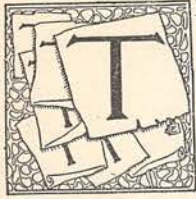


## EDUCATION AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

“There is nothing great in this world but man, and nothing great in man but mind.”—*Sir William Hamilton.*



HERE is a certain exhilaration of thought in America — compounded perhaps of our dry, stimulating air, our sense of achievement as a nation, the rapidity and multiplicity of our inventions, and the increase of wealth — that induces the belief that we are on the true highway of progress, and that nothing can prevent us from reaching the goal of social perfection. If the average American sentiment on this subject were reduced to a single voice and note, it would be a whoop of satisfaction at having emerged from the woods in which humanity has hitherto wandered, and of confident exultation in having found a straight path in an open country to the celestial city — whatever the conception of that may be. I propose that we separate ourselves from these worthy fellow-citizens who draw their data from the factories and the prairies, the newspapers and the halls of Congress, and endeavor to throw a somewhat broader light upon the subject. It is possible that history, philosophy, and a study of man himself have more to say upon the question of human progress than any of its chance phases or the voices of the present moment.

It is quite true that the conviction of a steady advancement of humanity toward an ideal of perfection has gained nearly universal lodgment in the modern mind, but the grounds of it are little understood. In the religious world it is based on the bare word of Revelation, without much intelligent conception of the process, and is lifted into the clouds of ecstatic vision; it is not, however, false nor in vain. In the world of semi-philosophy it is chiefly based on the signs of the times, which is somewhat like sailing by the winds instead of the stars. In the world at large it is based on material changes, with little heed of the fact that even adamant crumbles. The idea of human progress toward the goal of an ideal perfection is of recent origin. Always latent, perhaps, in the inmost recesses of man's nature, it has entered but feebly into his thoughts, is distinctly absent from the great minds except in rare cases, and only within a century has it found full expression in philosophy, where alone it has intellectual justification. But even here it is a modern idea, and so far

as it rests on facts it may possibly have too brief a history to justify its conclusion. Kant and Hegel and Lessing formulated theories of history — substantially alike — that point to the perfection of human society; but in doing so, they not only ran counter to the ordinary thought of men but to the habitual expression of the greatest minds. The highest forms of human thought are the epic poem and the tragedy; but the epic is always based on a remote age, and is a picture of past and faded glory. Eden is at the beginning, and all after it is lapse; the heroic period lies far back; the gods mingled with men in remote ages, and Olympus is now vacant; glory and virtue and achievement are found in early days that have passed not to return. It is easy to set this down to reverence, and to the demand made by imaginative genius for a clear field; but underneath such play of the mind there may be detected the conviction that the present is less worthy than the past. So in tragedy, which always turns on failure to cope with circumstances, man goes down under evil and the pressure of the forces of nature. The accord yielded to tragedy as the height of human expression is not merely literary and artistic, except as art is regarded as truth, but is granted because it is a true picture of human life. We refuse to accept tragedy unless it is thoroughly tragical; and again not for artistic reasons, but because we demand the truth of life. When a writer in tragic fiction softens his conclusion, and *Hamlet* lives, or *Lear* regains his crown, or when he carries the good and the evil along his pages side by side — the history of each involved in that of the other — and at the close draws a separating line between good and evil fortune, we pronounce it weak and untrue to life. It may not be untrue to spiritual faith, but it does not describe the course of things in this world. The tragedy that involves the noble *Hamlet*, the pure *Ophelia*, the weak *Polonius*, and the criminal *King* and *Queen* brings all to a common ruin. High intention and sweet innocence cannot disentangle themselves from the net of evil in which they are inevitably caught. Dante made Virgil his leader and master, but the world reverses the relation and sets the somber and awful critic above the amiable Mantuan. The theology of Milton, like his cosmology, has passed away, but his great epic stands not

because of the dignity of his verse, but through the tremendous sense of evil wrought into it, and which is still felt to be real. The hold that such authors as Juvenal and Lucian and Rabelais and Swift retain is not due to the keenness of their wit, but to their truthfulness; and Thackeray is accorded a more stable place in literature than is given to Dickens, because he goes deeper into the heart of society,— one depicts evil institutions; the other shows us the weakness of humanity itself, and we sadly acquiesce in his impeachment. So it is not the weird skill of Hawthorne that puts him at the head of modern writers of fiction, but the searching light in which he sets the forces of evil as they move on to inevitable doom.

