

the keystone of the colonial arch—among a people already separated by language and race, it “insulates” the more Protestant Provinces to the east and to the west. No scruples restrain it from obtaining every possible assistance from the State. Yet is it secret and irresponsible, bound by closest allegiance to a foreign authority, and utterly alien—in all its sympathies, habits, and interests—from the better spirit of our country and our time. Such, however, is its influence, that its consent had to be obtained ere the projected changes could take place. And be sure that it is sleeplessly watching behind the scenes to see that it loses nothing, but gains rather, in the pending deliberations.

Here lies one great peril of the time that is passing over us. Too much voice and hand has this malign power already had in shaping our future destiny. It took early possession of one part of the field, and strongly fortified its position there. It has auxiliaries everywhere. Some even, who seem to *protest* against it, harness themselves to its chariot. Its aim is nothing less than to have the whole Continent for its own.

Yet this is not the only danger. Were there no Church of Rome in existence, we should still look forward with many forebodings to the future of our country. The sin that is born with every human being, has, in some respects a ranker development amid the freedom and the spaciousness of a new world. There is a wantonness of self-will, an impatience of all authority, and an incapability of reverence, seemingly, in the very atmosphere. The new treasures of the soil tempt men to an inordinate and all-absorbing lust for wealth. Sudden enrichment, and the absence of hereditary distinctions, invite to an ostentatious style of life. Drunkenness, licentiousness and profanity, abound to a fearful degree. Soul-deceiving errors are freely propagated, and too often greedily embraced. While indifference, the passive “enmity against God” of the “natural man,” sinks multitudes into a purely selfish and worldly life. There is danger of national demoralization—and that means national destruction.

*How shall the evil be averted?* Shall we look for a remedy only to laws and institutions—to Governors and Parliaments—to Magistrates and Judges—to the Schools and the Press? All these have a most important part to perform. But when they have done their utmost they cannot rightly mould, but rather need to have ready to their hand, the most essential element in national life, that is—THE CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE.

Liberty is worthless—is an injury—to those who do not govern themselves. Paper constitutions depend for their efficiency upon the temper of rulers and people. Laws are unavailing when public opinion does not sustain them. As it is said of schools, that “The Teacher is the System,” so it may be said of nations, “The People are the Constitution.”

Our great task, then, in laying “the foundations of many generations,” is to strive to make our own generation what it ought to be. And *where shall we find the power that will accomplish this?*