

by modern nations are raised so far above those poor Old World creatures, the Greeks and Romans and mediæval Italians, has not so far controlled factional passion that many countries do not live in a perpetual civil war which Athens and Corinth would have been ashamed of. We all know how our dear sister republics of Central and Southern America, which, as Mr. Webster said, looked to the great Northern Light in forming their constitutions, treat their elections as merely indications which of two parties shall be set up to be knocked down by rifles and bombshells. unless it retains its hold by such means.

But how with ourselves? How with England? How with France? How often do we regard our elected governors as really standing for the whole nation and deserving its allegiance.

In 1846 the President of the United States and his counselors hurried us into a needless, a bullying, a wicked war. Fully a quarter of the country felt it was an outrage and nothing else. But appeals were made to stand by the government, against which our own merciless satirist directed the lines which must have forever tingled in the ears and the consciences of the men who supported what they knew was irretrievably wicked.

"The side of our country must allus be took,  
And President Polk, you know, he is our country;  
And the angel who writes all our sins in a book,  
Puts the debit to him and to us the percontry."

No, brethren! no president, no prime minister, no cabinet, no congress or parliament, no deftly organized representative or executive body is or can be our country. To pay them a patriot's affectionate allegiance is as illogical as loyalty to James II or to the French National Convention. Mere obedience to law when duly enacted is one thing; Socrates

may drink the hemlock rather than run away from the doom to which a court of his native city has consigned him; but when the tribunals of that country perpetrated such a mockery of justice, Plato and Xenophon were right in cherishing to their dying day a poignant sense of outrage, an implacable grudge against such a stepmother as blood-stained Athens.

But sometimes the voice of the whole people speaks unmistakably; its ruler is the true agent and representative of a united and determined people; the will of the nation is unquestioned; who are you, who am I, that we should dispute it and think ourselves wiser and better than all our countrymen? Is not the whole nation the mother, whom to disobey is the highest sin? No! the particular set of men who make up the nation at any time will die and pass away, and what will their sons think of what they made their country do?

In 1854 the Emperor Nicholas, whose thoughts were never far from Constantinople, picked an unintelligible quarrel with the Sultan of Turkey. The unprincipled adventurer who contrived to add new stains to the name of Napoleon Bonaparte saw his chance to win glory for the Gallic eagle; he plunged into war and entrapped England into it with him.

The wise old statesman who was at the head of the English government knew the war was needless and wrong; he did his utmost to stop it; but his countrymen preferred to listen to the reckless Palmerston, and they lashed first themselves and then Aberdeen into war.

The whole nation went mad. John Bright told them the philosophic, the political, the Christian truth, and Palmerston insulted him on the floor of the House of Commons. Two years were consumed in the costly and pestilential siege of Sebastopol; a hollow peace was patched up, of which the only

significant article was after a short interval impudently broken by Russia; the unspeakable Turk was given another thirty years' lease of life.

And now I do not believe there is one grown man in England among the sons and grandsons of those who fought the Crimean war who does not believe Aberdeen and Bright were right, that Palmerston and England were wrong; and that the war was a national blunder, a national sin, a national crime. When John Bright stood almost against the whole nation, he was neither self-conceited nor unpatriotic, but a great and good man speaking as the prophet of God.

Yes, a whole people may be wrong, and deserve at best the pity of a real patriot rather than his active love. Our country is something more than the single procession which passes across its borders in one generation; it means the land with all its people in all their periods; the ancestors whose exertions made us what we are, and whose memory is precious to us; the posterity to whom we are to transmit what we prize, unstained as we received it; and he who loves his country truly and serves her rightly must act and speak not for the present generation alone, but for all that rightly live, every event in whose history is inseparable from every other. If we pray, as does the seal of Boston, that "God will be to us as he was to the fathers," then we must be to God what our fathers were.

But after Philosophy has forced the vociferous patriot to define what he means by his country, she has a yet more searching question to ask: What will you do and what will you suffer for this country you love? How shall your love be shown?