The vital and enduring books do not blur virtue, but they do not present it as surely triumphant. I do not refer to the Sacred Books, into which a higher set of truths enter and where we find the story of human life drawn out at fuller length, but to the literature of this present world. We find, indeed, in all great books hope, and a deep sense that virtue will be crowned; but these hopes and convictions are subordinated to the sternness, the apparent vanity, the weakness of human life. They are subdued in their tone; if they exult, it is with a cadence or hint of question, and often the triumph comes after the failure — with funereal pomp and amidst the scenery of another world. It is the chorus of spirits that sounds the notes of cheer while Ate and Nemesis weave the body of the play. My point is this: that we do not find in the greater forms of thought that certainty of a good outcome for man, either as an individual or collectively, that we gather from the voices of the day.

The reasons for this somewhat doubtful look at the future of humanity — found in the great masters of thought — spring out of their profound sense of the weakness and frailty of man. They saw him invested by powers with which he cannot cope; these powers are inexorable and continue while man passes away before them. They also recognized the reality of evil, involving a doom not to be escaped, and linking generations together with cumulative force and increasing certainty of penalty. Regarding man as a frail being who rises, flourishes, decays, and passes away, and society as a macrocosm of which man is the typical microcosm, they assigned to them a common fate. A nation might flourish and come to glory, but it must decay as man does. They saw also a tendency in history to repeat itself; and the history of no nation, in its external aspect, justifies the hope of permanent perfection. They saw that the very conditions of progress in prosperity and wealth involve pride and presumption and self-indulgence that end in ruin;—the theme of

serious comedy and of the great moralists. They saw that as the life of man and of society grows complex, it outmasters human wit and that defeat steals in through one of the many doors;—the theme of tragedy, and the source by reaction of idyllic poetry that praises simplicity. They were governed also by a still profounder influence: they saw man involved in nature—drawn from its bosom, under its laws, conformed to it in the order of his life—and in nature they found no real progress, but only a round and a return to the starting-point; they found in it only fixed laws—a necessity that admitted a brief play of seemingly free powers, but ended the process in inexorable doom. Man is no exception and, however far he may go or high he may reach, he is still moving in a circle of destiny, and must at last lie down in the weakness and silence of death.

Such have been the governing thoughts of the great thinkers. Plato built an ideal republic, but confessed that it must at last perish under the frailty of human nature. Idealist as he was, he did not distinguish between the life of the individual and the corporate life of society; man was humanity.

These prevailing conceptions are not to be disregarded. The opposite, or rather correcting, conceptions have not yet found secure recognition. Freedom is not yet established above necessity, and will not be so long as we cherish a material and agnostic philosophy, and regard freedom as a thing to be conveniently taken for granted though all the facts are interpreted to the contrary. The question if man be not wholly involved in nature and its laws, is the Hougoumont of the Waterloo that is now raging in philosophy; if won by the materialist, this age at least will see no progress beyond rapid material changes, and the main question will be to reduce friction to the lowest possible degree,—that is, to extract from nature's grasp and get into our own the greatest possible amount of force,—force being all we know or have to deal with.

