

THE MISSION OF THE PILGRIMS.

AN

ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY

OF THE

CITY OF MONTREAL,

DECEMBER 22, 1853,

BY

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PASTOR OF THE THIRTEENTH STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK.

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MONTREAL, December 22d, 1858.

REV. S. D. BURCHARD, D. D.,

Dear Sir: On behalf of the New England Society, the undersigned beg to tender their sincere thanks, for the very able and eloquent Oration delivered before them this day, and, feeling that it will prove deeply interesting to their friends and the public at large, respectfully request of you a copy of the same for publication.

Very faithfully yours,

C. DORWIN,

President N. E. S.

JACOB DE WITT, JR.,

Secretary.

MONTREAL, December 23d, 1858.

Gentlemen:

I do not feel at liberty to deny a request so courteously made. The Oration is therefore placed at your disposal, with sincere thanks for the many and kind attentions received during my brief stay in your city.

Most respectfully and truly yours,

S. D. BURCHARD.

Hon. C. DORWIN,

JACOB DE WITT, JR.

ORATION.

LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN
OF THE NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY:

OUR mission, on this occasion, it must be confessed, is somewhat delicate and peculiar. We meet on foreign soil, in a foreign city, and beneath a foreign flag, to talk of our civic life and history.

We are prompted to this by filial respect, by patriotism, and by a high appreciation of moral excellence.

It is a common desire, to preserve in memory the character and deeds of our ancestors. Every nation and people have had their days commemorative of high paternal or patriotic worth. The Athenians, the Greeks, the Romans, held their founders in sacred veneration, and brought annual and votive offerings in commemoration of their deeds and memory.

We have no fabulous origin, no occasion to trace our history through the mythic lore of ages. Our fathers were real men, and their landing upon Plymouth Rock a great historic truth; their deeds are their imperishable monument, and that rock emblematic of its stability and strength.

Were we English, and were the anniversary we celebrate that of the St. George's Society, we should have

a noble eulogium to pronounce, a brilliant though somewhat bloody history to retrace: we could boast of a government the most stable, the most magnificent on earth; a queen universally and justly beloved, for her numerous and excellent virtues; a judiciary the most intelligent and equitable in the annals of nations. But *we* are Americans—the veritable sons of the old Puritans; as *such* we speak, and, though among strangers, we are not exiles; though under a different government, *cherished* as citizens, and indulged in our Yankee love of the Fatherland.

In testimony of forgiveness and forgotten feuds, we, the children of the rebel colonists, come back to join in social fellowship with the children of the loyal brother, under the mother's roof, and with the mother's blessing. We, here in the cold North, gather, in full sympathy with our brethren of the great Puritan family, scattered over the wide earth, to celebrate a day distinguished in the calendar of nations—

“And where the sun, with softer fires,
Looks on the vast Pacific's sleep,
The children of the Pilgrim Sires
This hallowed day, like us, do keep.”

The orator, at your first anniversary, very appropriately presented the *vision* of the Pilgrims—what they saw in perspective. The last, in his strict and truthful analysis, showed that they possessed the elements of character adapted to realize what had been conceived in vision. *Our* legitimate object is, to present the *ideal actualized*, or,

THE MISSION OF THE PILGRIMS:

They first rise to our view, like a morning star from a long night of darkness and gloom, about the middle of the 16th century, under the reigns of Henry VIII., "bloody Mary," and her milder, yet bigoted successor, Elizabeth, all claiming to be head of the visible Church, having the right to determine her doctrines and forms of worship. The Puritans joined issue just here, and claimed the right to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. This was their great distinctive principle. They regarded the human soul as above everything—above all material grandeur, above edicts and compacts—and nothing must come between it and God. Their views found little sympathy in England, and they left, after much opposition and trial, for Holland, where the principles of the Reformation had taken deeper root. This proved not to be their home. God had vaster designs for them to accomplish than they themselves had even conceived. The grand field of their mission was to be on this newly-discovered continent.

At the time of their leaving the Old World, the nations of Europe were tossing like the waves of the sea, lashed into violence by the breath of a mighty wind, or disturbed from their long repose, as by some fearful volcanic agency.

