

but we would not keep men in bondage for these. Ambition, extravagance, and artificial manners are not found in the primitive simplicity and society of pioneer life; but we would not forbid social progress on that account. The cultivated farm and commodious mansion are better than the wigwam and the forest. No state of life has so many charms and attractions as childhood; yet perpetual childhood would be an unspeakable calamity. So the world's manhood is better than its childhood. The stir and energy of modern intellectual life is better than the stolid credulity which they have superseded. For we should not forget that "the good old times," so fondly cherished, were times of prevailing ignorance and gross superstition—times of intolerant bigotry and inhuman persecution—times of unjust and oppressive tyranny, when the rights of manhood were denied. People speak of the past as they speak of the dead, mentioning only what is commendable; and throwing the mantle of kindly forgetfulness over the suffering, ignorance and injustice, that found a genial home in the bosom of "the good old times." With all its faults, the present age is the best age the world has ever seen. The present day is the brightest day that has ever shed its lustre upon our race. There never was so much light in the world as now. There never was so much liberality and charity. There never was so pervasive a sympathy with the various forms of human want and suffering; and never such noble and self-denying efforts to remove them as now. There never was as much liberty of thought and civil liberty; and human intelligence was never so constantly and successfully applied to the promotion of human well being, physically, intellectually and morally, as now. I freely grant that the picture is not without its dark shades, which may discourage and perplex. It has been fitly said, "It is dark with threatening, and bright with promise. It is like the autumn morning, that breaks amid wild and lurid clouds; yet through these lowering clouds there darts, at times, such glorious beams from the invisible sun, that we are held in palpitating suspense, uncertain whether the day will issue in storm and terror; or whether, after a few fitful blasts, the gloom will roll away from the heavens, leaving the sky more pure than ever, and the landscape beneath it bright and peaceful." For my own part, I believe that it is only the morning of the world's day. The sun of liberty and righteousness shall rise higher and higher, quickening the barrenness of earth into life and fruitfulness, before the harvest time comes, when the angel reapers shall garner the fruits of time in the garners of heaven. Let us briefly glance at a few of the tendencies of the times in which we live.

*First*—The present day is distinguished by a general diffusion of