The idea that humanity may have a destiny that is not typified in the individual, that history has a philosophy which is not wholly identical with the worldly experience of man, is yet a mere theory. The old and strongly presumptive idea that society is the macrocosm of which man is the microcosm is not yet separated into its proper proportions of truth and error. Thought still gravitates — and with profoundest reasons — toward man's consciousness of himself as a subject-being in the world, depicted perhaps nowhere so well as in Job, the Greek Plays, Hamlet, and the writings of Pascal, and it rises with difficulty into the late-dawning conceptions of his dominion and ability to conquer circumstance and to build himself

and society into enduring forms. There is no more wholesome and needful lesson for this presumptuous age to learn than that its disposition and ruling thought do not accord with the largest thought of the world. We find in the wisest of men a common and steady disposition to glorify the past, to criticise the present, and to distrust the future; — these three things men trained in the school of human life always have done, and will continue to do. Instinctive habits like these have a rational basis. The shallow critic says that to glorify the past is weak and untrue; to criticise the present is morbid; to distrust the future is cowardly. But still the poets will go on singing the praises of the past, glorifying the conquest of Canaan and not the last brush with the Philistines, King Arthur and not the campaign of the Soudan; the moralists will still lay their rough hands upon the present order; the wise and far-sighted will still look anxiously into the future and listen to their own thoughts rather than to the Fourth-of-July orators. These instinctive tendencies are capable of a high interpretation and have a profound use that quite outweighs any seeming inaccuracy of thought. It would be a misfortune if men did not think in these ways. Our sense of the past is made what it is in order to strengthen our hold upon good already achieved; our criticism of the present is a perpetual judgment-throne by which the evil is separated from the good; our distrust of the future is the expression of the conscious weakness of man and of his proneness to err — the echo in our hearts of his repeated history on the earth; it is the wise humility of man as conscious of himself; it makes him cautious, careful, vigilant. It is well and even necessary to believe in progress and to hope for it, but checks are put upon thought and hope lest they breed overconfidence and vain presumption. The goal of progress is first to be discovered, and then reached by achievement. The things to be done before it is gained are many and great, and can only be wrought in humility and faith and "sad sincerity."

Under such thoughts, let us raise the question whether much that is now deemed progress is really such, or, indeed, enters at all into a true conception of progress; whether, in fact, the changes that are called by this name are not a part of the old round of vanity through which men have walked from the beginning. Change, and that chiefly of a material sort, is the chief feature of the present conception of progress; and the process is one of friendly conflict with nature — to get power away from her into our own hands. As nature is now reduced mostly to force, the conflict is mainly at this point,—

to reduce friction, and use leverage with the greatest advantage. Hence the multiplicity of our inventions and their wide application to life — all designed to get this force of nature at work for us with the least expenditure of our own force, or with an expenditure only of brain-force. I do not say that this is not the very thing that man ought to do,—a chief part of his present vocation in the world. But let him remember meanwhile that he is simply toiling in the round of nature, and that what man wrests from nature will be reclaimed by it unless it is firmly held in the grasp of his moral and spiritual nature, and lodged in a higher and more retentive world; if not, the jealous fingers of nature will reach after its stolen force and draw it back into itself. A patent cut-off is not secure because it lies in the archives of the Capital and is described in a book; it is safe and permanent only as it is cherished by men who hold a true theory of the philosophy of human life; and this philosophy is not one of mere use and convenience, but is something far higher and has a different purpose. Progress in this world of mechanical achievement is not progress except as it is associated with and presided over by certain very rigid forces known as moral and spiritual. This progress has not in itself the slightest power to advance mankind an inch toward its proper destiny. It may be indeed the revolution of the car-wheel that bears the traveler on, but it is not the force that carries him. If we sink ourselves in nature, and turn life into a use of mechanical forces, nature will outwit us, and steal back the Promethean fire.

There would be no need of words of criticism and caution before the great achievements of physical science, if it were not for the fact that prevailing philosophy and conception favor, and play into, and simply interpret this material life. The steam-engine is something to be thankful for, but when the philosophy of human life is made one with the expansion of steam, fierce explosion or unresisting coöperation may be anticipated. I assume as unquestionable the prevalence of a materialistic and agnostic philosophy — the one because it is the other — seen everywhere, seen more in the life and conversation of men than in books, and yet literature is full of it,—running out into pessimism on one side and into an easy optimism on the other. I refer to it only to direct attention to the fact that, coincident with its prevalence, no apparent progress is being made in the higher lines of life as revealed in art and literature; and also to the fact of a diversion from the true methods and ends of education.

