

"Our Times and the Men for the Times"

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# ADDRESS

OF

## BEVERLEY B. MUNFORD,

OF VIRGINIA,

BEFORE THE

ASSOCIATION OF THE ALUMNI OF THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETEENTH  
ANNIVERSARY COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES OF THAT INSTITUTION.

JULY 4th 1889

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RICHMOND

J. W. FERGUSON & SON, PRINTERS.

1889

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY,  
WILLIAMSBURG, VA., July 4th, 1889.

BEVERLEY B. MUNFORD, Esq., Richmond, Va.

*Dear Sir:*—We have the honor to inform you, that at a meeting of the Association of the Alumni of the College of William and Mary this day held, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

“*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Association be tendered the Hon. Beverley B. Munford, for his address this day delivered; and that the President appoint a committee of three to inform Mr. Munford of the adoption of this resolution and to request at his hands, a copy of said address for publication by the Association.”

Whereupon the President, General William B. Taliaferro appointed the undersigned committee to carry out the above resolution.

We take great pleasure in communicating the adoption of the foregoing resolution; and request you to furnish us a copy of the address therein referred to for publication by the Association.

With sentiments of high regard, we are,

Very respectfully, your obedient servants,

JAMES N. STUBBS,  
JOSEPH V. BIDGOOD,  
ROBERT M. HUGHES.  
*Committee.*

RICHMOND, VA., July 6th, 1889.

*Hon. James N. Stubbs, Col. Joseph V. Bidgood,  
and Robert M. Hughes, Esq., Committee.*

*Gentlemen*:—Your favor of the 4th instant this day received. In accordance with the resolution of the Association of the Alumni of the College of William and Mary therein communicated, I send herewith a copy of the address alluded to. Be kind enough to convey to the Association my acknowledgment of the compliment thus shown me.

Yours very truly,

BEVERLEY B. MUNFORD.

## ADDRESS.

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*Mr. President, Fellow Members of the Association of the  
Alumni of the College of William and Mary,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen*:—My first words upon this occasion must be expressions of acknowledgment and gratitude to the Alumni of this institution, for the compliment tendered me by their call to be present and voice the sentiments appropriate to this glad hour in which amid the joys of fraternal re-union we celebrate the revival of this our venerable Alma Mater.

I need not express in more extended phrase, with what feelings of gratitude and congratulation I accept this call and greet this day.

COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY.

Desolated by the ravages of war and the vicissitudes of change, this illustrious institution which for centuries had lent instruction and inspiration to our people, stood with her portals closed and the lights gone out upon her altars. The calm voice of philosophy and letters was hushed within her walls; the devotees of science no longer thronged her courts; and men, with mournful interest, compared the glory of her past with the desolation of her present. Her children, scattered far and wide, still regarded her with sincerest sentiments of filial love, and hopefully looked forward to the time when she should once more resume her place among the proudest universities of this land.

That revival so earnestly hoped for has at length been most auspiciously accomplished.

Rejoicing in this glad day, we, her children, have come to celebrate its dawn; and here to-day, amid these classic scenes, fragrant with associations, which recall the memories of our college days and the aspirations of early manhood, we will take counsel, so that happily by unity of effort, this, her present prosperity, may be but verily the harbinger of a still more glorious future.

Standing here to-day, my mind instinctively wanders back along the track of her past, and recalls the great names and great events with which her history is inseparably linked.

Her very name suggests the memories of a great revolution and the triumphs which our English fore-fathers achieved over prerogative and king for the liberty and sovereignty of the citizen.

The cycle of another century found her the centre of a still greater revolution; a revolution the outgrowth of ideas which were destined not alone to achieve political independence for this nation, but to win with each succeeding age, the wide world over, new and greater triumphs for the rights of man. It was here at her shrine, that her great son, Jefferson, imbibed those principles which bodied forth in his immortal declaration and statute for religious freedom, turned the current of the ages and aroused the oppressed of every clime to new life with the glorious gospel of the equality of man and civil and religious liberty.

In every great movement, whether in the realm of thought or the domain of science or heroic action by "field and flood," which has marked our country's history, the influence of her teachings may be witnessed in the illustrious parts borne by those who have gone out from her walls. The story which recounts the achievements of her sons would indeed be a just portrayal of many of the proudest pages in our people's past—a past fruitful of inspiration for the present and of guidance amid the trials and triumphs which are to come.

As these thoughts, suggested by the scenes and associations about me, come thronging to my mind, I feel as if I stood at a point where the ebb tide of the past just touched the margin.

of the present from which the full flood of our future with its mighty flow swept onward into the years. The past is only fruitful in that it affords inspiration and guidance for the work at hand; the future with all its issues is largely fixed by the present and the character of those who control its forces. And thus, as the scenes and associations about me have aroused these reflections, so by the very antithesis of the ideas—past and future—I am led to select as my theme for this occasion, the sentiment, "*Our Times and the Men for the Times.*"

There are occasions when temerity must be accounted a virtue, and to such I can alone lay claim in venturing to discuss a subject of such vast comprehension and to portray with my puny hand, some of the salient features of this great age.

