wilful shutting of the eyes, but narrowness and dryness of vision.

Another enters the political arena. His theory is based upon the grandest premises. His heart throbs with humane sentiment. Liberty, equality, the rights of man, are staple themes of his eloquence. But how soon the patriot has become a partizan,—the philanthropist a demagogue ! How crookedly his legislation compares with his profession ! We must explain this, by considering the

centre from which he acts, the elevation of his view, and the scope of his horizon. We must consider how thick the Money-power has breathed its spell upon him ; and not interpret his career as a direct, conscious, wilful violation of right.

This, then, is the effect of the Money-power upon individual character. It sensualizes it, makes a material excellence the highest ideal, makes gain more desirable than goodness, interest a quicker motive than principle, and our rich men our first men. And if so with individuals, as an inevitable consequence so is it with communities, with nations. A people whose vision is narrowed to a consideration of mere material good, and whose action is from this spring, will not and cannot identify Might with Right.

But there is another, or, rather, there is a more radical cause of the separation of the Money-power from the right. The Money-power is nourished by and nourishes *selfishness* ; which is the master-sin of the universe, the life of all wrong. Selfishness ! which says—‘ Mine !’ ‘ Mine !’ ‘ My will,’ ‘ My interest,’ ‘ My possession.’ It can never go beyond the limits of the individual and the sectional. It is absorbent and not diffusive, planetary and not heliacal. In fine, there is no principle in it ; and though it may furnish occasion for, it never can

do a work of principle. It is mercenary and mean—acts from the motives of punishment and reward—never cherishes the grand conception of doing right for righteousness' sake. Christianity, the great Reform movement, aimed directly at this central obstacle to human advancement. It rebuked it by the sublime exhibition of self-sacrifice ; and in its Author's life and law, enunciated the only element in which Might and Right become identical—Love ! Love, over-sweeping all selfish considerations, and conquering that narrow, sectional, personal sentiment which has kindled all wrong between man and man. ' If each man loved all men,' says Schiller, ' then every individual would possess the world.' And beautifully has he contrasted Love and Selfishness. ' Egoism,' says he, ' erects its centre in itself ; Love plants it beyond itself, in the axis of the eternal All. Love intends unity : Egoism is solitude. Love is the co-ruling citizen of a flourishing republic ; egoism, a despot in a desolate creation. Egoism sows for gratitude ; Love is willing to reap ingratitude. Love bestows, Egoism lends—the same in the sight of the judging truth, whether it lends on the enjoyment of the present moment, or on the prospect of a martyr-crown—the same whether the interest falls in this life or in the other.' Involved with this Egoism

then, unbaptized by this Love, the Money-power cannot identify Might with the Right.

In saying, however, that the present is marked by the supremacy of the Money-power, let me not be unjust to our time. This is the most prominent, but it is, by no means, the only element that stirs in it. I have said that it sprung into activity with other great forces. These too have been working in human affairs, but more slowly. The Money-power has been both their ally and their adversary. But aided by it, or struggling with it, they have been transmitted with accelerated force, and mingle now with the most active movements of the age. They form its grandest and brightest characteristics. They have injected their trap-rock into this stern granite, and by increasing agitation portend the breaking of a new and better epoch.

III. I come, finally, to consider the Scholar's opportunity for affecting the practical identity of Might and Right, and, therefore, his obligation to do so.

It may be an impression somewhat prevalent, that the Scholar is, by virtue of his vocation, conservative. He communes much with the best life of the Past. Its shapes of beauty, its words of power, its glorious thoughts that never die, pos-

sess his soul. With a strange, indefinable affection, he yearns to the old. His spirit is steeped in its haunted and mellow air. He ponders its forms of antique grandeur and mysterious sympathy with nature. He loves to linger in its dim and architectural aisles. Its books open to him with a quaint and rich expression. He reverences the severe simplicity of its bards ; the sterling gold of its solid thinkers. He must dread, of all things, a period of convulsion, when there is a rush for equilibrium, for then the past is decried, and unclean hands are laid, with indiscriminate iconoclasm, upon the things he cherishes. It would seem, too, that he is ill-suited to an age of reform, with its fresh paint and gilding. Its new methods appear superficial, monotonous, and bald to him. He likes that anything, however good in itself, should have the flavor of ripeness about it.

