

Mankind, in their march through time, may be compared to that vast horde which, led by Xerxes, once moved, a wide, dark, human *mirage*, westward over the plains of Asia. They move on, and civilization embodies, complicates and intensifies about them at every step. In the march of generations, as in that of the Persian hordes, there may be insubordinate minds, who throw advantages in the way of the enemy, and there may be laggards who fall behind and retard the general advancement.—But here arises a difference. The rebelliousness of these churls will no more succeed, than will that of the lagging tide opposite the great luminaries, in wresting the earth from its gravitative center, and hurling it into space, merely because it does not with so much alacrity obey the attractive impulse: and there can be no deserters in this war, because no man can desert his own *personality*, and escaping beyond the confines of circumstance, lose the rank stamped by Nature, before his birth, in the very essence and constitution of his being.

We should pity, and not condemn, the *mules* in the march of ages, for while they plod sullenly on, they taste none of the fruits of obedience, save such as are thrust down their throats, and these they swallow with serry grimaces, fancying them aloetic pills or potions of wormwood. But let those who obey the “higher law” within them, and run manfully the race of life, rejoice; for as the actions of all mankind even now approve their own, so shall their words at no distant day unite to immortalize them.

To all who have assembled here to-day, I hope,—to most, I know,—I may address myself as to cheerful co-workers in the cause of Reform. Yet the same sentiment presents almost endless diversities of form and degree, as it exists in different minds. This is clearly true of Reform, as defined and advocated by different Reformers; and I doubt not there are many here to-day, purely radical, too, in their views, who would have to style me an ultraist, and some, perhaps, a rabid one. But what is ultraism? *Ultra*, you know, signifies *beyond*; so that *ultraism* is *beyondism*, that is all. It is the quality of being beyond one's fellows, it may be in error, it may be in truth, or it may be in seeming error which shall one day prove to be truth. But this you will at once perceive is no criterion. The test of all practical systems is *UTILITY*. If doctrines be ultra in this sense—if they overshoot and miss of useful results in practice, they are to be condemned. But if they merely go beyond the views of me, you, or any other man, they are by no means condemnable on that score, and if scrutinized, they may, or may not, still prove true. To argue otherwise, is to adopt, at one sweep, the whole odious doctrine of creeds and authorities against which we are all contending.

But let us handle a moment this doctrine of creeds and authorities, as it relates to medicine. The Old School would have us believe that we are a ragamuffin set of would-be-philosophers, who foolishly set ourselves up to oppose a grand, harmonious, perfect system of medical practice, taught the past thousand years, universally received save by quacks, with *et-ceteras* that would stupefy any one but a medical bravo! But let us analyze this harmony and perfection of creeds and authorities. It has vanished with