

The American Idea, and What Grows Out of It.

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I have alluded to the general reasons for celebrating the Fourth of July. But there are special reasons why we should celebrate the Fourth of July, 1854. For in no strained sense it is a *centennial* celebration, and involves that class of suggestions which spring up in contemplating the lapse of a hundred years. The year 1754 is a memorable one in our annals, and remarkable for its bearings upon the American Revolution. It witnessed the commencement of the French or seven years' war, which, no doubt, precipitated the crisis of 1776. For, in the first place, the issues of that war created, or, at least, suggested an excuse for that odious principle of taxation which the British Government endeavored to force upon us. Under the plausible pretext of making the Colonies pay for the support of a standing army, ostensibly for their own defence, but really for the furtherance of British power, the Ministers of King George endeavored to practice the despotism of taxing America without the action of its people, or the voice of its representatives. To this plan the events of the French war gave impulse and definite form. But the crafty were caught in their own snare. Grenville's "System of Colonial measures" was the progenitor of a new nation. The Navigation acts, the Stamp act, the Tea tax, were those very links in the iron of Oppression which were hammered into the sword of deliverance. For, in the next place, it was the result of the French war not to increase the need of British protection on the part of the colonies, but to loosen the feeling of dependence. In shattering the dominion of France on this continent, England had dissipated the terrors of Border warfare, and scattered those meshes of surprise and cruelty which hemmed the infant colonies and threatened the march of the early pioneers. It was felt then, that there was less need of help from across the water. Nay, rather it was felt that, under Providence, the American people had, by their labors and sacrifices, acquired sufficient strength of their own. Their after-course was not the ingratitude of wards who, pampered by fortune, meanly struck back the hand that had cherished them; but the manly assertion of free sons who had faithfully fulfilled their contract, and served their time. Side by side with the royal troops they had endured the burden and heat of the day, and had poured out their lives. And the services which they rendered had made their mark. It was a provincial engineer who threw the shell into the citadel of Louisburgh. It was a provincial youth — his coat torn with bullets, but whose life designed by Prov-

idence for higher ends no ball could touch—it was a provincial youth that bore the brunt when Braddock's soldiers quailed. And if by labor had come development, and manly strength by costly sacrifice — if in the enlargement of their usefulness they felt the throbbings of “manifest destiny,” and learned that they had become able to stand alone, had they not a right to the result? In the perils of the wilderness and in the storm of battle — before the batteries of Cape Breton, on the shores of Lake George, by the lonely rivers of the West — the really “Young” America of that day, had been baptized in its own blood, and had come of age. And this indicates still another result of the seven years' war. It was the school of that military experience which was so soon demanded by the exigencies of the Revolution, and the scholars were Prescott, Putnam, Pomeroy, Stark, Gates, Lee and Washington.

In various ways, then, this war had close connection with the war of Independence, and makes the year 1754 a memorable year. And it is memorable not only for the commencement of that pregnant conflict, but for its own special events. In that year, Washington, at the head of his little band, in the valley of the Ohio, on a dark night in May, himself fired the first shot which, in the words of our historian, “kindled the world into a flame,” and which carried his name into the saloons of Paris; and in that same year Benjamin Franklin at Albany, acting upon his motto — “Join or die,” projected a confederation of the Colonies, and breathed into the grand plan of a Union “the breath of enduring life.” Yes, a hundred years ago, this very day was a remarkable day. On the Fourth of July, 1754, Washington was forced to an honorable retreat from Fort Necessity, and on the same day, Franklin set his name to a plan for the league of the Provinces, at Albany. Only twenty-two years elapse, and how sudden the change, and yet, as we have just seen, how intimate the connection between the two classes of events! only twenty-two years elapse, and on the Fourth of July, 1776, Washington is at the head of an *American* army, and Franklin has signed the “Declaration of Independence.”