But more than this. Lifted in his atmosphere of intellectual communion, he realizes, comparatively, but little the social wrongs that fester around him. He sees how evil comes and passes, how good and true things endure and prevail by a kind of quietism, as the result of their intrinsic force, and not by agitation ; and he feels that quietness becomes him. Let those of more gorge roar and fret, and the reformer grow delirious in his day. It be-

comes the thinker to clothe himself with a serener aspect. He knows that no essential thing perishes, and that all else is but vesture—the form of yesterday differing only as a form from that of to-day. Art and Literature flourish in all climates, under the ægis of the Republic and the shadow of the Throne. The things he lives by and chiefly values never perish. The true, the good, out of all changes, through all ages, with grand, eternal sweep, flow on

‘From’ their ‘mysterious urn, a sacred stream,
In whose calm depths the beautiful and pure
Alone are mirrored ; which, though shapes of ill
May hover round its surface, glides in light
And takes no shadow from them.’

I reply to all this—and so the scholar is conservative ; not, however, from timid dread of evil, from scepticism as to the result of truth, but because of his affinity with the good. But this affinity makes him a reformer also. If his scholarship be broad and clear, he may venerate but cannot idolize the past. He sees that its shapes of beauty, its utterances of truth, are incomplete without a good that is to come. The excellence of the past is suggestive of excellence in the future, and if, from his communion with it, he derives its true force, he will receive its good not as a tradition

but as an inspiration—he will evince his reverence for it by seeking all good ; and become not a worshipper of the old, but a toiler for the new and the better.

Nor will he limit learning to an acquaintance with Attic beauty and Roman strength, quaint legend and venerable thought. For him, to-day, nature uncloses its wondrous volume whose mystic leaves are filled with ‘syllables of *un*-recorded time ;’ whose ‘Medals of Creation’ are far more delicate than shapes of Grecian art ; whose hieroglyphics make Egyptian symbols young. For him, too, it reveals new marvels breaking in light far out on the shoreless firmament, and opening fresh in the nebula and the flower. And thus does it suggest the truth that the old constantly develops the new, and the new is ever a hint of progress, and of higher revelation.

For him, too, is this book of Humanity—this varied Legend—this grand and solemn History—opening now, we trust, in broader and brighter light—fitted for his pity, his love, and his hope. Poorly furnished indeed, is that Scholar who has not studied these volumes. ‘It is a vanity,’ says old Fuller, ‘to persuade the world one hath much learning, by getting a great library. As soon shall I believe that every one is valiant by having a well-

furnished armory. I guess good house-keeping by the smoking, not by the number of the tunnels, as knowing that many of them, built merely for uniformity, are without chimneys, and more without fires. Once a dunce void of learning, but full of books, floated a libraryless scholar with these words : *Salve doctor sine libris !* But the next day the scholar coming into this jeerer's study, crowded with books ; *Salvete libri*, saith he, "*Sine doctore.*" But, surely, if as Fuller says, it is a meagre thing to have books without learning, there is but little true learning where nature and humanity have been neglected. Cumbrous and useless is that knowledge which is unbaptized by love and sympathy, which is merely the lore of memory, which has petrified the spontaneous powers of the soul into formulas, and dwarfed it into a poor parasite of classic propriety and routine. True learning should make the soul free, liberal, and, under God, self-competent ; but, if it have this mean and deadening effect, the jealousies and jeers of the ignorant are well-founded. And, least of all men, should the scholar with nervous timidity and alarmed conservatism shrink from strife and from effort. Of all men, he should be the strongest and the bravest. Of all men, he is fitted to unite the fragments of the good which lie strewn through the

ages. Of all men, he should expect and bring on the jubilant future. Of all men, he should make Might and Right identical—for