The thousand years of darkness, during which the continental millions had been lying crushed and paralyzed, had been invaded by the living spirit of the Reformation, and the great heart of humanity had been

touched by a sense of the fresh life that was then just kindling the dormant energies of the human soul, but it had not yet imparted that clearness of vision and steadiness of aim which are the result of a more favored and matured experience. The masses were rising and chafing with a universal agitation, yet they staggered like a blind and beaten giant, groping his way to the doors of his prison, and feeling for the bars that still opposed his deliverance. Around the European tumults lay the rest of the world, in one unbroken scene of desolation. The great Empires of the olden time had perished from the earth, or been petrified, standing as they were in the days of Noah. The old civilizations had all vanished, like shadows over a rock, and were then to be deciphered only from the greatness of their ruins. Egypt and Babylon, Greece and Rome had been and were not, and the winter of ages had rested on their politics, their military grandeur, their philosophy and their religion. The old historic world was dead, and the modern world of events was just emerging from the chaos of centuries. True, the seed of the present civilization had been sown in the earth with the advent of Christianity, but, though it had taken root downward, there was no apparent upshooting through the superincumbent mass of rubbish. True, this western world had been discovered, but it remained an object only of the universal cupidity of the mercenary adventurer, or of the still more infatuated intolerance of the priestly fanatic. True, the invention of the mariner's compass had bestowed on the genius of commerce the trident of the

sea, and the discovery of the art of printing had opened up channels of thought, even more manifold than the surges of the ocean; still the world had scarcely begun to dream of the expansion and power of these two mighty forces of the modern civilization. True, the ideas of the Reformation had broken out from the fetters of a heavy and most hateful tyranny, but they had not yet assumed the vastness of progress, which gives to the present generation such an untold advantage over the preceding ages. True, many a ship had sailed over stormy seas. In ancient times, there was a ship which carried Jason to the acquisition of the Golden Fleece.

At the battle of Actium, a war ship aided Augustus Caesar in the conquest of the world, and, since, there have been ships which have carried Hawkes and Howe and Nelson, on the other continent, and Hull and Decatur and Stewart, on this, to triumph; but never was there a ship on such a mission, or bearing such a precious freightage, as the *May Flower*. See her, like a wounded sea fowl, hovering round that stern and rocky coast, seeking a place to die—the cold December winds sighing through her tattered shrouds, as if it were her last requiem—between her and civilization stretched three thousand miles of pathless ocean—before her was an unbroken, snow-covered forest, where the howl of the wild beast mingled with the fiercer war-cry of the savage, and, yet, *not* a regret in man's heart to shake his high resolve, and not a tear to dim the lustre of a woman's eye. Surely, these Pilgrims are on some Heaven-appointed mission, and let it be our object, during this

calm hour, to contemplate it, in its *physical, educational, political and religious aspects.*

I. *First, we are to view it in its PHYSICAL aspect.*

Behold, then, the ideal actualized, the vision realized, as the mission of the Pilgrims has been hastening to its fulfillment. See what changes in the physical aspects of our land have been wrought, through their instrumentality, since the date of their landing. As we retire into the dark and dream-like past, we see the solitudes of the wilderness unbroken, save by the soft gush of bird-song, by beasts of prey, or savages prowling on the prairie or hot-pursuing in the war-path. We see nature in all her wild sublimity, with no sign or trace of civilized man—her mountains rising in silent majesty, with all their mineral wealth as yet unknown—her mighty rivers, deepening the channels in which they had flowed for centuries, but bearing no freighted wealth upon their bosom—her wide-extended prairies, all enameled with the wild flower, yet never yielding a rich and golden fruitage beneath the hand of a vigorous culture. See now, in the contrast, what has been wrought! The deep and frowning forests have fallen before the axe of the bold and hardy adventurer. Where once the wretched wigwam stood, and its inmates reveled in the dance, stately cities, beautiful villages, and cultivated farms now attract the eye. Where once the whoop of the solitary hunter was the only human sound that echoed through the deep solitudes of the wilderness, may now be heard the noise of clattering machinery,

and the hum of busy thousands. Where once the fragile canoe adventured on our inland lakes and rivers, hundreds of steamers, independent of wind and tide, now move on their stately course, freighted with life and beauty. Instead of here and there an Indian trail or perilous foot-path, the whole land is interlaced with a net-work of railways, bringing the most distant parts into near proximity, and binding the Union together as with bands of iron. Though the Puritan family is widely scattered—through the Canadas, on the North, to the Gulf of Mexico, on the South, from the Atlantic, on the East, to the Pacific, on the West—they may whisper in each other's ears, along telegraphic wires, as easily, and almost as audibly, as through the speaking tubes of a dwelling. From a little one, we have, indeed, become a strong nation. Possessing territories equal in extent to all Europe, inhabited by nearly thirty millions of active and enterprising human beings, and doubling in population every twenty years, the young Republic already holds an enviable rank among the most powerful nations of the world. Though not a fighting people, and having no standing army, yet, upon the field, we have always been valiant, and victorious, securing results which place us above the dread of aggression, enabling us to devote our energies to the remunerative pursuits of peace. In commerce, in agriculture, in manufactures, we rank among the first. Our ships are the finest that sail on any sea. Our implements of agriculture, illustrating the inventive faculty of the Yankees, have tended greatly to modify the original curse—"In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." Our fab-

rics and manufactures show the triumph of genius and art, and will not suffer in the comparison with those of France and England.