Without attempting to play the connois-

seur in art, I venture to say that its chief motive at present is to represent French peasants in the greatest possible variety of natural attitudes — admirable work and quite worthy of being done as a by-play, and sometimes, as in Millet, rising into the religious; but where are the pictures that set the blood on fire with noble purpose, or haunt the mind with their mysterious suggestion of eternal truth? What canvas now breathes inspiration? Where are the marbles that are gods to us in their awful purity and power? What great musical composition has been produced since the phrase *agnostic* came into use? I acknowledge the power of the Wagnerian compositions, but it is the power of nature, and not of the spirit. Music is by far the most significant and revealing of the arts. No electrometer is more sensitive than is music in its revelation of the character and scope of human thought; and what is present composition revealing? Harmony, sweet and intricate enough, but “the diapason closing full in man” we seldom hear from the modern composer, and our hungry hearts turn back to the men of old for the inspirations without which we cannot live. We miss in art nobility, breadth, power, inspiration, and find instead infinite carefulness and skill — a perfect transcript of nature, but it is a direct transcript; the paper is laid upon nature, and its forms are traced through. But if this is art, why is not the image of nature on the retina of the eye as good? We can all look for ourselves and take the skill for granted. I assume that there is no true art but such as passes through the brain and heart of man, and that it becomes art because the man sees and feels the meaning of nature. But if nature is regarded simply as a play of mechanical forces, a mere arrangement of parts, art will only express so much. If no other idea is seen in nature, no other idea will be seen in the marble or on the canvas, or heard in the music.

Passing to literature, we find books in abundance and none too many. Never were there so good books in special departments, — as theology, natural science, philosophy, history, social economy, medicine, and jurisprudence. But when we come to that form of literature where genius has play, — the literature in which the author is the interpreter of society, hears its voices, catches and repeats its spirit, — we are forced to confess that within twenty years we detect not only a loss of power but of the secret of power. The fault is subtle but real, hard to detect, but proved by the fact that one seldom reads a novel of the day twice, or gathers the present fiction on one's shelves, or quotes from it; no one dreams of calling it classic. Yet it is admirable work in many ways — carefully wrought, excellent in style,

and, it must be confessed, true in a certain way to human nature. The American girl and business man blush with shame as they turn the truthful pages, but — and here is the test — they are not converted; and for the simple reason that the author simply describes them and does not appeal to them. He is no more earnest and high-minded than they are, and takes about the same view of life, with only some variation of taste and fitness. At bottom they believe in nearly the same things; both reflect the age and its spirit, — an age of outsides, of phenomena and presentments, provincial in time while cosmopolitan in tone, a sectional age without beginning or end, without cause why or end whither, without basis in eternity or sense of eternal truths — the reflection, in short, of a materialistic philosophy and, by consequence, devoid of faith and so driven to a mere use of the world. If the universe, man and society included, is a mere play of mechanical forces, all we have to do is to watch the forces as they unfold under inexorable necessity. And this is what literature seems to be doing under the phrase *Realism*. Realistic it is, but it is an external realism, photographic, without personal conviction. The characters described are pen-pictures and not brain and heart creations. Hence they do not greatly interest us, nor do they move us at all. If we look to literature for signs of progress, we do not find them. The poets are gray-headed, and the novelists whose imaginary characters are vital beings in the world of fancy are no more. Or if now and then some rare and sweet pages stay in our minds and breed noble suggestions, they come from those who have not been caught by the pervasive spirit of materialism. It may seem that I exaggerate the influence of this spirit; but I need only to say in vindication that the philosophy of an age governs its thought, shapes its life, and expresses itself in its art and literature. The world — wisely so, without doubt — is homogeneous in its thought, and may be trusted to be steadily working out some good end. Just now it is making a *détour* from the grand highway of progress into a by-path of materialism, led by philosophers who are very sure that if they can master matter they have compassed the universe; — a *détour* quite well to make if only to find out, as we are beginning to do, that matter is nothing but points of force, — a *détour* quite well to make if it leaves us with enough humility to send us back to the highway where philosophy still lingers, and humbly to inquire of it what force is. Return we shall from this Egyptian sojourn and bring away much valuable information, but we shall leave behind us most of the art and literature wrought there.