First—he stands nearest the truth—he communes with it originally; and the more intimate he is with its nature, the more confidence will he have in it. He says with Milton—‘Who knows not that truth is strong; next to the Almighty?’ He sees its perpetuity. Therefore, he cannot fear its conflict with error, but knows that for this is it made manifest; and that wherever it comes there will be ‘confused noise, and garments rolled in blood.’ The worst scepticism in our age is not that of expressed doubt or open denial, but that which in the name of faith and zeal, would hush objection and check controversy, and is so fearful of the present as to distrust the future. Or, sick of the boastful radicalism and noisy cant of the reformer, and scared at the irreverent criticism of the rationalist, *this* scepticism retires into the dim aisles of the past, and, in its cloistered sanctities, seeks divorce from the tumult and responsibility of the time. It becomes the true scholar—which means not the mere man of letters, but the ripe thinker—to set the truth in a better light than this, to shame the unmanly fears of these professed friends; to say again, with Milton—‘Though all the winds of doc-

trine are let loose upon the earth, so Truth be in the field we do injuriously * * * * to mis-doubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple ; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter ?' The thinker fears no more the failure of the truth, than he fears the failure of God's own cisterns from which the winds blow. It may do for the ignorant to be timid, whom a fallacy can tangle and a false statement blind ; but it is for you, O Scholar, to see how in the intense heat of trial every film of falsehood melts away from truth, and the severe analysis leaves it alone, in all the beauty of its proportion, in all the harmony of its relations. By his knowledge of the Truth then, and his confidence in its excellence, the scholar becomes loyal to it, and, as a work of allegiance strives for its establishment ; and, therefore, he becomes a seeker for the better epoch—the identity of Might and Right.

The scholar is an anticipator, too—one ahead of his age ; and, therefore, legitimately, a Reformer. Others seek truth at second-hand. It is his privilege to be a discoverer, an explorer, to drink at the springs of thought, to detect the signs of new knowledge. It is true, he is liable thus to become a mere Idealist, a sower and reaper of dreams and shadows. But in the highest sense of the term

'Idealist,' it is a great privilege to be one. To shed upon men an intellectual light, to elevate them by force of thought, is the noblest of all missions. Honor to the idealists, whether philosophers, or poets. They have improved us by mingling with our daily pursuits, great and transcendent conceptions. They have thrown around our sensual life the grandeur of a better, and drawn us up from contacts with the temporal and the selfish, to communion with beauty, truth, and goodness. They do a great part of the work that is done. There must be ideas before action. The whole natural world is but the embodiment of ideas. The spade in the laborer's hand, the plough-share in the furrow was once an idea. Once the steam-ship was only an airy, bodiless thing, sailing through seas of thought in Fulton's mind. The idealist dies but his conception lives, in physical agencies that change the face of nature, in moral movements that bless and advance humanity. In saying, then, that the Scholar, by virtue of his first-hand acquaintance with truth, is an idealist, one who, by his conceptions, anticipates the action of his time, I ascribe to him the highest qualification for the work of identifying Might with Right.

But, *again* ; the Scholar is peculiarly qualified for this work, because he is familiar with *principles*—he distinguishes them from mere *system*. I will say

but a word or two upon this point. It is the tendency of the best efforts to grow formal ; to seek the accomplishment of a work by a set method, without reference to other facts, to new occasions, or individual peculiarities. The grand movement, which starts so full and free, as if it would comprehend and accomplish its idea, soon becomes vitrified and fixed. Protestantism sets out with a noble theory of religious freedom ; but soon it is interpreted to mean religious freedom in a certain way. The Democrat says ' Equality ;' but it is an equality defined and adjusted. The Reformer says—' let us work for human good, and the removal of all wrong ;' but, by and by, it is—' work in my way, wear my colors, join my association, say what I say ;' and this advocate of human brotherhood becomes most bitter and intolerant at anything like individual independence. The philanthropy of the age, I am sorry to say, begins to fall into cant, and will, therefore, most surely excite reaction. The illustration which a celebrated thinker has given of this tendency to system, is familiar to you —' Gimlet, plumb-line, and philosopher take a lateral direction—the thunder turns out to be a surface-phenomenon, and the wedge a rocket.' It is for the scholar to discern and apply great principles, fluent as the essences of nature, and comprehensive as her laws ; and thus, by adaptation and adjust-

