

on the same account, as their filthy advertisements, with which every newspaper teems, may certify, and as the thousands of books upon such, which are yearly sold, may confirm. The statistics of the criminal courts of New York, show a frightful increase in juvenile idleness, boldness, and delinquency, of the most frightful description. Look even at the outward appearance of young America; see the stern look of defiance, the leaden eye, and the sallow emaciation of most youthful faces among us, where health and beauty and sweetness ought to beam forth, an indication of inward happiness and worth. Compare the rising generation in cities with that of the country, and mark the difference. It is daily repeated that the race of Knickerbockers is vanishing. Yet were old Knickerbockers a smooth and oily set of men, whose voices were round and mellow, whose laugh was voluminous, whose appetite good, and whose digestion better. They were the Pilgrim fathers of our State, though they have no blamey rock of sacred memory, the most estimable race of men who led the march to America, though, indeed, not descendants of Englishmen. Like the fine old Catholic gentlemen of times gone by, they have a jolly fat patriarch for their patron, and in venerating good St. Nicholas, who was a Roman Catholic Bishop, they keep up the tradition of ages from which their ancestors sprung. Alas! for the old Knickerbockers, the true American gentlemen; are they to have no representatives but the thin, long-legged youths who throng Broadway of an afternoon, looking as though they had sprung up since the last shower, and speaking in a grating voice, more like that of an overgrown school girl, than of the manly heirs of the lords of the soil? Holy St. Nicholas pray for them!

Before concluding these allusions to the depraved state of manly and moral tone among the youth of this country, one peculiarity ought to be noticed which forcibly impresses every foreigner who comes to our shores. It is the want of respect in the young for the aged. Equality may be good enough in society and before the law, but equality in the family, is a levelling of the worst description. A community, where a stripling of thirteen will treat his betters at forty with contempt, must be one in which the education of youth is in a frightful condition. Ovid, the Roman Poet, speaks of this want of reverence for age as a sign of the approaching downfall of Rome, and Horace had observed it before him. I am proud to see among my audience this evening, some heads which the snows of approaching age have silvered over with the proofs of a virtuous and well-spent life. These venerable men might tell us whether they find among the youth of to-day, that their grey hairs are a badge of honor; whether youth will rise, out of respect at their reproach, and listen with modesty to the admonitions which the wisdom of experience may breathe from their lips. Woe be to the youthful society whose conduct embitters the heart of the old man, and renders itself unworthy of his blessing!

Another class of immense influence in the country, may be examined, in testing its morality: I mean that of professional men. In speaking of the class who are usually comprehended under the name of Divines, independent of the Catholic Church, I need not tell a Catholic audience, that they are powerless in keeping right the conscience of the nation. They are not able to speak with authority, for their mission is not legitimate. But let us see, practically, whether the various ministers of reformed denominations—a body of men comprising a vast amount of intelligence, influence, riches, amiability, and natural virtues—can be said to give us an assurance that the principles of morality will be preserved in this nation. They cannot preserve those principles. It is impossible for them, in the position in which they are, to speak out boldly to their hearers. They may tell them how Pagans and Papists are going to perdition, but they dare not put the brimstone under their own noses. They dare not tell them the place they are going to. It would cost them the bread of their life. But moreover it is a fact that the people have no confidence in them as guides, no respect for them as teachers, no admiration for them as examples. How eagerly the multitude will purchase vile prints where the shame of some member of the ministerial body, is painted in some scandalous colors, and exult over the filthy narration, as an excuse for popular depravity. It is an infamy and a disgrace to the community, when such a circumstance takes place, and no Catholic can rejoice to see any body of men abused, from the vain argument that some of its members have proved recreant. But still the circumstance proves that Protestantism, with all its tracts, sermons, Bibles, missions, institutes, and societies, has lost its hold on the mind and heart of the American people, and that some other agency must save the country, if it is to be saved at all.

The Legal profession has gradually become a subject of hatred and ridicule, and in many instances our lawyers have most richly deserved it. Yet, where is the body of laymen who, were their public life what it ought to be, could oppose a stronger front to bad principles and practice. The Jurisconsults and Publicists of the Roman Empire, were, under the Church, one of the strongest powers that saved ancient civilisation for a time, and built up modern civilisation, when the other had fallen to rise no more. Yet, among us, levelling in the legal profession goes on every day at a more fearful rate. In place of sticking to Blackstone, professional men turn politicians, turn speculators, turn contractors, turn newspaper scribblers, and, like other venerable bodies, are beset with ten quacks for every regular. It is not a trifling sign of the drift popular principle is taking, when lawyers are at work, every once in a while, to tinker the Constitution, and to fabricate new Codes, when Judges are elected by the people to office, and when systematic and persevering efforts are made to bring public opinion to bear upon the jury box and the

Bench. Heaven preserve the integrity of the Judge who is placed in the dilemma of judging an honest man, or acquitting a rogue, to satisfy the clamor of a brutal mob, or else of doing justice, and becoming the victim of their fiercest vengeance.