I deprecate the suspicion that I am about to plunge into the depths of pessimism, as I go on to question if certain changes in methods of education are in the line of true progress, and also to trace in bodies of scholars something of this same materialistic taint of which I have spoken.

I do not purpose to enter upon the vexed question of the study of Greek, but will only say that so long as the study of Greek is confined to the grammar, without reference to the literature and philosophy of the Greek plays, its utility will be doubted. It would be so with Hamlet were it used simply as an exercise in syntax. I refer instead to a tendency to specialization in study, with a strong lurch toward physics, and to certain methods becoming common that leave out the chief factor in education; namely, the inspiring presence and power of the teacher.

First, a preliminary word. It is vain to resist the call of the age as to the kind of trained men it requires. If mines are to be opened and worked, miners must be educated. It is also difficult to resist the spirit of the age, and to give to education any other complexion than that reflected by the times. One university falls in, and its crowded halls compel the rest to follow,—not stopping to consider that this is a reversal of the relations between the university and the people. When an age says, "We do not want ethics, we want science," ethics is the very thing it most needs. It would be well if the universities were strong enough to say, "Ethics you shall have or nothing"; and the answer would be rational, for, however it may be with the individuals who require the opening of mines and the refining of petroleum, society requires a science that is grounded in ethics and philosophy, since in these lie its destiny.

It requires no very keen eye to perceive that a materialistic philosophy has laid its grasp upon education and is dragging it toward itself and setting it at work in its vain round. Things and their uses, physical laws and their methods, the transmutation of substances,—such are the things of which the age thinks, and its demand upon the university is, "Give us the men who will serve in these ways." Little fault is to be found with the age—it is doing what it is set to do—nor with its demand for trained men to aid it, but surely it should be left with the university to decide upon the kind and method of training, and to reserve for itself that judicial estimate of the needs of society that belongs to it by virtue of its nature as an educator. It will never become untrue, though it may be for a time forgotten, that a broadly trained man is worth more to society than one trained as a specialist. Nor

will it ever cease to be true that no man is well trained for the uses of society who is not trained in philosophy, in ethics, in social science, and in the humanities. Nor will it ever fail to be true that education is nine parts inspiration and one part drill; or stating it otherwise, that the chief factor in education is the teacher; that being given, the study, as it is called, may easily be arranged as to its details.

I do not deny that great improvements have been made in education since some of us were catechised—often with woful results—on the grammar of Homer without so much as being told that Homer was a great poet, much less wherein his greatness consisted. Personally, I may say, I supposed while in college that Homer was read because he bore out the assertions of the Greek grammar. To get the Iliad under the grinding heel of the grammar was my vain struggle and the only effort required of me; but the shout of Achilles as it rang over the wind-swept plains of Ilium—that I never heard; the Castalian fount—I learned its topography, but I never drank from it; the muses—I knew their names, but their mystic dance I never traced! It is somewhat different in these later days, and now a student is informed of the distinctive characteristics of Æschylus and Sophocles and Euripides.