Ours is a virgin soil, the richest in the world. Our fields are broader and more luxuriant, and, what is better, they are owned and tilled by an honest-hearted and clear-headed yeomanry, who call no man "Lord or Master."

In Europe it is not so; not even in Great Britain—the tillers of the soil are generally the humble tenantry, whose hard earnings must largely contribute to the support of a lordly aristocracy. In many of the States on the Continent, matters are still worse; all motives and stimulus to industry, especially with the lower classes, being removed, begging, as a system, or starvation, is the only alternative.

In Italy, with a soil naturally rich, a climate unsurpassed, this is emphatically true. Troops of beggars, soldiers and mendicant priests, meet you at every turn.

Panperism and palaces, rags and robes, famine and fashion, loafers and lords, are the sad and painful contrasts which everywhere meet the eye in that land of beauty and art, and *all this* as the result of a system which taxes to oppression, and absorbs all the material wealth of the country. Everything there, as well as in Austria, Prussia and Germany, is stagnant, retrogressive, indicative of a splendid past, a dead present, and a still more doubtful future. How different from all this is the state of things in the land of the Pilgrims! Each day sees some new conquest achieved in the primeval forests—some tract of waste land subjugated and brought under cul-

tivation. The descendants of the Puritans are everywhere at work, not only digging out the solid granite of their native hills, but the gold of California—pioneering the civilization of the West, wayfaring the desert, and making the wilderness to bud and blossom as the rose.

Their mission is in progress of realization, and, viewed even in a *physical aspect*, in the reclamation of a land from the solitudes of a wilderness, in the cultivation of the soil, in the accumulation of material wealth, in the growth of cotton and corn in quantities sufficient to clothe and feed the destitute of half the world, is calculated to make one proud of the fact that his infancy was cradled in the land of the Pilgrims.

We are not insensible to the aid received by the constant and increasing immigration from abroad, but we mean to say, that our country would not be what it is, in extent, in enterprise, in agriculture, in commerce, in all the sources of material wealth, but for the strength and energy developed on Plymouth Rock. Suppose it were possible for one of the old Pilgrims, who landed from the May Flower, to join in our festivities to-day. He speaks to us of the vision and of its realization. He says, "We saw and anticipated but little of what it is your privilege to enjoy. We sought a refuge and a home for ourselves and our children, where we could worship God under our own vines and fig-trees, with none to disturb or make us afraid. Our hopes were on another life. For conscience and for God we were willing to sacrifice all, and we did sacrifice all, home and country. Our bones were buried

deep and obscure in the sloping bank that looks out towards our Fatherland. No hillock or stone must reveal the place of their repose, lest the savage foe should wreak his vengeance on our humble graves. We little dreamed of this wide extent of country, this physical wealth, this refinement, these luxurious abodes, these magnificent cities, these works of beauty and art, as being the inheritance of our children, the result of our toil and sacrifice. We rejoice with you, and bid you 'God speed.' Go forward and accomplish your high mission, and prove yourselves the worthy descendants of Carver and Brewster, and Bradford, my illustrious compeers, who landed from stormy seas on the rock of Plymouth."

II. *In the second place, let us view the mission of the Pilgrims in an EDUCATIONAL aspect.*

They were designed, in the plan of Providence, to be the educators of succeeding generations. They themselves had been educated for this purpose, not in Polytechnic Schools, nor in luxurious and classic halls, but in the school of suffering and of trial. Their minds had been made elastic and strong by the severest discipline, and by an intimate and constant fellowship with the great truths of God's word. They were men of deliberation and forethought, and could clearly see that their vision could never be realized without a wide-spread intelligence among the people. So soon, therefore, as they had reared a shelter over their heads to protect them from the cold December's blast, and built an altar of worship, they laid the foundations for

the Common-School. They had installed the Bible first of all in their affections, then in their households, and now as the source of all light and wisdom, in the education of their children. It was the basis of all their hopes, and must be the text-book of all their instructions. As soon as a new settlement was formed, the Church and the School were planted, as indispensable and inseparable. The population increased no faster than the means of instruction were multiplied. They designed that the people should grow in *knowledge* as well as in grace, and that the facilities for which should be furnished and sustained at the public expense. They recognized a *community* of interests, and aimed at the universal good, and determined that the blessings of education, like the rain and sunshine of Providence, should descend alike upon the evil and the good.