The subject suggests themes as boundless as the universe and as variant as the mind of man, but my endeavor shall be to marshal some few reflections which come to me touching the social, intellectual and spiritual characteristics of the age; and the equipment of mind and heart necessary to appreciate and fulfil its glorious privileges and weighty responsibilities.

#### SOCIOLOGY.

There is no more cheering sign of the times than the widespread interest evinced in all the subjects and problems covered by the generic term of sociology.

The significance of the question asked by the creature of the Creator in the very dawn of the ages, "Am I my brother's keeper?" has, with the revolving years, more and more impressed the mind and conscience of humanity.

The applause which greeted the Roman actor when in the Forum, he proclaimed, "I am a man, and naught which concerns humanity is foreign to me," has reverberated through all the ages, and myriad of hearts to-day re-echo the sentiment.

The reciprocal rights and obligations of man to his fellow, the amelioration of distress, the reclamation from crime, the spread of prosperity and the diffusion of knowledge; these are first among the problems which enlist the best thought and energy of our times.

## SPIRIT OF ALTRUISM.

Not only does the earnest consideration of these questions distinguish the age and give promise of the future, but in no era of the world's history was the spirit of altruism so strongly developed as in this our day.

The world is dotted with noble institutions—monuments of philanthropy. Schools for the ignorant, asylums for the insane, homes for the orphan, shelter for the aged, refugees for the fallen. From no quarter of the globe can the cry come telling of suffering and want that the world's great heart is not touched and a golden stream of sympathy and sustenance go out to its relief.

The instances of individual munificence which each day occur are as multitudinous as the stars, and scarcely a home can be found darkened by poverty and disease to which the sweet angel of charity does not find her way bearing offerings in her hands and "healing on her wings."

The age of chivalry may have passed, but the era of noble sentiments and kindly deeds survives, and knights clad, it may be, in homely attire, still have their place among us who hesitate not in the performance of feats of as noble heroism as ever glowed upon the pages of romance and song.

The day does not pass without recording some heroic deed—some noble life sacrificed upon the altar of duty.

The engineer who, with his hand upon the throttle, meets death at his post, regarding supremely the safety of those committed to his care; the fireman who, from flame and smoke, rescues the perishing; the weather-beaten toiler of the sea, who leaves not his place upon the bridge of the sinking ship until all are saved; the noble army of those who go to the relief of plague-stricken cities and wage the hand-to-hand conflict with pestilence and death; these are the heroes who dignify our times and exalt humanity, arousing within us a supreme appreciation of its god-like attributes. With all its myriad voices—by acts of love, sympathy, self-denial, and duty—humanity proclaims its onward and upward advance, giving promise of the dawn of that glorious era in which every aspi-

ration and effort shall spring from a realization of the sublime sentiment of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

## WEALTH AND EDUCATION.

Foremost among the subjects included under the term sociology are those which concern the wealth and education of the people.

Our age is oft arraigned for its materialism and its worship of Mammon, but if the accumulation of wealth occasions alarm in the minds of the thoughtful, we may at least take comfort in the reflection that an appreciation of the dangers of plutocracy is equally widespread, and that no problems so much engage the best thought of our times as the proper application of wealth and its just diffusion among those whose industry has brought it into being.

I am not one of that class who vociferously decry wealth, and view with unmitigated alarm its accumulation. While history records instances of nations whose prestige and power have been destroyed, and the vigor and virtue of whose people sapped by its corrupting influence, yet it is equally true that it is the necessary precursor of all those acquisitions which lend power and stability to the government and culture and refinement to the people.

I find it in every age and clime the patron of art, the founder of universities, the builder of homes, and the inspiration of myriad enterprises which bless mankind.

## BLESSINGS OF WEALTH.

If asked for one of the crowning glories of this age I would point to its wealth and the advantages, educational and social, thus brought to the lives and homes of the people. I do not mean the abnormal wealth of millionaires—they had their prototypes in the favored few of the past ages, whose piled up accumulations were monuments of the poverty and degradation of the masses, whose unrequited toil brought them into being—but I speak of that widely-diffused prosperity, which,



in our day, carries to the humblest advantages and blessings of which the former ages of the world furnish no parallel.

The enterprise and inventive genius of our times has not only made possible as never before the creation of wealth, but has filled the homes of the masses with comforts and appliances of which their fathers in the long ago never knew or dreamed.

With all the evidences of our national greatness spread before us; our incomparable system of government; our attainments in the realms of science and of thought; our mammoth enterprises and the prowess of our arms by land and sea, there is no evidence of our greatness so real, none to which we can point with more of patriotic pride—than the spectacle of the myriad homes crowned with a reasonable measure of prosperity, which, like the stars in the firmament, dot the broad bosom of this fair land.

The peasant-bard of Old Scotland has beautifully said:

“ To make a bonny fireside clime,  
For we’ ans’ and wife—  
That’s the true pathos and sublime  
Of human life.”