But, fellow-citizens, the great Revolution which was consummated by that armed array and by that act of Declaration, was not the product of twenty years or of twenty centuries, of mere outward historical transactions. Events are only the shells of ideas; and often it is the fluent thought of ages that is crystalized in a moment by the

stroke of a pen or the point of a bayonet. In the minds and hearts of those Revolutionary heroes — in the deep current of those Revolutionary events — there worked an idea, not new by any means; but still, for reasons which I shall give, I call it the AMERICAN IDEA. It had its sanction, and its first, clear, consistent utterance, as I believe in the oracles of Christianity. It found a sanctuary in the breasts of its early saints and martyrs. It passed out into the world and struck the chord of political action as it blended with the spirit of Teutonic independence. It flourished well in England, and found utterance in Parliament and from Tower-Hill. The cavalier bore it in his haughty consciousness to his new home in Virginia. The Hollander accepted it in his sturdy Republicanism. The Puritan brought it in the May-Flower, and planted it on Plymouth Rock. Indicated now and then by some isolated enterprise or sharp event, its influence was silently engendered in a people's history, until at length its latent electricity broke out in one quick blaze from line to line, in one long roll of drums, from Lexington to Yorktown. I find that Idea at the core of all Democracy; I find it at the heart of our national organism; and without it Democracy would be only a name, and our nationality illegitimate. That Idea, fellow citizens, is *the spiritual worth of every man!*

That I may not seem to be presenting you with a bit of transcendental philosophy instead of historical fact, let me call your attention to the manner in which this Idea of the worth of the individual, the spiritual dignity of man, was expressed in the course of the Revolutionary struggle. The prevalence of any great conception is more strikingly manifest in the general flow and tone of a people's thought than in any specific utterance. We see, then, that it has descended from the region of abstract speculation, and become a recognized and practical fact. I find the spirit of this Idea prevalent, I would say then, in the first place, as I turn over the pages of the thinkers and writers of that period. In doing so, my eyes rest upon the satisfaction with which Benjamin Franklin, in one of his letters, states that "It is a common observation here (in Europe) that our cause is the cause of *all mankind*, and that we are fighting for their liberty in defending our own. It is a glorious task," says he, "that is assigned us by Providence." I detect the same thought in the words of Alexander Hamilton: "All men," says he, have one common original; they participate in one common nature, and consequently have one

common right. No reason can be assigned why one man should exercise any pre-eminence over his fellow-creatures, unless they have voluntarily vested him with it. No man in his senses can hesitate in choosing to be free rather than a slave." This is the key-note in the following language of Jefferson: "These are our grievances, which we have thus laid before his Majesty with that freedom of language and sentiment which becomes a free people, claiming their rights as *derived from the laws of nature*, and not as the gift of the Chief Magistrate. Let those flatter who fear; it is not an American art. They know, and will therefore say, that kings are the servants, not the proprietors of the people. If our winds and waters should not combine to rescue their shores from slavery, and Gen. Howe's reinforcement should arrive in safety, we have hopes he will be inspirited to come to Boston and take another drubbing; and we must drub him soundly before the sceptered tyrant will learn we are not mere brutes to crouch under his hand, and kiss the rod with which he designs to scourge us." And still again, the same Idea, as we might well expect, finds expression in the words of Washington, addressed to Bryan Fairfax: "What is it," says he, "what is it we are contending against? Is it against paying the duty of three pence per pound on tea, because burdensome? No, it is the right only that we have all along disputed. \* \* \* If I were in any doubt as to the right which the Parliament of Great Britain had to tax us without our consent, I should most heartily coincide with you in opinion that to petition, and petition only, is the proper method to apply for relief; because we should then be asking a favor, and not claiming a right, which *by the law of nature*, and by our constitution, we are, in my opinion, indubitably entitled to. I should even think it criminal to go further than this, under such an idea; but I have none such. I think the Parliament of Great Britain have no more right to put their hands into my pocket, without my consent, than I have to put my hands into yours." How refreshing these strong, bold words are — words that mean something — words that come pouring down from those heights of patriotism upon our mean politics and our shifty statesmanship, like a cataract. This was the Idea of the Revolution as expressed in its deepest thought. And it must be recollected that it was an *Idea* which first roused our forefathers to action — not a material acquisition. Resistance for the sake of a principle, in the minds of most of them, at least, preceded the notion of actual separa-