There is one of the old Greek maxims which says in four words of that divine language what a modern tongue can

scarcely stammer in four times four: "Sparta is thine allotted home; make her a home of order and beauty." Whatever our country needs to make her perfect, that she calls on us to do.

I have run over to you some of the great sacrifices and great exertions which patriots have made to make their dear home perfect and themselves perfect for her sake. But everything done or renounced to make her perfect must recognize that she is not perfect yet; and what our country chiefly calls on us for is not mighty exertions and sacrifices, but those particular ones, small or great, which shall do her real good and not harm.

That her commerce should whiten every sea; that her soil should yield freely vegetable and mineral wealth; that she should be dotted with peaceful homes, the abode of virtue and love; that her cities should be adorned with all that is glorious in art; that famine and poverty and plague and crime should be fought with all the united energy of head and hand and heart; that historians and poets and orators should continue to make her high achievements and mighty aims known to all her children and to the world; that the oppressed of every land may find a refuge within her borders; that she may stand before her sister nations indeed a sister, loved and honored,—these are the commonplaces, tedious, if noble to recount, of what patriotism has sought to do in many ages.

Yet every one of these things, when actually achieved, has had a worm at the core of the showy fruit, which has made their mighty authors but little better than magnificent traitors.

For every one of these has been achieved at the expense of other nations, as ancient, as glorious, as dear to their own children, as worthy of patriotic love as their triumphant

antagonist; and every one has been achieved at the still worse price of corruption and tyranny at home.

Every country has in times mistaken material for moral wealth, and has grown corrupt as she grew great; and every country in time has fancied that she could not be great and honored while her sisters were great and honored too; and has gone to war with them hoping to enlarge her borders at their expense and to gain by their loss.

It is here, again, at this very point, that the philosopher calls upon the patriot to say what he means by his cry, "Our country, right or wrong," the maxim of one who threw away an illustrious life in that worst of wicked encounters, a duel.

If there are such words as right and wrong, and those words stand for eternal realities, why shall not a nation, why shall not her loving sons, be made to bow to the same law, the utterance of God in history and in the heart? Can a king, can a president, can a congress, can a whole nation, by its pride or its passions turn wrong into right; or what authority have they to trifle or shuffle with either?

We are told that if we ever find ourselves at war with another country, no matter how that war was brought on, no matter what folly or wickedness broke the peace, no matter how completely we might oppose and deprecate it up to the moment of its outbreak, no matter how, as truthful historians, we may condemn it after it is over, no matter how iniquitous or tyrannical our sense and our conscience tells us are the terms on which peace has been obtained, we ought, during the war, to be heartily and avowedly for it. "We must not desert the flag." Patriotism demands that we should always stand by our country as against every other.

And what are the patriots in our rival country to be doing the while? Are they to support the war against us whether

they think it right or wrong? Are they cheerfully to pay all taxes? Are they to volunteer for every battle? Are they to carry on war to the knife or the last ditch? Is their love for their country to be as unreasoning, as purely a matter of emotion, as ours?

Certainly, if the doctrine of indiscriminate patriotism, "our country, right or wrong," is the true one. If France and Germany fight, no matter what the cause, every Frenchman must desire to see Germany humiliated, and every German to see France brought to her knees, and it is absolutely their duty to have all cognizance of right and wrong swallowed up in passionate loyalty.

Lord Aberdeen and Mr. Bright were right in deprecating the Crimean War up to the moment of its declaration; history says they were right now, but while the war lasted it was their duty to sacrifice their sense of right to help the government aims. Mr. Webster and Mr. Clay were right in pouring out their most scathing eloquence against the Mexican War; General Grant was right in recording in his memoirs that he believed it unjust and unnecessary; yet Mr. Webster and Mr. Clay only fulfilled patriotic duty in sending their sons to die, one by the sword and one by the fever, in the same army where Grant did his duty by fighting against his conception of right.