With less of poesy, but equal truth, I can say, that a land filled with contented homes, whose hearthstones are brightened with the smile of plenty, and the lives of whose inmates are touched by refining influences, is a spectacle to which the nation can point with more pride and satisfaction than the grandest victories which ever crowned her arms by land or sea.

Every prosperous and contented home is a safeguard against anarchy and communism, and a standard high uplifted for the maintenance of law and order. Elements of unrest and discontent find their birthplaces amid scenes of poverty; for men harassed by privation are not prone to the cultivation of patriotic sentiments, nor are the virtues of society and religion fostered in homes whose apartments are darkened by wretchedness and want.

#### DANGERS OF ABNORMAL AGGREGATION.

But while I appreciate the blessings of wealth, yet I am none the less sensible that its abnormal aggregation in the hands of the few is also to be witnessed, that vast numbers of our fellow-men at our very doors are cursed with poverty and dependency, and that the chasm which divides the rich from the poor is broad, and, in many instances, seemingly impassable.

The inequalities which mark the conditions of life are no new developments peculiar to our time. Abnormal wealth, side by side with squalid poverty, arrogant power and wretched dependency—these are some of the infirmities of the former ages which still unhappily have their place among us. So long as men are differently endowed by nature with attributes of forethought, industry and economy, so long will vast divergence exist in their conditions.

The laborer is worthy of his hire, and whatever a man creates by brain or muscle in avocations open alike to all, and to which the government or prerogative attaches no peculiar privilege, is veritably his own, and the strong arm of the law and the protecting ægis of public opinion should preserve to him inviolate this, the product of his energies. Of such accumulations there can be legitimately no adverse criticism—against wealth thus acquired public sentiment cannot lift its voice. But it is the accumulations in the hands of the few, brought about by unjust and unequal laws, demanded by capital and enacted through its influence; it is against the vast treasures extorted from the masses by trusts and combinations; it is against the millions acquired by the sale to the ignorant of stocks and securities for the issue of which there was no legitimate basis; it is against the plethoric earnings of great corporations which, by the absorption of rival organizations, are enabled to levy what is verily tribute upon the people; it is against all forms of wealth gathered by those who have not strewn, and the systems and conditions which foster its aggregation, that we may well lift a menacing voice—that the states

men and thinkers of our time may well regard with apprehension.

I know that from time immemorial it has been the disposition of the public to find in the administration of the government the cause of every ill which afflicts the body politic; and while I have oft quoted approvingly the sentiment of Doctor Johnson,

“ How small of all that human hearts endure,  
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure,”

yet I am verily persuaded that in the unhealthy accumulations of wealth, the growth of monopoly and the arrogant power of great corporations, which mark our day and afflict our land, there has been no influence so potential as the legislation, unjust and unequal in its effects upon the people, which has been incorporated upon the statute books of this nation. Under our system of tariff tax laws and statutes regulating the financial policy of the government, the opportunities of wealth to accumulate wealth have been multiplied ten-fold, while the task of the toiling masses to provide food and raiment has become proportionately more and more difficult. Never, in the history of the world, have such colossal fortunes sprung so quickly into being as here in our own midst, while if the condition of the surrounding masses is not one of comparative poverty and dependency must be ascribed, in great measure, to the peculiar advantages which our country, with its free institutions and boundless expanse of virgin soil, presents to the people. When we remember that this sparsely settled and fruitful land is just in the dawn of its national existence, the conditions of extreme poverty and great wealth now to be witnessed among its citizens may well give us pause and tinge with apprehension every occasion of our rejoicing over our growing prosperity and material development.

Much that is wrong may be righted, many evils anticipated may be turned to good.

In such an hour we need men of comprehensive thought, brave hearts, and clean hands, who will sturdily stand for the right, and with conscientious effort seek to solve the problems which to-day confront us.

To equalize the opportunities for acquisition; to secure to the laborer his full share in the wealth produced; to prevent capital from obtaining more than its just proportion of the profit, and to estop aggregated wealth by sheer force of its power, as such, from dominating the land—for the right solution of these problems, and to carry forward to successful issue every movement looking to such an end—the conditions demand the best thought and energies of our times.

#### PLUTOCRACY.

There is another phase of the corrupting influence of wealth to which I desire to allude. I speak of that spirit of subserviency which it engenders in the lives of not a few, and the consequent disposition to accord to men, regardless of their moral or intellectual attainments, position and influence measured by their possessions.

I have little toleration for any form of aristocracy save that which comes as the reward of pure lives and intellectual attainments through the long years of a people's history; but for an aristocracy of wealth there is no word in my vocabulary too strong with which to express my aversion; no phrase too alarming in which to depict the degradation to a people which follows close upon the spirit which ushers in the era of plutocracy.