tion from Great Britain and of National Independence. And that which was a pervading conception in the thought and the writing of the time, was manifest in the very character and lives of the men of the Revolution. The men of the Revolution! those who left the standing corn and the plow mid-furrow, and seized the weapons with which they had fought against Montcalm and Pontiac, to battle for the cause of freedom. Men of elastic muscle, and dauntless bearing, and mother-wit. As they rise up before us, nothing strikes us more impressively than their individualism and their sense of personal independence. These traits had been fostered by every circumstance of early education and of local position. Their religion threw them upon the basis of personal conscience, their politics had been trained in town meeting, and in the field they "fought on their own hook." It was the man of this class whose "ruling passion," as Bancroft says, "was to be a freeholder," and who "coveted the enjoyment of perfect personal freedom in the companionship of nature." The authority of royal mandates, the terrors of border warfare, could not shut him out from the wilderness, and from that life of adventure in which self-consciousness and self-reliance are specially developed. In the primeval forest he learned great first principles and a contempt of mere conventionalities; while the march of individual enterprise and achievement was proclaimed, in the sound of his axe and the crack of his rifle, from the woods of Penobscot to the valley of the Mississippi. Such, then, were the pervading thoughts and such were the living men of the period of the Revolution. Therefore we are not surprised that at length this Idea of personal worth, of individual freedom, culminated and blazed in that bold, distinct sentence which this day has been read in your ears: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights." Nor do we wonder that this Idea triumphed, as it did, in the result of the Revolution.

I call it "The American Idea," and yet I have said it is no new idea. I call it "the American Idea" in the same sense as that in which I call the reaping-machine, or the cotton-gin an American idea; meaning thereby not only a principle, but a principle embodied and working to the best results. If you look around in this Crystal Palace and select the most modern or original invention you can find, you may trace in it, filaments of thought that are older than the pyramids; and, perhaps, some working principle that was



known to Tubal Cain. Yet you will accord the honors of invention to whomsoever has disentangled a great idea and embodied it in a more efficient form, or has so adjusted a working-principle as to make it produce its best results. Now liberty itself is an old fact. It has had its heroes and its martyrs in almost every age. As I look back through the vista of centuries, I can see no end of the ranks of those who have toiled and suffered in its cause, and who wear upon their breasts its stars of the Legion of Honor. There was Grecian Liberty, and there was Roman Liberty—Grecian and Roman Republicanism. And certainly there was a *framework* of Liberty. But everybody knows that ancient freedom was not like our modern, not like our American freedom. It was a freedom of cities; not of huge masses and territories. It was the freedom of the citizen rather than of the individual. Then Christianity came into the world, and introduced that grand *working principle* of liberty which I have just enunciated—the doctrine of individual, spiritual worth—which runs beyond the barriers of race, and finds a deeper foundation than the standards of ethnology. I do not mean, then, that the American Idea is original, either as presenting the first form of organized liberty, or as an abstract working principle. Nor is it so merely as the combination of that principle with an organized form. To say nothing of others, we owe a great deal to England, and let us never grudge the confession. Let us be thankful for so many of our fibres that have grown out of its heart of oak, and for so many of our household associations which were cradled within its sea-beaten walls. Land of Shakspeare and of Milton, whose inspirations make a flood of common thought; in the reservoir of its constitution we willingly recognize, also, head-springs of our common freedom. It was natural that we should spurn the hand that oppressed us—it was quite a *family trait*. It was legitimate blood that mounted to cheek and eye when the statues of King George were melted into bullets and tea-boxes floated in Boston harbor. They were ancestral tones that mingled in the battle-shouts under the smoky veils of Saratoga and Mommouth. When we think of Morgan's riflemen and Stark's Green Mountain Boys, we readily think, also, of Cromwell's Ironsides; and we are willing that Elliott, and Pym, and Russell, and Hampden, and Sydney, should stand in illustrious companionship with the great men who signed our Charter and bled upon our fields.