For the first time, in the history of the world, the principle was suggested and adopted, that the education of youth was the duty of the Commonwealth, the expense of which was to be defrayed by a tax upon property, to which those who had no children were as much required to contribute as those who had. Education was justly regarded as the right of all, and not the privilege of the few. In knowledge was recognized an element of safety and strength, in which all were interested, and for which all were bound to pay.

The parish, or religious society, and the common-school have ever been, and are, the characteristics of New England. They were not exotics, transplanted from another clime, but the spontaneous growth of the soil, and their roots were twined round the fibres of the

popular heart. They formed the instinct of social order, and practically trained and taught men how to build themselves into a state. The common-schools of New England are the grand corner-stone of our American fabric. They have been rich sources of blessing to individuals and to the State. See in Franklin an illustration of their utility: once a Boston school-boy, receiving not an hour's instruction, except in the public institutions of his native town, afterwards you see him the sage, the patriot, the philosopher, standing before princes, mastering the subtleties of science, devoting himself to the cause of his country, and at last coming down to his grave full of years and of honors, while upon his tomb-stone was inscribed, by a foreign hand, that magnificent epitaph:

"Eripuit celo fulmen sceptumque tyrannis."

See Samuel Adams, that pillar of the revolution, so firm, so patriotic, so incorruptible, that even his worst enemy said, there was no office under the British crown that could seduce him from fidelity to his native land.

See John Adams, the son of a New England farmer, trudging to school with his satchel upon his arm and inuring himself to hard toil and study during the days of his minority, to stand at last in the halls of the Continental Congress, the Ajax of his country. The Grecian Ajax, when surrounded by darkness in the day of battle, addressing himself to his deity, implored for light, saying:

"Dispel this cloud, the light of heaven restore,
Give me to see, and Ajax asks no more."

The mind of the American Ajax had seen the light, as kindled by the school-houses of his native New England, and, amid the terrors and darkness of that day which tried men's souls, he stood firm and unmoved, a prodigy of strength—the exponent of that great spirit which animated the hearts of his countrymen.

We cannot pause to recount the benefits of that system of common-schools which had its origin in the land of the Pilgrims. It was the germ of that future development which is now the ornament and the boast of the American people. Our common-schools, like the blessed sunlight, are spreading their benefactive influence over the entire land. They are open and free to all. No high barriers are reared around their threshold—no sect, nor creed, nor aristocratic class can claim pre-emption there, but all alike are invited to come and partake freely, without money and without price. With such generous intellectual fare, and so generally appreciated by the masses, we may confidently anticipate that they will never become the dupes of demagogues, nor sink into the chaos of anarchy, nor into the night of barbarism. When, therefore, we look with the eye of Christian patriotism over our country, more and more thickly dotted with school-houses and other and higher institutions of learning, then at our free press, free government and free Bible, all favorable to the acquisition of knowledge, and remember that all this is but the efflorescence and fruitage of that blessed seed sown by the hands of the Pilgrims, we may form some conception of the grandeur of their mission. It

may, indeed, be said that we have no standard national literature equal to that of England and Germany, no universities to compare with Oxford and Cambridge. True, we are too young for this; still, our authors are honored, and their works sought and republished in the Old World, and no one will presume now to ask, in a tone of sarcasm, "Who ever reads an American book?"

Some of our colleges and universities are rising to an enviable distinction; and, if not as scholastic and pretentious, are sounder in the faith than some on the other side of the waters, whose ecclesiastical leanings are evidently toward Rome.

We may have no galleries of art equal to those of Italy, and no poetry or music like that which once floated over the Adriatic, or breathed among the islands of the Ægean; yet, for wide-spread intelligence, for practical utility, for all that constitutes a nation's wealth, power or influence, we occupy a commanding position among the nations. Our circumstances, as yet, have tended to make us practical, rather than poetic, earnest, rather than esthetic, in our life and literature. We have been doing foundation work, but, when we shall have perfected our institutions, who shall say that we may not become as artistic as Greece or Rome in their palmyest days; or, that some peasant may not be raised from the soil, who, like Burns, shall wreath the plow with amaranths of living green, vie with Schiller and Goethe, or rival even the bards of English and Scottish story? Already has our country produced a few names that were not born to die. A Bryant and a Halleck have struck the lyre of

Apollo with success in the newer and better world. The first is a Druid of our grand old forests—the second has transferred to his page the touching eloquence of the red man who inhabited them. I scarce need mention Longfellow, whose laurels are still fresh and green; or Willis, whose poems are full of life and feeling; or Whittier, whose soul was stirred at the wrongs of the oppressed; or Saxe, whose lines ring out like the merry laugh of childhood; or Mrs. Sigourney and Gould, whose strains soothe and cheer us like the music of an angel's harp.