Many there are who measure their worth by their wealth—many more there are who, like moths about the candle, are attracted by its glare, and, to the insult of their manhood, pay homage at its shrine, and so to-day, as during the ages gone, in church and State, in society and the marts of trade, men, because of their wealth, are elevated to places of influence and power who are utterly unfitted in character and attainments for the assumption of such important trusts. Sentiments of honor, of love for country and fellow-man, are thrust aside in the mad race for gain and the power which its possession assures. Access to high station and prominence in all the affairs of the time seem often only to be attained through its influ-



ence, and men, not a few in the bitterness of their spirit, utter the pessimistic sentiment of the poet,

“ Every door is barred with gold,  
And opens but to golden keys.”

To the legitimate leaders of public opinion—men whose vigor of thought and purity of aspiration have not been debased by the worship of Mammon—the great teachers who stand in the pulpit and the forum, or speak through the press, we must look for brave words and high thoughts to crush this spirit and furnish nobler types of manhood for inspiration and example than those which spring as the flower and fruit of conditions in which such sentiments hold sway.

Let it ever be kept before the young, let it ever be impressed upon the people, that while wealth is a legitimate object of pursuit because of the power for good which its possession confers, yet that neither its acquisition nor its loss can make or mar a man. That honor, courage, reverence and goodness, these are the attributes which dignify character—these are the realities of man's being. That the position and prominence conferred by wealth can never accord to life that moral greatness which alone lifts man above his fellow. “That pygmies are pygmies still, though perched on Alps,” and that in all this universe of ours, except its great Creator, there is naught save intellect to which man should bow, and naught save goodness to which he should make obeisance.

#### POPULAR EDUCATION.

Closely allied with wealth and of even greater importance in promoting the well being of a people, stands popular education. Pre-eminent among the characteristics of our times are the unequal advantages offered for the education of the masses and the wide spread interest evinced in noting its effects upon the characters of the people. The time has passed in which it is necessary to urge the importance of education and the duty of the State to so equip its people, that they may intelligently appreciate the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship.

In all the relations of life, whether to the government or society, or to self and home, man needs the helpful aids and refining influences which come with education.

Wise and just laws can only exist in that commonwealth where light and virtue influence the sources of power, while the heart of man cannot long remain pure when his mind is steeped in darkness.

But while we may extol the beneficent effects of education and rejoice in its wide diffusion, yet let us never forget that that system which only carries letters and science to the recipient is unworthy of the name. That the bare acquisition of scholastic knowledge, can never endow a people with those attributes which lend moral greatness to their lives. A land may be ablaze with the splendor of its achievements in the realms of art, science, literature and philosophy, and yet thereby only the better reveal the moral degradation of its people. Not only the mental, but the moral and religious elements of man's being should be developed. With each draught of knowledge, we should indoctrinate the recipient with faith in Divinity and clear conceptions of right. An infidel armed with education is of far greater danger to society than had this great weapon never been placed in his hands, while socialists and communists are but thereby the better equipped for the propagation of their disturbing heresies. Better that man should never taste of the tree of intellectual knowledge, if without faith in God and correct moral principles for his guidance, he should thereby only be led the farther off into the realms of error, and perchance by the glamour of his own attainments, lead others from the peaceful moorings of their faith and trust.

#### REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

Inseparably linked with popular education, is the spirit of representative government. If our age is distinguished for its wide diffusion of knowledge, it has also witnessed, as never before, the glorious fruition of such a condition in the assertion of man by his sovereignty and the triumph of the princi-

ples upon which rests the great fabric of representative government.

Mr. Webster has well said, "Popular governments and general education, acting and re-acting, mutually producing and reproducing each other, are the mighty agencies which in our days appear to be exciting, stimulating and changing civilized societies. Man is found everywhere demanding participation in government, and he will not be refused, and he demands knowledge as necessary to self-government. On the basis of these two principles—liberty and knowledge—our own American system rests."

It would be indeed difficult to declare whether Knowledge first lit her torch at the Altar of Liberty, or whether with the dawn of learning came for the blessing of the nations the glorious conception of liberty regulated by law.

The spirit of liberty is indeed the mightiest offspring and ally of popular education, and this spirit to-day pervades as never before the nations of the globe. Wherever light goes to direct the aspirations of a people, there springs the conception of man's equality and inherent right to have a voice in all which affects his interests.

With each new victory achieved it demands more light, that its blessings may be better appreciated and its triumphs more firmly secured. Like an emanation from Divinity, it will not return void, for it possesses the power to assert its mastery and to convince men of the justice of its claims.

Thrones and principalities may for a time impede its progress; the power and arrogance of caste and prejudice—the results of centuries of wrong—may stay its onward march, but linked with enlightenment and justice its ultimate triumph is assured;

"Thou hast great allies;  
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,  
And love, and man's unconquerable mind."

#### INTELLECTUAL CHARACTERISTICS.

I turn now to the intellectual characteristics of our times, and if asked for one of its distinguishing features and crowning

glories, I would point to the evidences which everywhere abound of the growing tendency to accord to mind a mastery over matter—to intellectual a predominance over physical forces.

Looking back along the ages, we can but be impressed with the important part which mere physical force, either in the individual or the nation, has exerted in determining their respective destinies. "Might makes right" was an aphorism which obtained in almost every land, and the power of the aggressor to maintain his cause, determined more than aught else whether the claim should be asserted. Great wars have been waged, empires dismembered, nations enslaved and crimes against life, liberty, and property committed, for which there was no higher justification than that the party of aggression possessed the physical power to bring victory to his arms.