But with all the improvements there is a tendency to specialization that looks away from the ideal of education, so that we are getting admirably informed men instead of comprehensive thinkers,—that is, servants and tools of society instead of its masters and guides. When a university gives to society a trained man who can develop a mine, or remove crops according to the best rule of economics, it renders a certain valuable service; but unless it has also trained this man to think on the question, What is a mine for? or, What is the relation of crops to social welfare? it has not met its vocation as an educator. It is to be doubted, therefore, if this tendency to specialization—favored and fed by an elective system—is genuine progress. It seems rather a servile play into the hands of a clamorous age bent on securing the greatest possible amount of material change. The age cries, "Teach us how to get a living,"—a cry to which the university should pay but little heed, heeding instead the profounder call that issues from all the ages and from the deep heart of humanity itself, "Teach us how to live!" To think, to reason, to feel nobly, to see the relations of things, to put the ages together in their grand progress, to trace causes, to prophesy results, to discern the sources of power, to find true beginnings instead of unknowable causes, to perceive the

moral as governing the intellectual and both as dominating the material, to discern the lines along which humanity is moving and distinguish them from the eddies of the day,—such is the end of education. To provide society with the greatest number of specially trained workers in special fields is to turn the university into a shop.

Again, admitting great improvements in education, I question if the change of relation between teacher and pupil is in the line of true progress. Heaven forbid that the relation of the past should be reestablished. If there is a nightmare of youthful recollection that the years fail to dispel, it is the vision of a college tutor of thirty years ago. While the chilling dignity and antipodal distance have largely passed away, there is distance of another sort, and a tendency to methods that defeat the end of the relation. I refer to the increasing tendency to rely upon examinations and the consequent separation between teacher and pupil. More and more is the examination used to test proficiency,—frequent, searching, thorough, if a student passes he is considered educated. And so he is, if education is a drill instead of an inspiration; if education consists in a knowledge of text-books, and not in the instruction of a living man. I protest against turning education either into a martinet process or a frequently recurring judgment-day. The main, I might almost say the entire, feature of education is the sympathetic and inspiring contact of a fit teacher with young minds. So a lioness trains her whelps; so a mother rears her children; so Socrates and Dr. Arnold educated young men. The tendency to throw the student upon the text-book and to test him by examinations is a departure from education just in the degree it removes him from a fit teacher. I grant it is the proper method if the only object of education is to provide capitalists with trained servants for opening their mines and mixing their chemicals. But if the object of education is to secure men who shall think for capitalists and dominate them by the logic of a sound and lofty philosophy, and to inspire society with high conceptions of character and conduct, then the present tendency is not in the right direction. Such education is not gained except by personal inspiration, through personal contact. The imparted spirit in education, as in the church, is by the laying on of hands. That is a fine passage of Plato's in which he speaks of "the gentle and pleasant and approving manner in which Socrates regarded the words of the young men," and goes on to say in the words of Phædo,— "I was close to Socrates, on his right hand, seated on a sort of a stool, and he on a couch which

was a good deal higher. Now he had a way of playing with my hair, and then he smoothed my head, and pressed the hair upon my neck, and said 'to-morrow, Phædo, I suppose that these fair locks of yours will be severed'; for Phædo was under a vow. Here is a teacher who repeats and perpetuates himself in his pupil. I am not pleading for the old recitation-room with its perfunctory drill and childish marking system, but instead, for a free, full, confiding, and almost constant intercourse between pupil and teacher. The main point in education is the teacher. The tendency at present is to select him because of his proficiency in his department, with less and less disposition to regard any other qualifications. Give us for a teacher in our college the best mathematician or linguist or chemist,—such is the demand, with small inquiry on other points. Does he believe anything? has he a heart? is he capable of human emotions? has he the wit of insight? is he noble, brave, large, aspiring, devoted, reverent? These are minor, omitted considerations. And indeed, if education is a drill, and examinations do the work, and if the aim is to provide servants for capitalists, these things are quite superfluous. I do not deny before practical educators, who are often shut off from pursuing their own better ideals, the wisdom of the examination. It is a practical world we are in, and education is a thing of methods; but to erect the examination into a test and main feature of education, turning, as it does, chiefly upon knowledge of the text-book, is to take away from it what I will call its *human* element. The examination may be necessary under the system and in view of the end now held up, but it is not a lovely spectacle, preceded, as it is, by a process the name of which is an indignity and a condemnation—*cramming*. On what principle of education can such a process be justified? But it is recognized and almost called for by the present methods. If familiarity with the text-books is the main thing, and examinations are the test, cramming is the sure correlate and is even invited. And so a hundred well-crammed students meet a teacher who does not greatly alter his function or character in becoming a detective of deftly concealed formulæ and tough passages, tucked in the sleeves and otherwise hid as if by a Chinese card-player. Indeed, the whole affair is Chinese,—formal, childish, soulless. When education turns upon and is determined by an examination instead of daily and almost hourly contact with a wise, sympathetic, inspiring teacher, it provokes these irrational methods and defeats itself at every point. It has not even the excellencies of the military drill, for a soldier learns the manual however unwillingly he goes through it, but a