In theological lore, we can boast of some giants, such as Edwards, Dwight, Bellamy and Hopkins.

In jurisprudence, who has ever written with more strength and acumen than Kent and Story.

In the healing art, especially in the science and practice of surgery, we have had those whose names will live with Cooper and Hunter. Sayre is a rising star, and Simms is, at this moment, doing a work for which the women of all lands will rise up and call him blessed.

In historical literature, the ivied chaplet has been well earned by Sparks, Bancroft and Prescott.

In the department of forensic eloquence, we may point to the living and the dead, whose logic is irresistible, whose clarion tones have echoed round the globe. We scarcely need breathe the names of that grand trio, whose remains slumber in the green graves of Quincy, Marshfield and Ashland.

It may be doubted whether the great masters of the art have not found their rivals in the land of the Pilgrims. Our grand natural scenery, our peculiar institutions, our posts of honor and public trust, open alike to all, have

tended to develop the very soul of eloquence, and our pulpit, bar and senate will not suffer in the comparison with the most polished nations on the globe.

We can scarcely make mention of our periodical literature, our weeklies, monthlies, and more ponderous quarterlies, which had their origin in a newspaper first published in Boston in 1701, and now have spread like the leaves of Valambrosa, in multiplied thousands, over the land. We do not say, that all would be approved by the stern old Puritan. We greatly mistake, if his spirit of intolerance would not burn more fiercely against much of the periodical literature now thrown reeking with pollution from the press, than against the witches that perished in the persecutions of Salem. We need a more rigid censorship of the press, that its mighty power may be wielded for good and not for evil, for the virtue and coronation of our rising millions.

III. *In the third place, let us contemplate the mission of the Pilgrims in a POLITICAL aspect.*

They, indeed, had little conception of the splendid procession of events that were to follow their movements.

Their simple object was freedom of worship, and every interest, purpose and organization were to be subordinated to this. They had not even dreamed, as yet, of a separate independent State sovereignty. They were the loving and loyal subjects of Great Britain, seeking, in the exercise of an inalienable right, an asylum, where they might worship God in peace, according

to their own honest convictions. Beyond this, it is to be doubted whether their vision extended. They would have been content with this, but God, in his wiser plans, had designed and fitted them, though unconsciously to themselves, for a still broader and grander mission.

They loved England and her laws, but not the burdens of feudalism, nor the prerogatives of the Crown, nor the privileges of the nobility, nor the right of primogeniture, nor the civil grasp of ecclesiastical tribunals. Their conceptions of freedom, their claimed and asserted rights, were in perfect harmony with the laws of the mother country. They brought with them the habit of civil obedience and the proper elements of a State. Persecution had stamped more deeply upon their hearts the noble principles expressed in the Magna Charta. They knew the meaning of those proud words, "The Commons of England." They understood the right and the process of trial by jury, and had seen the great principles of liberty embodied in the State. They came to these shores, therefore, not as renegades from law and justice, but as royalists, only hating the huge and unnatural excrescence which had been attached to the practical workings of the government.

"Although," said they to Queen Elizabeth, "her Majesty be incensed against us, as if we would obey no laws, we take the Lord of heaven and earth to witness, that we acknowledge, from the bottom of our hearts, her Majesty to be our lawful queen, placed over us for our good, and we give God our most humble and hearty thanks for her happy government, and both in public

and private we constantly pray for her prosperity. We renounce all foreign power, and acknowledge her Majesty's supremacy to be lawful and just. We detest all error and heresy, yet we desire that her Majesty will not think us disobedient, seeing we suffer ourselves to be displaced rather than to yield to some things required. Our bodies and goods, and all we have, are in her Majesty's hands. Only our souls we reserve to our God, who is able to acquit or condemn us."

Their grand distinctive principle, that for the maintenance of which they were willing to suffer the loss of all things, was, that the subject of any State, or under any form of government, has a natural right to religious liberty of conscience. They very properly regarded this, not as a derived right, not conferred by any form of civil compact, but as incorporated in the very charter of their being, and responsible for its exercise only to Him who requireth of his human children the worship of the heart. The idea of a separate independent State, at the beginning, did not so much as enter their minds, but the principle of religious freedom, so dear to their hearts, was made prominent in the instrument or constitution which they formed and adopted, to regulate their mutual intercourse, as Pilgrims in a strange land. Though they, in their vision, did not see the result, Providence designed that that simple compact should be the seed of Empire. It contained the germinal elements of a republic, and the current of events, which they could not altogether control, favored the establishment of Democratic institutions. As the colony increased, or as new ones were planted by immigration

from abroad, the representative element was introduced, so that, early in the history of the Colonies, we find a representative Republic.