The spectacle to-day presented by the nations of the Old World with their mighty armies, equipped with all the appliances of war, yet fearful to strike a blow, is at once an illustration of the practices which formerly obtained and of the spirit which is to-day seeking a mastery.

With some qualification we may with safety aver, that there is not to-day a nation, the lives of whose people and the administration of whose government is affected by the enlightened sentiments of our times, which could arbitrarily declare war, with the hope of permanent success, unless the cause for hostility commended itself as just and adequate at the great bar of the world's opinion.

Every measure before the German Reichstag or French Chamber of Deputies; every movement projected by the British Ministry, or Czar of Russia, is watched and weighed by the considerate thought and statesmanship of the world. And enterprises of conquest, policies of administration, reforms in laws and customs, all these are most potentially affected by the power of public sentiment which itself is fixed by the intellectual and religious forces of the age.

The growing disposition of nations to settle by arbitrament great international controversies, illustrates the spirit whose potency in our times I am endeavoring to depict. In these

courts of arbitration, considerations of right and law determine questions which were aforesaid settled by a resort to arms.

Ideas and principles which can maintain their supremacy at the bar of the world's intellectual assize, are to-day, as never before, controlling the policies of nations, while the calm voice of judicial decision settles the controversies of kings.

Awed by the majesty of this power, force yields place to law; and the disturbing clamor of factional nations is hushed in the "Parliament of man, The Federation of the world."

#### POSITION OF WOMAN.

Another evidence of the intellectual force of which I speak, is the position of woman to-day as compared with her lot in the ages gone.

As the world under the influence of enlightenment and Christianity, has moved onward and upward, so every mile stone in that march marks a new era in the elevation of woman.

With the diffusion of knowledge, and the consequent power of ideas to maintain their inherent equities against the opinions and practices of the past, questions involving her intellectual and social status and opportunities for usefulness and independence, are receiving a consideration which could never have been secured under the conditions which formerly existed.

Honor for her person, respect for her wishes, acknowledgment of her rights—these are sentiments which more and more impress the thought and conscience of our times.

To develop the intellectual as well as the sentimental attributes of her being, and to rescue her from that dependency which her contracted environments so often entail, these are sentiments, the promotion of which each day receives new and enthusiastic advocates.

Many there are, I know, who will return to these intimations the suggestion that in all this universe of ours, there is not a higher or holier mission, than that accorded woman as the

maker and inspiration of home; the mother and preceptress of immortal souls.

Of home, with all its sweet associations and blessed influences, I can only speak in sentiments of reverence and of love. I know that to the "angel of the house," more than ought else, home is indebted for its purity and peace; and it is there that many of the noblest elements of her being find surroundings most congenial for their complete development.

But it is not to mar the sweet sentiments which surround the idea of home nor to unfit woman for its gentle offices, that we would stimulate her to intellectual development and accord her broader fields of aspiration and endeavor.

To the gentle influences which spring from a loving heart, there may well be added the strength which comes from mental and spiritual attainments.

The world's history, with its thrilling narrative of great events; the sweet sentiments of poets and sages; the memorials of those whose lives incite to noble aspirations; the refining influences of music and of art; the triumphs of science and the onward march of thought—of all this the glorious heritage of the age, she should be made the partaker.

The dignity and nobility of woman's character, and her power to bless the lives of those about her, will indeed be heightened, when to the charms of her being is added the strength which comes with learning and reflection; while the sweet sentiments of reverence and love which she awakens in the strongest and best of men, will not be destroyed by her elevation to her rightful place as the peer and complement of man.

In a recent work, entitled "Civilization and Progress," Mr. John Beattie Crozier, says: "The relation of superior and inferior, founded on power on the one hand and submission on the other, is fatal to all moral grandeur and magnanimity. It is when men are free and independent, that they disclose the finest qualities of the mind and heart. Then it is that love and reverence spring spontaneously like flowers, and the infinite range and subtlety of affinity and personal attraction have free and unimpeded play." "I have noticed," says the same

author, "that lovers never afterwards exhibit to the same degree the beautiful irredescence of thought and fancy, the generous and lofty enthusiasm as when, unshackled and free, they approached each other like stars moving regally in their respective spheres. But the knot once tied and the one, as alas, too often happens, becomes the mere appendage of the other, then domination begins and recrimination and brutal caprice enter with all their train."

When we look beyond home, and to that class for whom neither its joys or its duties have any relation and to many of whom the question comes with cruel distinctness, what is my mission, and wherewithal can I live, we still more appreciate the propriety of the sentiments of which I speak.

A place to fill and opportunities to prepare for a successful performance of its duties—fields of endeavor more commensurate with the capacity of her being—a voice in determining questions which affect her rights and interest—these are concessions which the enlightened sentiment of the times is beginning to concede her.