But, fellow-citizens, it is the man who makes the *best* application of a working-principle who is entitled to honors of invention. And our claim is that we have made a better application of the great working-principle of Liberty than England has. In order to do this, we had a new, broad field, clear of all feudal rubbish. We had the advantage of experience. We had the best results of the old civilization to incorporate in the new. The ripe seeds of European freedom, shaken by the hand of oppression and wafted by the winds of persecution, were borne to these shores, and furnished material. And so, in constructing a new national system, we gave more prominence to this principle of individual worth and right. As has been well observed, "we incline less to the *historical* element than the English do, and more to the *abstract*. We conceive of the rights of the citizen more as *attributes of his humanity*." Now, fellow-citizens, into the great Crystal Palace of History, whose contributions consists of facts and principles, I bring this machine of ours—I bring it into the Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations, as patented by John Hancock and the under-signed, stamped with thirteen stars, bearing date 1776; and I claim for it the title of "THE AMERICAN IDEA." Here it stands, and in this great arena of History it will stand, in the front rank, and forever.

But to justify this claim, we must not merely describe the machine but see what it produces. I mean, what it ought to produce—what it was meant to produce—what it inevitably *will* produce, when it is in good working order. Or, to drop the metaphor which this place so naturally suggests, let us proceed to consider what grows legitimately *out* of the American Idea.

In the first place, then, it is evident that out of it grow the best forms of *personal freedom, culture and power*. One of these is universality of political privileges—the possession by every man of the sacred rights of citizenship, not because of the height of his station, or the weight of his purse, but by virtue of his intrinsic manhood. For, according to this idea, the mechanism of the State is not merely for classes, or for property, but for the great interests of the whole and the true interests of the individual. That which weighs in one man's hand just as much as in another's; which concentrates the humblest expression of opinion, and makes it felt in Cabinets and Senates; is the *Ballot*—which is especially a symbol of the American Idea, because that Idea alone requires it to be universal. And another result

of this fundamental system is *Public Education*; the duty of the State not to enforce but to provide knowledge for all—to scatter the seeds of truth even more solicitously than it crushes the fruits of crime; and to open to the poorest the domain of thought and the possibilities of honor and virtue. The American Idea is embodied in the Public School, and it will be a dark day when the sentiment of the American people sets against it, or the hand of jealous bigotry is permitted to strike it from the catalogue of our possessions. And still another result of this great principle is *Freedom of Conscience*, and all that pertains thereto—freedom to worship God in solitude or in crowds, by liturgies, or with silence—freedom of thinking—freedom of speech: a freedom, let me say, that is violated by ignorant denunciation as much as by the wheels of the Inquisition; violated by calumny as cruelly as by the stake.

I am well aware, fellow-citizens, that this is a recapitulation of very familiar things—and you ought to thank God that they are familiar; but I am desirous that you should see clearly that this idea of the worth and right of the individual man lies at the core of them all, and, therefore, when this idea is dishonored upon any one point, the entire organism of our national privileges is stricken with heart-disease.

I may say, however, that all these specific instances are involved in the general statement that the American idea provides for the free *action and development of every man*. In the very personality of a man, it respects that “image and superscription” of God which distinguishes him from all other beings; respects his right—unless convicted of aggression against the common right—to free circulation in the currency of the universe with his own limbs, mind and soul. O, it was worth years of revolution, with all the suffering and the blood; worth your precious heart-drops, O, martyrs of Lexington; worth your cold and hunger, O, soldiers of Valley Forge; worth your prayers, O, Washington, when gloomy clouds hung round the tents of our Israel; it was worth all this to vindicate and achieve the great fact that a man is priceless; and that, poised on the axis of personal responsibility—limited by nothing but the curve of moral law—he belongs only to God. It was worth all the cost and struggle to consummate a system in which, primarily, the man does not exist for the sake of the State, but the State for the sake of the man. And, mark how, by virtue of this characteristic, legitimate