The order of growth was, first, the family, which was primitive, central, germinal; then the religious society, or town; then the Commonwealth, or State; in all of which the individual was recognized, his rights guarded, his conscience held sacred.

Thus, government is a growth, a creature of the people, an instrument adopted, primarily and fundamentally, as the patron and guardian of that principle of religious freedom, which was dearer to the Pilgrims than even life itself. In the development of the historic drama, it became necessary to separate from the mother country, and to throw off allegiance to the British Crown. The colonies had become extended, had acquired strength and the elements of self-support. And when the time came for the adoption of a new Constitution, suited to the somewhat diverse interests of the different States, see how the Puritan element worked and triumphed in guarding the freedom of conscience with a vestal fidelity, and securing to man, as man, certain inalienable rights. The Constitution, adopted by mutual concession and compromise, is simple and unique, resembling, in relations, grandeur and beneficence, the planetary system, with its magnificent central orb, regulating and refulgent. By it all the various departments of government, and the appropriate duties of each, are clearly defined, while the rights of the people and of the States are jealously and sacredly guarded. Its checks and balances are arranged with consummate

skill, and its *actual workings*, that truest of all tests, proclaim it an honor to its authors, a blessing to its subjects, and a beacon-light to the world. The great principles of hereditary equality and of universal suffrage are recognized, as they are not in the constitutions and practical workings of the governments of the Old World. We have no crowned heads, no kings to inherit thrones by right of descent, no nobles "to the manor born," no patrician privileges—the way to wealth, to fame, to political preferment, is open to every plebeian foot. With us the people are sovereign—the great questions that are to affect the interests of the country, or the wrongs under which we suffer, are submitted ultimately to the ballot-box—

"A weapon that comes down as still as snow-flakes fall upon the sod,
And executes a freeman's will, as lightning does the will of God."

To this system, the people cherish an unconquerable devotion. A remarkable proof of this is found in the fact, that while continental Europe has been weltering for years past in the agitated waves of revolution, and it has required the utmost strength of its disciplined soldiery to suppress the tumults of the people, not a revolutionary voice has been raised among us; and all our millions, Saxon and Celt, natives, and gathered from every land, would unite to execrate the wretch who should seriously attempt the subversion of our political fabric. We have our private opinions, our State prejudices, our local interests, and sometimes a little skirmishing in Congress, but beneath all, underlying all, is the great sentiment, *we are Americans*, reposing be-

neath the wings of our Eagle, or under the Stripes and Stars. We shall have agitation, and there may be some causes of apprehension, none of which are more appalling than that huge and monstrous system of domestic slavery, which clings to us like an unnatural excrescence; still, with the same blessing which has hitherto attended us, we shall live and not die, and, what is more, we shall live as *united* Americans! Change and decay have, indeed, been the history of the governments of the world. Sceptres and sovereigns pass away like pictures from the screen of a phantasmagoria. Where are the great dynasties of the olden times? Where now is the crown of the Stuarts, and the sceptre of the Bourbons—those mighty sovereigns who sat unawed upon their thrones? Gone! But the Pilgrims' staff still stands erect and firm, and it is destined to stand, the pledge of freedom and a heritage of blessing to unborn millions. The reason of this hope is in the fact, that with us man is recognized as man, in all our laws, intercourse and institutions, and, when an appeal is made in the name of a principle common to man, every heart answers to the call. We find, amid the nations of the past and the monarchies of the present, the same susceptibility to feeling; the same responsive echo, but not to the same external appeal.

The people can say *Vive l'Empereur*, or prostrate themselves to the earth, as the Pope is charioted along in splendor, or illumine their dwellings, and make the very air ring with their plaudits, when the hero returns victorious from the battle-field, but, our loudest shouts, our most deep-felt and prolonged hurrahs, are for

humanity! What if the whole nation is toiling in work-shops, amid clattering machinery, or tilling the soil, or jostling against each other on the great thoroughfares of trade, as if everything depended on pecuniary success—let the cry of oppressed humanity, or the shrill blast of liberty, ready to be crushed by the tyrant, be borne to their ears, and you will find a stir among the people, a response from one end of the land to the other—the work-shop will be deserted, the oxen left unyoked in the field, while the hall will be full of men, or the broad arena crowded with those, whose shouts ring out through the clear air like the sound of mighty thunderings!