ment, by liberal and profound methods, to consummate the union of power with truth and love.

But, *lastly*, let me say, that the scholar can best accomplish this grand and final work, because of the intimate connection between intellectual and moral culture, between the springs of knowledge and of righteousness. Say what we will, he cannot be the true scholar, the true thinker, who is not a moral, a spiritual man. I cannot close without dwelling upon this prime truth. Of this, then, let us be assured ; in order that the mind may go forth calmly to the investigation of great truths, and fix its attention upon them with serene and comprehensive survey ; in order that it may hold the balance which weighs contending probabilities, firmly yet delicately ; in order that it may be qualified for analysis and construction ; there must be freedom from all moral disturbance, there must be self-discipline, controlled by the highest ideal of Right. Although bad men may exhibit splendid talents, and genius may accompany great vices, only virtue is favorable to true intellectual culture. Sometimes the light of that genius may shine out with marvellous splendor, and, like lightning, leaping all laborious points of induction, it may reveal at one flash some grand and remote truth. Or a man may gather, at will, from his capacious memory, the clusters of a ripe scholar-ship ; with won-

derful logic he may 'make the worse appear the better reason,' exhibit the smartness of a wrestler in controversy, the skill of an anatomist in criticism, the force of a strong man armed in tearing down and scattering ; but, after all, he cannot be the truly great man, the man of broad and lofty views, acquainted with truth in its inner life and meaning, one who seeks it for its intrinsic excellence, who grasps the relations of the universe, and hears its harmony, and goes up from knowledge to power, and from power to spiritual exaltation and triumph. That which biases from goodness, violates conscience, and perverts the will, cannot be favorable to true intellectual culture. Only by sympathy with truth and excellence, can we climb to the knowledge of them. It is true, intellectually, that only 'the pure in heart shall see God.'

And what is intellectual culture worth, without the moral. To what end is it pursued, why do we strive after knowledge in the outward universe, or the world of mind ? What advantage is it to learn the operations of nature, to win the secrets of the planet and the flower ? What to us this endless procession of phenomena, this ebb and flow of action ? What to us this subtle analysis, that detects the common law of nature in its meanest atom ; this sublime induction that rises from the sands of the sea-shore to the infinitude of worlds,

themselves but golden sands on the shores of eternity, inductive evidences of Him around whose throne they burn and worship ? What to us this knowledge that rends open the graves of a million years, and reveals to us the secrets of embalmed epochs—strange forms of life, that have no use, only as they indicate, in every rigid filament, the Divine Designer, and, through ascending strata, suggest the law of progress, and the development of a beneficent purpose ? What to us the use of history, poetry, of all the forms of knowledge ; except through largeness of the intellectual vision to purify the heart, and to bring us to spiritual perfection ? Without this, knowledge is worse than an abstraction, and, in such a case, we can conceive of a splendid intellect only as we can conceive of a star, drifting through space, without adaptation, without an orbit, without a centripetal law !

In the very nature of things, then, the true scholar is one whose mental supremacy is based upon moral excellence, whose intellectual force is inwoven with spiritual life, in whose own soul Might and Right are one. He then, of all men, is fitted with the enthusiasm of knowledge and of love, to make these one in the practical action of humanity at large. Therefore there rests upon him the most stringent obligation to do so. Loving the moral ideal which he sees, he will labor to extend it ; reverencing that

supreme Right in his own soul, he cannot resist the claims of humanity. In whatever sphere he is called upon to act, this will be his prime object—to overcome the wrong, to establish the Good and True, to bring on the new epoch when the highest practical power shall be moral power.