Americanism differs from all other systems. Despotism, both ancient and modern, regards the individual man as a mere utensil. All the sacredness of humanity flowers in the monarch. The soldiers of Xerxes' army were no more than his bridge of boats. Louis the Fourteenth was, the Czar Nicholas is, the State. In the ancient Republics, again, the individual man was only a fragment of the State, and had no personal completeness. And, although in England the individual is respected, he is respected only according to his class, as though this man was actually made out of blue clay and the other of porphyry, instead of both from the common dust. We sometimes see this distinction attempted in America; but it is not American. The fathers of our Revolution, with a clear perception of the great fact which I now urge, abolished orders of nobility; no: they affirmed the true nobility; they rejected the outward patent and took up the inward claim; they detected the right divine not in the coronet but in the brain—the heraldry of honor not in the crimson hand but the diligent palm; and rated a man by the quantity of his virtue and his greatness, not by his position on some old genealogical tree stuck into the body of William the Conqueror, with blood at the roots, and gout in the fibres, and idiocy at the top unless recuperated by plebian sap. Benjamin Franklin wore the most appropriate Court dress I ever heard of. At the Court of Versailles, says Madame Campan, he appeared in the dress of an American farmer. “His straight, unpowdered hair, his round hat, his brown cloth coat, formed a singular contrast with the laced and embroidered coats, and powdered and perfumed heads” all around him. What did he need of a Court dress, whose patent of nobility was written for him by lightning on the clouds? It seems to me that if that clause in the Declaration which lies at the foundation of all I am now saying could have been read, just after it was penned, in some old sanctuary of dead kings and sculptured barons and drooping heraldries, it would almost have made the feudal dust and the aristocratic bones shake and rattle in the tombs, to hear this Gospel of a new order in which man was to be recognized apart from his accidents, and held his titles not by inheritance but by achievement. This is the legitimate growth of the American Idea which, in one word, recognizes the fact that the richest stock and product of a nation is its stock and product of manhood; and that man, as man, is sacred. Whatever runs counter to this is illegitimate. Whatever sets up something fac-

titious instead of it—in the shape of crests and household liveries—is a fantastic heresy. Whatever argument goes to show that Jefferson's words don't mean what they seem to mean, is sophistical, and not the truth. For the men of the Revolution answered the great question of politics, just as the poet has answered it :

“ What constitutes a State ?

Not high-raised battlements and labored mound,  
Thick wall or moated gate ;  
Not cities proud with spires and turrets crowned ;  
Not bays and broad-armed ports,  
Where, laughing, at the storm, proud navies ride ;  
Not starred and spangled courts,  
Where low-browed baseness wafts perfumes to pride.  
No! Men! high-minded Men—  
Men who their duties know,  
But know their rights—and knowing, dare maintain.”

But, if men like these *do* “ constitute a State,” then, obviously, a true individualism is not adverse but favorable to a true *nationality*. In developing the springs of personal worth and dignity, we develop the springs of all public greatness. Therefore, the doctrine involved in the American Idea is not a doctrine of disintegration, but of unity. For, in the first place, every man is two-fold in his nature. He is both individual and social. The necessity of a State is enfolded in and grows not of the very conditions of his being. On the other hand, the fulness and richness of his individual nature cannot be developed except through the organism of society. He never can be perfected in isolation — in solitary self-existence. This is the abstract truth. It is practically demonstrated by the fact that the greatest nations always have been those in which there has existed the greatest amount of personal freedom and consideration. That is the grandest history which contains the most biographies — which is crowded with the specialities of individual men. While, on the other hand, Despotism furnishes but a dull study. It is a lazy succession of dynasties. Out of its monotonous waste rise only the crowns of bloody and voluptuous kings. But pass into the area of a free land, and what variety and interest, in senate, and port, and citadel, to fill the pages of the annalist! A little limb pushed out from the trunk of Europe, but O! how thronged with achievements whose symphony rolls through the march of ages! what monumental places — what immortal names! Leuctra, and