student left largely with his text-book — the teacher a rarely appearing phantom except at examinations, where he sits clothed in the black robes of Rhadamanthus to determine if the cramming has been sufficient,—this is neither drill nor education, but is rather akin to the commercial processes in which the young men will soon be engaged—a process of rapid inflation and soon following disorgament. It is no surprise that athletics are the inspiring theme in our colleges, when the possible finer enthusiasms are quenched by such methods as these.

It is the first duty of scholars to lift themselves above their age and to search it with judicial scrutiny. If there is weakness or fault or faulty tendency, it is their business to detect it. No man can or should separate himself from his age; least of all should the scholar seek such isolation—either in the past, sighing for that which cannot come again, or in the future, longing for that which cannot yet come. But while the scholar should preëminently live in his age and even yield to it in a measure,—remembering that it is a step in the march of the Eternal Providence,—it should be in a way far different from that of the masses who always sink themselves in their age, and conceive of progress only as an ultimate of the present idea or force. What thought to-day has place in the American mind beyond that of developing its physical resources? The scholar should recognize this, but he should also recognize far more. He should see that material progress is but traveling in the old round of vanity whose sure phases have been fixed over and over again in history. He should see that the masses require higher conceptions than they assume for themselves; that while they do the immediate work of their day, they should be led and stimulated in the harder and loftier lessons of life. As a scholar he should understand that his vocation is to labor for those great, corrective principles of truth and virtue and reason that men do not readily heed and obey. Hence, there is no sadder sight than that of education bending and shaping itself to the demands of a low utilitarianism. When the university departs from its vocation of rearing scholars who shall think for the age and guide its thought and lead it to act on solid principles, and instead furnishes a set of specialists to do the intellectual drudgery of the day, it falls away from the line of true progress; this is not an advance, but a capitulation. Specialists there must be; physical science must have full and due regard; every page of the book of nature must be turned, but let these specialists and students of science be also scholars who have been taught in the broader schools of

philosophy and of humanity, for in these are found the secret laws that determine social destiny.

The chief aim of the American university at present should be to produce scholars who shall be able to see the full significance of the idea that lies at the foundations of the American nation and in the fulfillment of which runs the true line of its progress. I refer to the democratic idea—or, as plainly stated by Mr. Lowell, democracy, stated by him with epigrammatic insight, but drawn out into philosophical fullness, traced to its divine origin, set in its historic relations, and applied to the details and institutions of our government by Dr. Mulford, in his work — “The Nation.” It has so happened that, for the first time in the world, this democratic idea with its associate idea of federation has been wrought into national form on this continent. Christianity, the doctrine of evolution when properly interpreted, and history have yielded a practical, working form of this idea. Christianity teaches nothing unless it teaches the self-sovereignty of man. Evolution crowns its process with man who acts in freedom and holds his destiny in his own hands. History ends its records of struggle with tyranny in a nation that at last is actually governing itself. From these three conspiring and coöperative sources do we get what I have called the democratic and federative idea, and now hold it in actual realization. In the perfecting of it lie the destinies of the nation, and through it runs the line of progress. The apostle of this idea is the scholar, for he alone can take in its immense significance and direct its fulfillment. This idea must be accepted and held and applied in the light of its sources.