There has been no influence so potential in the development of this sentiment, as that intellectual force which enables ideas and principles vitalised with the genius of truth to dominate the mind and thus direct the policy of the world.

Sentimental considerations could never have accomplished these changes. The sublimest conceptions of chivalry which ever touched a poet's fancy or inspired to knightly deeds, could never have effectually righted the wrong. The very idea of chivalry pre-supposes a condition of dependency and the need of protection; in an era of equality and under the reign of law, the weak stand side by side with the strong, because other considerations than those of physical power or extraneous advantage, determine their relations and guarantee their rights.

It is only in that condition of the world's thought in which the strong arm of might yields to the calm voice of right and the justice of existing relations is tried not by the fact of their antiquity or the romantic glamour with which they may be invested, but by the cold ethics of right and reason, that pro-

blems affecting those in dependency, will receive at the hands of those in power impartial consideration.

It is to the growing potency of this spirit that the advance already attained may be attributed; while to a future dominated by such sentiments, we may with confidence look for still more beneficent changes.

#### TRIUMPHS OF SCIENCE.

In the incomparable triumphs of science which mark our times and the mastery which man has achieved over nature, we may witness another illustration of the intellectual predominance of which I speak.

To one standing at the beginning of the nineteenth century and regarding the discoveries and achievements which marked that era, the thought may well have come, that here science would pause in her onward march, and that to the triumphs of the past, the future could make but few additions. Such, however, is not the testimony of experience. With each new discovery, with every advance achieved, man's unquenchable thirst for knowledge has urged on and on the search for light, and to day, as never before, he is demanding of nature a revelation of the secrets of her life and laws.

Phenomena, before which the human intellect in former ages stood in superstitious awe have been stripped of their mysterious draperies and laid bare to the mind of man; while forces which were thought beyond the grasp of human ken, have been caught and bridled, and made his ministering servants.

As man unravels the secrets of nature, learns her laws, and appreciates her powers, there comes to him a fuller realization of the God-like attributes of his being—of the supremacy of his intellectual over the physical forces about him.

It is ignorance that stands shivering at the storm—regarding its destructive fury as the sign of offended Deity: it is science which proclaims that great laws—the statutes of Infinity—govern these forces. It is ignorance which looks not beyond the physical phenomena; it is science which questions their origin and discerns the hand of Divinity in the land—in the sea—in the stars.

Mr. Buckle, in his great work on the History of Civilization in England, has admirably pictured the influence which, in the earlier ages of the world, natural phenomena had upon the intellectual condition of a people. If their land was studded with towering mountains, upon whose crests the storm-clouds broke; if illimitable wastes of wilderness marked its confines; if along its coasts the North Sea dashed its angry tides, or flaming volcanoes lit its skies; then the imaginative and superstitious elements of such a people would be unduly inflamed while their understanding would be awed by the majesty of the physical forces about them. If, however, their land was touched with scenes of quiet beauty, closely environed by calm seas and fair skies—in such a land man would quickly appreciate his supremacy over the physical forces around him, and his intellect would be stimulated to development.

But the era in which natural phenomena predominates their intellectual beings has passed, and with it the superstitious awe thereby awakened in the minds of men.

To-day the storm-cloud rolling in peerless majesty, the ocean with its stirring concourse of winds and waves—all stimulate and enthuse the intellectual elements of his being; while to him who looks out upon the landscape, tinged with the soft glow of the setting sun, or up to the quiet stars, revolving on in all their steadfast beauty, there comes a sense of exquisite peace only touched perchance by that vague feeling of longing which is the desire of the human for communion with the great Spirit whose handiwork they are.

Conscious of his supremacy, there has been quickened within man a bold and inquisitive spirit which brooks no defeat, but with unceasing aggression demands more light.

Up the rugged sides of the mount of scientific investigation his tireless march is made, and though "clouds and thick darkness" may still rest upon its summit, yet the light which falls about his footsteps from the triumphs already achieved shows the path and urges him on.

#### THOUGHT AND LETTERS.

Not only in the domain of science, but in all the realm of thought, the age can point to trophies of its triumphs.

The time has not yet come to declare how the writers and thinkers of the nineteenth century shall stand in comparison with those who have gone before. Only the hand of the ages can winnow the wheat from the tares in the field of letters; only the concurring judgment of generations can measure the merit of intellects and declare who shall be accorded a place "among the immortals." But when we recall the illustrious company of those who, in every department of thought, have dignified our times, we may well feel assured that the future will accord to this age a foremost place among those eras of the world distinguished for their intellectual achievements.

Not only have our times been dignified with profound thinkers and noble souls, whose sentiments are inspirations to sanctify and to bless, but the company of those who read their works and whose lives are touched by the ideals there portrayed is illimitable in its numbers.

The age is not only one of writers, but of readers, and the man who to-day declares a sentiment has for his auditors the inhabitants of continents who, with a capacity unapproached by the masses in former ages, will weigh his thoughts and determine their merit.

#### RELIGIOUS CHARACTERISTICS.

The age is thrilling with intellectual activity, and from every quarter the devotees in the Temple of Letters may be seen pressing forward bearing their offerings to the shrine.