Thermopylæ, and Marathon — Homer, Phidias, Demosthenes, Pericles, Plato. What inspiration from the springs of freedom, making the history of a nation finer than a poem, and transfiguring even the forms of its idolatry into a pantheon of intellectual worship. There's Russia — huge and mysterious; a muffled destiny, creeping down the map of Europe. But its not a *Nation* — its a *Nicholas*! And of what avail will be its ponderous and shaggy power in the world, compared with that of a Republic in which every man is an electric nationality, with a birthright in his hand, a free-school in his brain, and a declaration of independence in his heart. Oh! depend upon it, fellow-citizens, the truest patriotism co-exists with the truest development of personality, and where one feels that he is not a mere cog in the wheel of government, but an arterial force in a nation's life. He has something to strive for, something to love, something to sustain them, though his private possession be but a hut among the Alps, or a patch of corn on the Penobscot, or merely a single ballot charged with his own free will, and shot from his own right hand. It is *his* country; for it enlarges and enriches his own life; and so, when the drum rattles along the heaving lines, or the "hurra" peals from the slippery deck, for *his* country, he is even proud to die. And whatever his private station, in his country's life, he recognizes an apotheosis of his own personality. He responds to the sentiment of those truly great men, to whose labors we owe the Erie Canal. "No time," said they, "is fixed to the existence of a State, and the first wish of a patriot's heart is that *his* may be immortal."

I think you will acknowledge, then, that another result growing legitimately out of the American Idea, is *National Union*. I believe that it is the tendency of our history — the tendency of the principles involved in the Revolutionary struggle — to develop a great Nationality. I believe that the word "Union" has a broader meaning, and signifies something resting upon a deeper sanction than many who are very vociferous in the use of it seem to suspect. The American Union is a precious heritage just in proportion as it serves the interests of humanity. Its fibres of strength are not the mere web of party contrivance, or the bands of traffic, but personal independence, intelligence, and virtue. Whatever demoralizes the man and the citizen, whatever violates the dictates of conscience or lowers the standard of rectitude in his soul, inflicts a more dan-

gorous wound upon the Constitution, and shakes the fabric of our nationality more than any open treason. I don't fear so much from the mixture of diverse nationalities in our country, as I do from unfaithfulness to the American Idea. Senators and statesmen do more damage to the public weal by moral disloyalty and depreciation of the eternal right than they do good by Buncombe rhetoric and a delirium tremens of indignant patriotism. The basis of all public law is private virtue. The anchorage of our national Union is in personal rectitude and reverence. If it holds by anything more shallow than this, it is unsafe; and they who flout individual conscience and the moral law in the soul, do violence to the strongest guarantees of all order and all law.

But I believe that our national life, with its organism of national Union, is healthy at the core. I detect tokens of this health wherever I find free labor, intelligence and enterprise. It is no insignificant sign, perhaps, that the circumference of journalism is almost incalculable, and the centre of loafersdom about nowhere — evinced by the fact that the demand for paper is ahead of the supply of rags. Then there are these great public works, concerning which there is such a respectful article in the last number of old Tory Blackwood — these veins and sinews that stretch far away, and overrun the lines of locality, and quicken the pulses of reciprocal interest. The shuttle of enterprise is weaving a *physical* web of union around the land, with railroad warp and whoof of telegraphic wire. Push them across the continent; open the mountain-gates of the West; and wed the Atlantic to the Pacific with a marriage-ring of iron. Fill up all these channels with a free, enlightened, virtuous spirit, and we have another pledge of Union. And, yet again, I believe that in the deepest consciousness of our people there is a sense of the real mission of our country — of the significance of its antecedents, which will hold us together through many a sectional convulsion, and many a political sophistry, and enable us to accomplish the legitimate growth of the American Idea in a splendid nationality.

But, Fellow Citizens, the principle which lies at the foundation of our system does not attain its consummate result even in a great national organization. Nations, like individuals, exist for something beyond themselves. I believe that America is to do more than to develop its own magnificent resources. If it fulfils its legitimate destiny, it has a *world's* work to do. It has to achieve the