The irrefragable proof, the persistent life, the power of Christianity, lie in the fact that in its very nature and substance it is composed of this idea of self-sovereignty; it is the gift of Christianity to the social life of humanity. I am quite aware that Christianity has not been so apprehended, but when it is delivered from ecclesiasticism on one side and from dogmatism on the other — as is fast being done — the world will behold in it a philosophy of human society that it cannot fail to accept. The doctrine of evolution as it is now coming to be interpreted by philosophy, is a deliverance from that sense of necessity which has brooded over humanity from the beginning — the adumbration of the nature from which man has hardly yet escaped and a birth into freedom and self-sovereignty. History, as the record of ethnology, jurisprudence, and institutions, illustrates the steps by which the great purpose of the ages has advanced toward its ideal of man as a self-governing being.

We do not as a nation yet apprehend the peculiar and wholly exceptional position that we occupy. As one who stands in the sun may be in darkness, so we look at this wondrous spectacle of a nation ideal in its structure, divine in its conception, the perfect fruit of evolving history, in a dull, matter-of-fact way, and we take Mr. Matthew Arnold at his word when he tells us that we *happen* to have good institutions! Even so the solar system happens to be orderly and stable; so a tree happens to yield fruit. Mr. Arnold is quite well pleased with our institutions, and thinks his England would do well to adopt them. Were he the critic he might be, he would lash us with scorn for our dullness before the meaning of our institutions. For the democratic idea supplemented by federation, and realized in a nation and a history such as ours, is an absolute novelty in the annals of the world. It is as truly the necessary and foreordained outcome of the history of humanity as the birth of a child is the product of gestation. The democratic idea, or self-sovereignty, is the eternal and absolute principle of government; the principle of federation is that which renders it practicable—its clothing body, not, as Mr. Arnold says, its clothes, but its vital, working organism. Sir Henry Maine and Mr. Scherer tell us that "democracy is only a form of government,"—so difficult is it even for great men to apprehend the secret of history and the nature of man. Democracy worked by the federative principle is the exact solution that a pure reason would have worked out at the beginning, having at hand the contents of human nature. It stands in exactly the same relation to government in which man stands to the process of development,—the purposed end, the perfect, fixed product of the whole process.

This ideal of a nation is being realized on this continent. Many have stood on Pisgah and viewed the promised land, but our feet press its borders, and our lips taste its clusters.

Here, then, in the development of this ideal, lie the lines of progress; here is the field of the American scholar; here is the vocation of the American university. Its main question should be, How shall it train its men so as to best fit them to conduct and develop this mighty enterprise of a self-governing, federated nation?

The question nearly answers itself,—first, by a spontaneous negative; not by training men in special ways for the special errands of material industry, for the destinies of the nation do not lie there. It must educate its men through those studies in which there is revealed the sources of our national life, and still more in those studies that reveal its principles, and must guide their development and application to society. This nation is founded in the nature of man, and hence man must be studied, and not merely as an animal, but also as a moral being. This nation is founded on morals, and on hardly anything else; it rests on morals and feeds on morals, nor does it live by any other bread; hence the university should teach ethics. This nation is an evolution of human history; hence the university should teach history in its broad sense, ethnology, institutions, religions, environments, events, indeed, but as related to causes. The age is analytic; the university should be synthetic.

In brief, the chief aim of the university should be to send out men who are thoroughly grounded in the philosophy of the nation, who understand the depths from which it has been drawn, and the secret forces by which it may be guided. Its work lies aside from the tendency to specialization and skill in material lines, and looks toward those broad studies that may be summed up as philosophy.

To know man, to understand society, to serve the nation with self-sacrificing intelligence,—this is the vocation of the scholar; and the university must heed the requirement to educate him accordingly.

T. T. Munger.