Let us turn to another profession, and examine its influence upon the preservation of a healthy moral tone in the country. We have the Medical profession. That the influence of its members is very great, and highly important, no one can deny. The doctor's voice is heard in moments when his power is unlimited, and when there is every disposition to revere and love him. His influence extends to the bosom of the family, and to the minds and hearts, as well as to the bodies of his patients. But of all professions in the world, none abounds more with ignorant and heartless quacks, whose influence, were it lent only to purposes of private emolument, might be considered merely as an abuse, but is a curse to the country when, as it does amongst us, it murders the body by mismanagement and audacity, and the soul by pandering to the most horrid vices, by screening worse than heathenish malpractices, and by diffusing, under the name of cheap and familiar instructions in the healing art, works explaining secrets of the most poisonous and destructive nature. Far be it from me, however, to cast obloquy upon those physicians who, being properly trained, exercise their beneficent calling as men of integrity and wisdom should do. There is probably no body of men amongst us, so worthy of our love and respect, as those of whom I speak, and, I may add, perhaps nobody can, with a better grace, do justice to the doctor than a Priest. Our calling leads us often, when others are reposing in their home, to meet in garret and cellar, in the midst of winter, and the darkness of night, by the bedside of the poor and the friendless. We of the clergy can testify how frequently the good physician in New York may be seen to toil cheerfully, and to return again where he is certain that no earthly recompense will be found; we know how often, after long and anxious service is rendered by the doctor to the rich, his just demands are treated with neglect, and perhaps insolently gainsaid by the very objects who owe their life to his skill and fidelity. If the people will forsake those who are worthy of their respect and confidence, and place their lives at the mercy of the miserable dabbler in washes and mixtures, they alone are to blame, not the honorable and learned medical profession. The manner in which the doctors are treated in a country, is an index of the state of its enlightenment and civilisation. Where these exist in a state of high culture, the regular professors of the noble medical science will command not only the respect and the confidence, but the gratitude and the affection of their fellow citizens.

Let us pass, however, from these classes, to examine other tests of moral civilisation. Among these, one of the most alarming is the spirit of anarchy, which is heard breathing from so many different quarters, in defiance of law and order. It has manifested itself, especially since two years ago, in reference to foreign countries. Wherever a banner was raised, and people collected around it, we never stopped to inquire further than if authority was concerned on one side, and having found out that it was, we hurraed for every thing else. We made fools of ourselves, and rendered the public sympathy of this country absolutely worth nothing. We cheered and clapped our hands and threw up our caps for the Pope, and then we cheered, and clapped hands, and threw up caps for those who were against the Pope. We cheered on the villainous robberies of Swiss and Roman bandits, and we hurraed for the haughty Magyar nobles, when they sought to oppress the native race of Hungary, rising to claim equal rights. We have gone for every shade of rebellion, from the blood-red to the cream-colored. We, who claim to be so cool in our judgment, so just in our decisions, have allowed ourselves to be completely deluded, both as to justice of cause and probability of success. We, who pretend to be so generous to the persecuted, lent our sympathies against the poor down-trodden Slavonians, against the Pope driven into exile, against old General Haynau, an aged man, a stranger, and alone,—cudgelled and bruised by a whole brewery full of sturdy English bullies. I knew Americans could be deceived, but I never thought, until late examples, that they would attack the weaker party, much less that they would help to kick a man after he was down.

Wise men feared all this sympathy, and were alarmed at the tone of the press, and of public speakers siding everywhere with rebellion. They feared that the contempt expressed by us so vehemently against government of every kind abroad, and the right asserted to disobey it, might gradually shape towards our own government, and lead us to assert the right to disobey it. Their fears were not vain. Ultraism was sympathized with in Europe, and ultraism soon reared its snaky head to be sympathized with here. A distinguished whig Senator proclaimed himself the apostle of a law higher than the Constitution he had sworn to obey. He did no more than a distinguished democratic Senator had done when he discovered a law higher than the laws of Austria and its dominions, and which justified the conduct of the rebels, and condemned the Government that put them down. Radicalism and Socialism do not seek to reform monarchies alone. We have seen in this city a slight indication in the demonstrations made by journeymen at their meetings in the Park and elsewhere, and in the various labor movements of similar character, that the seeds of discontent exist here too at the very foundation of society. Men will not be wanting to cultivate those baneful seeds until they are developed to their full height and breadth. Unless to obey the laws of the country and the authorities which they recognise becomes the fixed spirit and

principle of our people, what will be the result when the Tailors' higher law, and the Cobblers', and Blacksmiths', and Carpenters' higher law, and all the tradesmen's and workmen's higher law tells them to make a grand rush at their employers and seize upon their property? See what the country loses by keeping company with European radicals, by confusing liberty with licentiousness, government with despotism, authority with tyranny, and rebellion with right. Moral civilisation is already attacked when law and order begin to be resisted, and contemned even in words alone.