We love, brethren of the New England Society, thus to linger over the *political* promise of the land of our sires. We love to behold the first spring of the eaglet to the air, in circles of amazing swiftness and power, and see it outsoar every bird of the sky on its strong and steady pinions, to the sun. The march of our magnificent progress—the power and play of our political machinery—the majesty wherewith man, as man, walks that broad continent—the radiant flash, to the ends of the earth, of the stars that blazon our banners, indicate the grandeur of our mission, and the still increasing glory of our destiny. While we thus confidently anticipate the stability and perpetuity of the Republican edifice, let us remember that its grand corner-stone was hewn out of the old Plymouth quarry, and if it stand, as we believe it will, amid the storms and floods that beat upon it, it will be owing to the fact, that it was founded upon a rock. To drop the

figure, and use the language of one of England's noblest sons, "From the bruised seed of the poor and persecuted Pilgrims, has arisen one of the most powerful and prosperous empires in the world"—an empire destined to stand, because founded in prayer and in a deep-felt recognition of man, as an immortal being, and endowed with a nature seeking religious homage. It is because God and the Bible and the baptism of the Holy Spirit are recognized and enjoyed in the midst of us, that our hope is sanguine in relation to the permanency and prosperity of our political institutions. Take away the Bible, and our sense of dependence on God, and the grave which has received other republics would soon receive us. To you who have left us, to share the protection and love of the mother country, while you feel safe and happy, under her noble form of government, let me say, forget not the hills and the hearth-stones of the homes of your childhood.

" You have left the dear land of the lake and the hill,
 But its winds and its waters will talk with you still ;
 ' Forget not,' they whisper, ' your love is our debt,'
 And echo breathes softly, ' We never forget ! "

IV. *In the fourth place, let us contemplate the mission of the Pilgrims in a RELIGIOUS aspect.*

They were pre-eminently religious men. Theirs was a religion of the head and of the heart—a religion of conscience, permeating every power and faculty of their being. It was the religion of the old prophets revived, and of the martyrs of the early Church—a religion of principle and not of convenience, which

led them to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods. It made them exiles from the homes and graves of their fathers—pilgrims first in Holland, among a people of barbarous tongue, then adventurers in frail vessels on a stormy sea, then homeless strangers on the rock of Plymouth, with clouds and darkness round about them. But then it made them brave, heroic and full of hope. It kindled a bright light in the cabin of the *May Flower*. It made the storms and the winds, which howled around them, soft to their ears as anthems of praise. Amid the perils of their first winter, and amid the ravages of famine and disease, it drove them back upon God, as the only source of endurance and strength. It tamed the rage of hunger, softened the rigor of cold, broke the sting of death. It was a cordial to the sick, a shield to the timid, a staff to the feeble, a hope to the despairing. *It was their all*. It fully prepared them for their great mission, inspired them with Heaven's own wisdom, made them deep in counsel, mighty in the Scriptures, musical, too, full of the great life-psalm of faith and hope, a living Epic before the world, more august than all mere time-heroes, because inlaid with that high supernal grace which gives the soul its very giant-hood and power!

Touched with the fire of patriarchs and prophets, they were nerved to superhuman energy, as they fore-saw the better life and coming resurrection. And a proud thing it is to mark their great mission in the world, as they went forth, like Nehemiah of old, with the weapons of war in one hand and the implements of peace in the other, to build their own Jerusalem. A proud thing it is to see how, before their sturdy handicraft and

indomitable courage, the great forest and all human foes had to fall alike ; to note their spirit when life and honor were at stake, when for the soil yet unshorn and virgin, when for their altars and hearth-stones, yet in their rude simplicity, they pledged their all and plunged out into the struggle, in a time of darkness, that their children might have a free home and themselves an unpolluted grave. In many a secret as well as open place they poured their supplications and moulded their impress on all the forms of social order. Their Sabbaths, their social compacts, the outgoings of their inner and outer life were interpenetrated with the spirit of religion.

They were not, indeed, perfect : they had not all the gentleness and tolerance which ever become the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus. But we must consider the times in which they lived, the school in which they were trained, and the mission they had to accomplish. Even the sterner and more inflexible features of their character seemed adapted to the work they had to do. They were to lay the foundations of Church and State, in the midst of dangers and obstacles the most formidable that ever frowned upon the enterprise of man. They felt that they were set for the defense of the ark and the Shekinah in the wilderness, and that they would be held sacredly responsible for any unhallowed touch given to the one, or for any polluted feet that might enter the hallowed precincts of the other. Nobly did they execute their mission ; and New England, moulded by their influence, has ever been characterized as "the land of steady habits."