I turn now to the religious characteristics of the age, and of all its striking phenomena there are none which may so well arouse our interest as those which mark the religious thought and aspiration of our times.

The student of history cannot fail to have remarked that in every age and clime great changes in the social and intellectual status of a people have been accompanied by a corresponding awakening in their religious life and sentiments.

During the ages in which unquestioning loyalty to the king, acknowledgment of superiors, reverence for tradition and veneration for the past, marked the lives of the people, their minds moved on in the same grooves of thought and accepted tacitly, if not intensely, the same religious beliefs as their fathers.

But hand in hand with the sentiments which destroyed the sense of dependency and reverence for tradition and the past, came the spirit of enquiry and the disposition to demand proof for the authenticity of that which was accepted aforesaid with unquestioning confidence.

Mr. Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, has well said: "The self-assertion of liberty, the leveling of democracy, the dissecting-knife of criticism, the economical revolutions which reduce the relations of classes to simple contracts, the agglomeration of population, and the facility of locomotion, which severed so many ancient ties, are all incompatible with the type of virtue which existed before the power of tradition was broken, and when the chastity of faith was yet unstained."

History cannot point to an age marked by such great changes in the social and intellectual characteristics of the world as the century just passed.

The spirit of democracy has destroyed the sense of personal dependency and weakened the sentiments of reverence for civil and religious superiors; the diffusion of knowledge has aroused that intellectual skepticism which investigates rather than accepts, while the manifold improvements which the age has brought to the conditions of the people strip the past of much of its vaunted perfection.

Amid such mighty changes as these, the awakening of a bold and inquisitive spirit in regard to all questions of accepted faith and canons of spiritual authority might well have been expected.

On every hand the foundations of old beliefs are being scrutinized; systems of faith, consecrated by the ages, are being tried anew, and the authenticity of revelations which, for centuries, have stood unquestioned, are subjected to every test

which literary research and the crucible of science can bring to bear upon them.

And thus our age, which has witnessed the unparalleled triumphs of Christianity, and is itself a monument of its power for good, is no less distinguished for its skepticism and the zeal with which men are questioning the divine origin of this great religion.

The dangers to the faith and morals of a people amid such conditions may be readily appreciated.

Men who have accepted as a whole this revelation will stumble and fall when convinced of the error of any of its parts; souls of little faith and less thought, amid the confusion of the conflict, will wander off into a helpless agnosticism, while many of the safeguards which have protected the morals of the people will fall with their tottering faith.

Never was the call so urgent for men of pure lives and heaven-born zeal to exemplify the beneficent power of Christianity—never was the obligation more imperative upon those who bear its standards to maintain, with every weapon which the triumphs of the age affords, its authenticity upon every field of scientific and intellectual combat.

But these conditions which seem so fraught with present danger are not unmixed with elements of hope and assurances of ultimate good.

#### SKEPTICISM AND PROGRESS.

Honest skepticism, and the search for light which it engenders, is a sign of awakening to the paramount importance of spiritual concerns.

Every liberation which Christianity has secured from unreasonable dogma, every deliverance which it has achieved from the errors and superstitions which the bigotry of man or the ignorance of the ages have heaped upon it, has been effected through the efforts of men regarded as skeptics in their time, and whose investigations were denounced as destructive of the purity and beneficence of our holy religion.

We know that the track of history is lined with the wrecks



of exploded theories and cast off dogmas, whose acceptance was once regarded as essential to salvation.

A spirit of enquiry and desire for light are no more indicative of the decadence of genuine religion than is the disposition to accept all that bears the semblance of authority an assurance of spiritual life.

The torpidity which marked the Middle Ages could hardly be cited as an evidence of faith, and a consequent triumph of Christianity, but the skepticism of Luther, which broke the long night, and the results which followed, are oft pointed to as among the most potential factors in the propagation of Christianity and the elevation of man.

The power of truth to evolve itself, no matter what may be its environments, and to ultimately triumph, has been demonstrated on a thousand fields of religious, scientific and intellectual controversy; and though the fires of the conflict may have destroyed many conceptions which were mistaken by the multitude at the time for truth itself, yet it in fact but stripped her form of alien trappings and left her free and untrammelled in all her fair proportions.

#### SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

Another blessing which will ultimately come to the cause of Christianity from the conditions of which I speak, is the dissipation of the popular conception that science is at war with revealed truth, and that intellectuality and religious faith cannot walk agreed.

For the prevalence of these opinions both the friends and the enemies of Christianity are in a measure responsible.

With laudable but mistaken zeal the exponents of Christianity have oft closed the doors upon scientific research and stifled the promptings to investigation, lest their imperfect revelations, being at variance with the system of orthodox truth, might weaken the faith of its followers; while many so-called scientists have prosecuted their labors, not with a heaven-inspired zeal to know the truth, but rather to store their arsenals with supposed weapons with which to assault the citadel of re-

ligion—these considerations have engendered the misconceptions before alluded to.

The spirit of the times is at variance with all such disposition.