practical unity of the human race by the elements of freedom, ruth, and love. And this, too, is the growth of that idea which stands so prominent in the Declaration of Independence — the unity of humanity by virtue of the essential manhood, the common nature of every man. I do not say this in a spirit of pompous patriotism, but under the sense of a great trust, and a great responsibility. When I consider the position, the history, the developments of this land, I look beyond what human skepticism may just now think of it, or human fallibility thus far may have made of it, to the designs of Him whose purposes are consistent with His instruments. He whose will flows serenely into history, and who gives the coral island time to grow, has spread out this vast continent in the waters, balancing the globe, for some great contribution to the general plan. See how late it came into the records of the race, veiled from the old world until the best seeds of civilization — the seeds of a new epoch — had ripened and were ready to be transplanted to its breast. “What I admire in Christopher Columbus,” said Turgot, “is not his having discovered the new world, but his having gone to search of it on the faith of an opinion.” But I think that the opinion and the achievement both are involved with something still more serene; and that is the manifest intent of Providence standing clear above all human agencies. The dreamer with his strange and splendid conceit; the weary pilgrim by the convent-gate; the untired supplicant at courts, at length attains his wish. The sails are hoisted, the prows are turned, the great adventure lies before. Speed on, speed on, bold Genoese! look straight forward, hold dauntlessly to your thought! The lights of the known land sink behind you, but the heritage of your fame lies before. The deep is hoary with mystery; the compass turns from its point, but a divine current sweeps you on. Your heart grows faint at mutiny, delay and solitude; but, lo! Providence tempts you with its tokens. New stars rise to light you; birds sing in your tattered sails; flowers of strange odor drift by your keel; and a new world is found. You sought it to complete the geography of the globe; God opened it to complete the destiny of humanity!

All our antecedents, then, seem to proclaim that result which the American Revolution was calculated to assist, and which we, as a nation, will produce, if true to our legitimate work — the work of teaching the nations liberty, and of diffusing the great elements of



liberty, by the instruments of civilization and of peace. I deem it very appropriate that we celebrate the Fourth of July in the Crystal Palace. For around us are the best achievements of civilization; around us are the true vehicles of American power—around us are the prophecies of the coming time. England and France and Russia may play at battle, and make the poor Ottoman a diplomatic shuttle-cook. But peace, not war, will rule the coming period. And for all the triumphs of peace, consider our facilities. Our land is the granary of a world. Our ships cut a perpetual wake around the globe. The wilderness of the Pacific grows populous in a day; while Japan opens its sullen gates to amity and commerce. It only remains that we be faithful to our own idea, and our intelligence, our freedom, our true development of humanity shall become the ligatures of the world. For my part, I adopt here the language of Washington; “I do not believe,” said he, “I do not believe that Providence has done so much for nothing. . . . The Great Governor of the universe has led us too long and too far on the road to happiness and glory to forsake us in the midst of it. By *folly* and *improper* conduct proceeding from a variety of causes, we may now and then get bewildered; but I hope and trust,” adds he, “that there is good sense and virtue enough left to recover the right path before we shall be entirely lost.” And what better words than these of Washington do we want to cheer us with the faith that the best result of the American Idea will surely be unfolded in the best result not only for ourselves, but for humanity.

And, fellow-citizens, what better illustration of this great Idea can we find than he, concerning whom it has been truly said that this “day would be well spent, did it produce no other effect than that of furnishing us public occasion, once in the year, to contemplate the character of Washington?”

Men constitute eras. Washington himself was the embodiment of the Revolution, and may fitly personate to other men and other ages the principles of that movement. I had intended to say something especially respecting the Washington Monument, but exhaustion and the extreme heat of the weather forbid. You have read the appeal in the public journals in its behalf, and will act, I trust, in this matter as your own patriotism and judgment may dictate.

But let not even the greatness of Washington overshadow the merits of the least of those who labored and sacrificed in that early

struggle. Come up before us to-day from many a battle-ground, from many a post of duty; from the perilous enterprise and the lonely night-watch! The pageant of this hour sinks from my sight. This temple of industry with all its symbols of civilization dissolves into thin air. These tokens of a great and prosperous people pass away. This magnificent city dwindles to a provincial town. I am standing now upon some village-green, on an early summer morning, when the dew is on the grass, and the sun just tips the hills. I see before me a little band clothed in the garb that is now so venerable. There are the cocked hat, the continental coat, the well-worn musket. They have turned away from their homes; they have turned from the fields of their toil; they have heard the great call of freedom and of duty, and before God and Man they are ready. Hark! it is the tap of a drum, and they move forward to the momentous issue. That drum-beat echoes around the world! That movement was the march of an irresistible Idea — the Idea of the spiritual worth and the inalienable rights of every man; out of which grow the stability of the nation, and the unity of the world.