Our noblest charities, our boards of foreign and

domestic missions, our temperance reforms, our model institutions, our simplest forms of church organization, had their origin on the very soil first trod by the Pilgrim Fathers. From them we have inherited a religion the freest, the purest, the most aggressive in the world. It has become the religion of the entire country, recognized in its laws, its constitution, its courts of justice—a religion, not Jewish nor Papal, but *Christian*, monopolized by no sect or creed, yet blessing all, and offering to all its hopes and its salvation. Thus we see, in our day, without any departure from the essential principles of our fathers, a more enlarged and comprehensive Christian philanthropy. It seems to be the American destiny, the mission which God has entrusted to us, to show that all sects and all denominations, professing the fundamental truths of Christianity, may be safely tolerated without prejudice, either to our religion, or to our liberties. Occupying such a vantage ground, having such educational privileges, such institutions, and such a religion, what is our mission to the world? "Freely we have received, let us freely give." From our high tower should be streaming abroad those mighty and manifold influences, which shall destroy despotism, and establish and vindicate the brotherhood of man. For this was America born, and baptized with God's own baptism; that in the embodiment of a vast moral power, and the movement of a tremendous moral machinery, she should solve the great problem of a world's freedom, and work out the glorious accomplishment of an emancipated race.

When this shall be, what wonders of development

will roll, in swift succession, over the astonished earth; what new pulses of life will beat into the old and dismantled seats of former ages, carrying back, from the home of the Pilgrims, a new and better civilization into the very cradles of the human race. We are conscious that God is moving, even now, in an unusual manner, among the nations, and that the world has already passed into another and more amazing stage of its development in the history of human progress. The horoscope of cycles has just marked another triumph over the elements, in linking the two mightiest nations of the earth in closer bonds of sympathy, and marshaling the energies of both for the disenthralment of the race. Not till the shout of earth's happy and free millions shall ascend to heaven, will the mission of the Pilgrims be fully accomplished. We look abroad upon the other nations of the world, some of them groaning under the heaviest burdens, some of them meditating revolution and change, some of them groping in the night of ignorance and barbarism, some of them in the wane and wrinkle of hoary decrepitude, and we look to the land of the Pilgrims, and lo! by her grand old hills and rushing streams, there stands, like the angel of the Apocalypse, upon the land and sea, a gigantic form, in the fresh vigor and fair glory of trustful and exultant youth, all girt as a giant to run a race, all prepared, with heaven's own armor, for the furtherance of God's great designs, of reclaiming and redeeming the world.

This, then, is the *mission*, and for this was this wide land opened—for this were three nations sifted, that

the proper seed might be secured—for this was the May Flower freighted—for this were the Pilgrims schooled and prepared, and for this are they now pleading—by all the history of this world, by all the memories of the past, by all the expectations of the future, by the struggles of mankind for freedom, by the blood of martyred saints, by the blessings of Christianity, both temporal and eternal, they are pleading that the great burdens of the race may be rolled off into the gulf of oblivion, that the Gospel, like a belt of glory, may encircle the wide earth, and that the shout may go up to the listening heaven,—“The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of his Christ.”

Thus have we spoken of the Mission of the Pilgrims in its *Physical, Educational, Political* and *Religious* aspects.

You perceive that they, under Providence, were the architects of a most glorious structure. They laid its foundation in the *physical*, the basis of practical utility—the unhewn, unpolished granite moulded into buttresses of native simplicity and strength. Above this rose, in Egyptian proportions, broad, massive and firm, the educational element, with its columns and pillars of Ionic grace, imparting at once beauty and solidity to the structure. These were surmounted by architraves and entablatures, chiseled in Corinthian splendor, spanned by arches at once magnificent and strong, symbolizing and expressing their idea of a perfect state; and yet, above these, crowning and finishing the whole, was a massive dome, as of pearl, radiant with gold and gems, a beautiful emblem of that Christianity—that pure reli-

gion which, at the same time, completes and adorns the work. Its pinnacle, kissed by the light of heaven, and catching the incoming glory of the Millennium that tips the hills afar, anticipates the earthly heaven whose glory hasteneth on.

The Pilgrim Mission, laid in strength and ascending in beauty, modest but magnificent, simple but strong; let us, like the votaries that from every corner of the world cast wreaths of roses at the column of Napoleon in the Place Vendome at Paris, cast the garlands of our praises at its feet and pay our homage to the Pilgrims' memory.

" O! Thou Holy One and Just,
 Thou, who wast the Pilgrims' trust,
 Thou, who watchest o'er their dust,
 By the moaning sea ;
 By their conflicts, toils and cares,
 By their perils and their prayers,
 By their ashes—make their heirs
 True to *them* and *Thee*."