Many of the foremost champions of religion to-day welcome honest enquirers seeking the proof of its divine origin; while the imputation that it shuns investigation is dissipated by their willingness to discuss its claims under the full light of the literary research and scientific achievements with which the age abounds.

Not less significant is the changed attitude of science itself. In every department to-day its worthiest disciples are animated not so much by the spirit of controversy as by a laudable desire to find and proclaim the truth; while scientists not a few, convinced of the divine origin of the Christian religion, are finding in all the phenomena with which the universe abounds confirmation of its authenticity.

Of the ultimate and well-attested results of physical science the friends of religion need have no fear.

The shifting theories and changed conclusions which mark its past, show that its true voice has not yet been heard. In the appointed time all will be made plain. Surely God is at unity with Himself, and His power and design as declared in His works will harmonize with His attributes and purposes as portrayed on the pages of revelation when both are properly interpreted.

#### INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT.

Equally fallacious is the prevalent idea that intellectuality and spiritual development cannot go hand in hand. In man's complex nature a veritable trinity of elements, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, compose his being.

The full and harmonious development of these attributes is among the highest impulses of his nature and a duty enjoined by Heaven.

The practices which formerly prevailed sought to develop faith and spiritual life by commanding unquestioning obedience of the intellect, or by estranging the one from the other.

The domains of these attributes may be separate, but the debasement of the intellectual is not essential to the elevation of the spiritual man.

Christianity portrays man with all his great attributes fully developed, each performing its allotted part and moving with unquestioned sovereignty in its respective sphere. Their estrangement may be of sin, but their harmonious development is of God.

#### CHRISTIANITY AND AGNOSTICISM.

Nor need the Christian religion fear the issue of the great battle now being waged between its champions and the forces of infidelity and agnosticism.

It is but a repetition of what the centuries have witnessed. In no age of the world was there such an intelligent appreciation among the people of the importance of spiritual concerns, nor were the adherents of Christianity ever so numerous or so imbued with its vital precepts as in this our day.

Men may listen for a time to the criticisms and theories of clever conversationalists, but they will never follow long the leadership of men, who, while they may pull down the fabric of a faith, have no power to rebuild a temple of fairer proportions.

The ceaseless aggression of Christianity can never be borne back by a spirit of bare negation, while its power to satisfy the longings of the human heart assures its continued supremacy over that helpless agnosticism which begins in doubt and ends in darkness.

The genius of Christianity will not permit men once aroused to the immortal attributes of their being to stand unmoved when their very souls within them are crying out, in the language of Carlyle, "Whence, and, Oh Heavens! Whither?"

Mr. Lecky has well said, "The first desire of the human heart is to find something on which to lean."

Amid the trials and disappointments of mortal life, humanity turns with unspeakable restfulness to that great religion which tells of a Being, infinite in wisdom and love, whose "everlasting arms" are about the children of men, and

from whose presence alone their comes to their troubled lives that "peace which passeth all understanding."

No system of earthly philosophy has ever satisfied the longing of the soul for rest—the desire of the human for communion with God.

And so to-day, as in the ages gone, the heart of man clings instinctively to the sentiment voiced by the great poet-teacher of the eighteenth century :

"But leave me unabated trust in Thee  
And let thy favor to the end of life,  
Inspire me with ability to seek.  
Repose and hope among eternal things—  
Father of heaven and earth! and I am rich,  
And will possess my portion in content."

#### CONCLUSION.

Thus, Mr. President, as best as my humble abilities would permit, have I endeavored to portray some of the salient features of this great age.

The moral of my message is to arouse a loftier appreciation of its glorious privileges and weighty responsibilities.

All the triumphs which mark the history of our race—the mighty achievements which have crowned their efforts in every domain dignified by the genius, the intellect and the enterprise of man—is the heritage bequeathed by the past to this our age.

Upon such a vantage ground, the manhood of to-day steps forward to accept and fulfill the high behests imposed by these imperial times.

The voices which come from the past—the inspirations which spring from the present—the possibilities which crown the future, may well arouse noble aspirations and confirm the resolve to measure in life and achievement up to the requirements of their high criterion.

If the incomparable opportunities which surround him fill his soul with solemn distrustfulness of his powers, yet the transcendent advantages of the age—the mighty trend of its elevating and progressive forces—should strengthen his faith and urge him on.

## THE GREAT EXEMPLAR.

The civilizations of the past can furnish no prototype of what should be the ripe product of these our times. The loftiest conception of human philosophy will not avail as a pattern for the manhood of this age—endowed with all the triumphs heretofore achieved, and guided by the light of divine revelation which falls with ever-increasing brightness upon his ascending path.

Alone against the disc of the ages there looms a majestic figure; solitary in his august greatness and unique in the perfection of his attributes: " Mightiest among the holy and holiest among the mighty," in Him are blended all the elements which constitute the perfect man.

The wisdom which comes from the past, the inspiration which springs from the future, turn to the aspiring manhood of the present seeking an Exemplar, and with authoritative voice declare, " See the Christ stand !"