The inordinate love of gain among the men, the introduction of aristocratic luxury among the women, is quoted by ancient writers as having led to the downfall of the republics of Greece and Rome, and later of Florence, Venice, and Genoa. Are these two sources of feebleness and corruption on the increase in this country? Those who know best may answer. Merchants and men of business commonly tell you they do not believe there are many honest men going. Honesty is the best Policy was the proverb in old times. Now it would seem with the modern improvements to read more to the purpose backwards—"Policy is the best Honesty." I admire the wisdom of our forefathers who put the Head of Liberty on one side of our coin, and wrote the value on the other. It might have taught the man who handled it to keep half his heart at least free from avarice, and reminded him that there is something worth living for beyond money-making. Old America nearly worshipped the side where Liberty was: Young America does not care about that side, but worships the other side where she reads the name of her favorite Deity, the Almighty Dollar. But this love of gain in individuals would not be of such evil import were the nation not to sanction it. But unfortunately our American Eagle, who when he was young was such a sweet interesting little bird, now that his beak and talons have grown, begins to evince the fondness for visiting neighboring barn-yards that is characteristic of most birds of prey. It is singular that this republic should develop so early a tendency to split upon the same rock, against which the fate of other republics should have warned her. It is singular also because of all nations it would seem that we are less in need of room. Of Rome, gorged and bloated with the spoils of conquest, it was said, "mole sua ruit." She fell by her own weight. The burden of the old world was too heavy for her. Shall the United States be able to bear that of the new world? Scarcely a year passes now without an attempt on the part of Americans to annex, which is the polite word for stealing when it is done by wholesale, something that does not belong to us. We tried Canada, we annexed Texas, we occupied Mexico, we appropriated California, though it nearly cost the dissolution of the Union. The public voice of the country has generally sanctioned the anti-Cuban movements, and now is threatened the occupation of Lower California. All this in the name of Liberty. It justifies the exclamation of the French writer—"Oh! Liberty, how many crimes have been committed in thy name." One of our Poets, I believe Mr. Willis, in some verses which he made, supposed to be sung to the American Eagle by the Swedish Nightingale on the occasion of her presenting her bill to him, says that the Eagle will go on with annexation until he annexes all the earth, and more, until the stars of heaven shall become stars of the American flag. I think it would have been decidedly more to the purpose had the sweet little northern melodist told the proud eagle, that unless he stopped his outrageous propensity for stealing he would find himself and his country annexed to a certain kingdom far enough down from the stars, whose fiery king does not accept bad poetry as an excuse for worse behaviour.

There is no passion more cruel in its origin, more accursed in its progress, more horrid in its consummation, than the thirst of conquest. War, rapine, and darkest crime are all united in this wholesale scourge. The man who seizes by force upon the property of his fellow-man, is conducted by the ministers of the law to the court, the jail, the scaffold. When a nation robs a sister nation is there no bar before which it can be arraigned, no punishment by which it will be visited? The car of conquest may roll onward amid the triumphant shouts of its satellites, but like the car of the accursed Juggernaut of the east, it crushes heatombs of hearts in its hellish course. The pathway of military heroes is white with the bones, and red with the blood of their fellow-men. Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, may triumph; Greece, Rome, France, may exult in their high festival. But there are registering angels in heaven who record the sigh of the unknown widow mourning perhaps in the hour of triumph for her son, her only hope, whose corpse lies a prey to wolf and raven upon the field of the conqueror's glory. Persia, Assyria, Greece, and Rome, worshipped on the national altar the greedy idol of annexation. Where are now the monuments of their triumph which cost rivers of human tears, and mountains of human skulls? There remains of their greatness nothing but a pile of melancholy ruins, and a name of departed glory left as a warning to the nations which imitate their reckless ambition. Ah! has this brave young republic, so much admired by men, so highly favored by the God of nations, has she then no mission but to punish the crimes of her neighbors, to be punished herself in her turn? Is she, like the sanguinary Attila, to become the scourge of an avenging Deity? Oh! may her future career avert such an omen. May it be one of love and peace, may she be a daughter of joy, wielding not the terrible rod of vengeance, but the beneficent wand of mercy. The rod of vengeance when it has chastised the wicked is broken and cast away by the hand of Eternal Justice which gave it to the world, but the wand of mercy, like that of Aaron, is

placed in the ark of the tabernacle to bring forth buds and blossoms before the face of the Holy of Holies.