And let him not think that such an age is always to be ideal. He may not see its consummation, but he may do much to hasten it. Let the knowledge, let the intellectual power of the present time, declare themselves for the right, and they must hasten that consummation. That epoch will come. The Poet has already beheld it in celestial allegory, when he saw—

‘ As in a dream sublime
The balance in the hand of Time,
O’er East and West its beam impended ;
And day, with all its hours of light,
Was slowly sinking out of sight,
While, opposite, the scale of night
Silently with the stars ascended.

* * * * *

I saw, with its celestial keys,
Its chords of air, its frets of fire,
The Samian’s great Æolian lyre,
Rising through all its seven-fold bars,
From earth unto the fixed stars.
And, through the dewy atmosphere,
Not only could I see, but hear,
Its wondrous and harmonious strings,
In sweet vibration, sphere by sphere,
From Dian’s circle light and near,
Onward to vaster and wider rings,
Where, chanting through his beard of snows,
Majestic, mournful, Saturn goes,
And down the sunless realms of space,
Reverberates the thunder of his bass.

* * * * *

Begirt with many a blazing star,
Stood the giant Algebar

Orion, hunter of the beast !
 His sword hung gleaming by his side,
 And, on his arm, the lion's hide
 Scattered across the midnight air
 The golden radiance of its hair.

The moon was pallid, but not faint,
 And beautiful as some fair saint,
 Serenely moving on her way
 In hours of trial and dismay.

* * * * *

Thus moving on, with silent pace
 And triumph in her sweet, pale face,
 She reached the station of Orion.
 Aghast he stood in strange alarm !
 And suddenly from his outstretched arm
 Down fell the red skin of the lion
 Into the river at his feet.
 His mighty club no longer beat
 The forehead of the bull ; but he
 Reeled as of yore beside the sea,
 When, blinded by Enopion,
 He sought the blacksmith at his forge,
 And, climbing up the mountain gorge,
 Fixed his blank eyes upon the sun.

Then, through the silence overhead,
 An angel with a trumpet said,
 ' Forevermore, forevermore,
 The reign of violence is o'er !'
 And, like an instrument that flings
 Its music on another's strings,
 The trumpet of the angel cast
 Upon the heavenly lyre its blast,
 And on from sphere to sphere the words
 Re-echoed down the burning chords,—
 ' Forevermore, forevermore,
 The reign of violence is o'er !' '* *

We may not be gifted with so transcendent an illustration, but we, too, see the great truth which it symbolizes—the supremacy of moral power over brute force, its sure advancement, and its mild victory. We see it in that law of human progress which runs through all God's universe. We see it in that application of means, through the course of

* Orion—by Longfellow.

Chapin, Edwin Hubbell, 1814 - 1880.
might and right...

Archiv

ages and the labors of the great and good, which were not meant to be wasted. We see it in the features of the present age, the power which is elevating man above mechanism, the humane ideas, the increasing confidence in moral force, the tendencies to the universal. We see it, above all, in that Christianity, which is 'the highest fact in the rights of man,' whose work is the work of advancement, and whose grand triumph is in the future. And from earth, as from heaven, rises music—

'The sweet, sad music of humanity;'

growing more inspiring though, and breaking into wider and wider circles, as we listen. Heard in the clank of the laborer's toil, in the sundering of the bondman's fetters, in the pause that follows the crash of falling institutions, in the song that rises from fields of harvest growing in the old furrows of violence and blood, breaking out in waste places, murmuring underneath all thrones. The night is waning, the day is at hand. Happy the toiling and watchful scholar, who, in his position, stands nearest the morning, and, as a gifted oracle, shall, with trumpet-blast, fling upon the quivering hearts that wait to hear it, the prelude to that grand, out-bursting chorus, which shall proclaim that Might and Right are one!