

The first paper is, perhaps, the best in the book. It is a selection from the "Pugsley Papers," and is as worthy of attention—perhaps, for either; is to stay the approach of immediate death—to turn aside a few of the commoner arrows with which the whole atmosphere is burning; to purify with a fire that of itself destroyeth; to put off the evil day, not for ever and ever, but for a few miserable months, for years, or ages. Above all, it were good for us—ay, and for the very best and wisest of our earth, to bear in mind forever, by night and by day, and all their lives long, that the downward step of nations, as of men, is always when least expected; always in their greatest prosperity, following the moment of their greatest health and strength, 'as the thunderbolt pursues the flash,' with no interval; no pause; no time for prayer or preparation.

'Behold how the cities and wealth of Asia have faded away from the eastern sky, like a vision of turrets and battlements or like the bright colors of a picture crowded with life and beauty, over which the breath of centuries hath passed. And so with Africa. And so with Europe. And why may it not be so hereafter with America? Who shall say? Are we to read the stars for ourselves—Would you leave the decision to America, or to the children—or to the sages of America? As well may you interrogate the golden dust of Babylon, the sepulchre of kings and princes; or the unapproachable hiding place of Palmyra, that imperial spectre of the desert; that architectural phantom of the solitude; or Carthage, or Tyre; or push aside the pyramids and call up the Pharaohs of old; one by one;

'With blasts of unseen trumpets, long and loud,
Swelled by the breath of whirlwinds:—

and ask what *THEY* thought of the future, in the fulness of their strength, or what their people thought; or their sages; when the roar of the great world broke upon their solitude, with the uninterrupted heave and swell of the far ocean. Were *THEY* afraid of the future! Did their astrologers or soothsayers tremble when *THEY* read the stars? Did their philosophers, their lawgivers, or their statesmen, ever foretell or foresee the overthrow that has made the country of each a proverb, the power of each a by word; the birth place of nations, the nursery of empires, a desert. Or if they had foreseen the issue that we see; if they had interpreted the stars aright, and prophesied truly; would they have been believed? Would they have been listened to; would they not rather have been pitied, or scoffed at, or peradventure put to death for the outrage upon their magnificent destiny?"

After thus pointing out to our view the examples of departed nations, who remained quiet and secure until the Spoiler came upon them; he applies his remarks more immediately to the present situation of this country; alluding to the danger of luxury, and stating boldly, but perhaps justly, that in point of moral energy, we are weaker than we were at the time of the Revolution; that our day of chivalry and virtue has gone by! that there