We have examined from several sources the civilisation, physical, intellectual, and moral, of this country. We have cheerfully granted its unequalled prosperity in the first respect, we have given it qualified praise in the second, in the third adducing many proofs of the fact, we have deplored its deteriorating course. From the nature of present circumstances our treatment of the subject proposed, viz., "True Civilisation," has turned mainly upon the third division we made—moral civilisation. This is the point which every one who has patriotism, and influence in the country should study well, and frequently explain to his listeners.

I think I can sum up to your satisfaction, the statement of what is wanting in the moral civilisation of this powerful country, and in doing so, more fully explain my subject. First of all, the reflections proposed, are not Utopian. They do not exhort you to try and turn earth into the Socialist's heaven. They take man as they find him. They admit of being applied more or less perfectly. I do not predict danger, therefore, from the fact that individuals, or even corporate bodies, are bad. There will be good and bad everywhere. But there is danger when levelling begins to affect the honor, the faith, the unwritten law of the whole people, and even brings gradually into contempt the sanctity of their written code. Public opinion is the most powerful arbiter of things in the United States. It is willing and strong enough to conciliate differences, to solve doubts, to prescribe the course to be followed, after its own fashion. Moral civilisation requires that, back of this public opinion, there should be a public conscience. The working of the public conscience will guide and correct public opinion, and repair the errors of its hasty and heated expressions. It will make the nation admit right and truth at least in theory, even though it should violate both in fact. It will call things by their right names. A community that calls things by their right names, is safe in its principles, and can survive bad practices. If an individual does wrong, the community at least will not sanction his prevarication. But, we be to the people who, like the wicked men mentioned in the Bible, "*dixerunt malum bonum et bonum malum.*" call good evil, and evil good. As an instance in case, if we will allow our representatives to pillage and plunder Mexico, let us at all events acknowledge our roguery, and not pretend to appease conscience, crying out against our evil deed with sickly cant about freedom, or with the high-sounding battle cries of Monterey, Buena Vista, and Churubusco. When Pilate is swayed by the Jews, in his judgment of the Innocent One, we hate him; but, when he attempts to wash the guilt from his hands, we are positively sickened by the man's base and reckless hypocrisy. Let the nation not have recourse to Pilate's basin of water. It is an emblem of extreme villany, of vice not satisfied with being vice, but pretending to be virtue. The sinner who does evil, and is ashamed of it, may be amended. But, if he boasts and brags of his sin, if he crows over the mischief he has done, he becomes an irreclaimable scoundrel. We say, when he goes that length, that he is hardened, and was never born to be drowned, and we are right. A nation, however, as an individual, does not grow extremely wicked all at once. It does so by a gradual process. It is a process which precisely marks the lessening influence of the public conscience. The dictates of the public conscience will live by tradition, even in a vicious community, and as long as they are not silenced by brutal obstinacy, there is yet hope.

It is a faculty, whose office is to keep in view and apply the principles of the moral common sense of humanity, the maxims which God engraved upon the heart of man, from the beginning. It is sometimes called a "small still voice." It is a Divine voice, like that which spoke to the Prophet, not in the rushing wind, not in the gathering storm, not in the roaring flame, but in the subdued whisper of the gentle breeze. It is no Pantheistic or fantastic spirit, but it is Jehovah himself, not addressing man from on high, in the rolling thunder-voice of Sinai, but bending to whisper in his ear a fond parent's admonition. This voice is a practical dictum of moral wisdom. It speaks when a man goes to do a thing, and says merely, "You do right," or "You do wrong." It speaks after his action, and says merely, "You have done right," or "You have done wrong," and he feels and knows its truth. In the first case, it is a warning; in the second, it is that bitter word Remorse. Were I to point to an institution, in preference to others, which can and ought to assist in maintaining the dignity, and the authority of the public conscience, there are few agencies I should attribute greater influence to than the American press. The press is called the mighty engine of public opinion. It is more than that, it is the lord and master of public opinion, and holds public opinion in as perfect subjection as Jonathan does his colored brother Sambo. The press, were it to attain to the standard it might reach, did not human passions control it like all other human institutions, should be the exponent of public conscience to public opinion. Some body has said that were St. Paul to come into the world now, he would speak through the press. I would add, respectfully, that just as surely as he did so, he would be peppered for it the next morning. The reason is what I stated, that the press allows itself to be swayed by public opinion, by popular tumult, and popular wickedness. It fears to give offence by saying what the people do not hold to themselves, and of course the people hold often to what is pleasant against what is good. One who wields such a powerful weapon as the editor of a popular periodical must necessarily do immense good, or immense evil. He will be greatly rewarded or greatly punished hereafter, according to