Brethren, I call this sentimental nonsense. It cannot be patriotic duty to say up to 1846 that our country will be wrong if she fights, to say after 1849 that she was wrong in fighting, but to hold one's tongue, and maintain her so-called cause in 1847 and 1848 though we know it is wrong all along.

And, observe, these patriots make no distinction between wars offensive and defensive, wars for aggression and conquest and wars for national existence. In any war, in all

wars in which our country gets engaged, we must support her; her honor demands that we shall not back out.

Oh, Honor! that terrible word, the very opposite of Duty; unknown in that sense to the soldiers, the statesmen, the patriots of Greece and Rome; honor, the invention of the Gothic barbarians, which more than any other one thing has reduced poor Spain to her present low estate.

There was a time when individual men talked about their honor and stood up to be stabbed and shot at, whether right or wrong, to vindicate it. That infernal fiction, the honor of the duel, was on the point, sixty years ago, of drawing Macaulay into the field in defence of a few sarcastic paragraphs in a review which he admitted himself were not to be justified. It was very shortly after that, that Prince Albert came to England with his earnest, simple, modest character: he used all his influence to stop the practice and the very idea of duelling; and now all England recognizes that any and every duel is a sin, a crime, and a folly, and that the code of honor has no defence before God or man. When shall the day come when the nations feel the same about public war? When shall the words of our own poet find their true and deserved acceptance, not as a poetical rhapsody, but as practical truth?

“Were half the power that fills the world with terror,  
Were half the wealth bestowed on camp and courts,  
Given to redeem the human mind from error,  
There were no need of arsenals and forts.

“The warrior's name should be a name abhorred,  
And every nation that should lift again  
Its hand against its brother; on its forehead  
Should bear forevermore the curse of Cain.”

Brethren, if there is anything of which philosophy must say it is wrong that thing is war. I do not mean any particular school of philosophy, ancient or modern. But I mean,

if any one studies the nature of God and man in the light of history, with a view to draw from that study rules of sound thought and maxims of right action, he must say war is wrong, an antiquated, blundering, criminal means of solving a national doubt by accepting the certainty of misery.

I began my address with Cicero's definition of patriotism. I now recall to you his sentence wrung from the heart of a man who had blazoned with his eloquence the fame of many great soldiers, and was not even himself without a spark of military ambition: “Ego sic judico, iniquissimam pacem justissimo bello esse anteferebam.”—“This is my judgment, that the most unfair peace is preferable to the justest war.”

Granting—as I do not—that war is sometimes necessary: so cutting off a man's leg, or extirpating an organ may be necessary; but it is always a horrible thing all the same, and just as the conservative surgery of our age is at work day and night to avoid these destructive operations, so the statesmanship of the day ought to be at work, not specifically to secure arbitration, as if that was anything more than a possible method, but to stop war as an eternal shame.

And granting war is sometimes necessary: if it is ever engaged in for any cause less than necessary, it is wrong; and the country is wrong that engages in it. A doubtful war, a war about which opinions are divided, is for that very reason not doubtfully evil, and the country that makes it is wrong.

Yes, brethren, a nation may be in the wrong, in every war one nation must be in the wrong, and generally both are; and if any country, yours or mine, is in the wrong, it is our duty as patriots to say so, and not support the country we love in a wrong because our countrymen have involved her in it.

In the war of our Revolution, when Lord North had the king and virtually the country with him, Fox lamented that Howe had won the battle of Long Island and wished he had lost it. What! an Englishman wish an English army to be defeated? Yes, because England was wrong, and Fox knew it and said so.

But there is a theory lately started, or rather an old one revived, that war is a good thing in itself; that it does a nation good to be fighting and killing the patriot sons of another nation, who love their country as we do ours. We are told that every strenuous man's life is a battle of one kind, and that the virile character demands some physical belligerency. Yes, every man's life must be to a great extent a fight; but this preposterous doctrine would make every man a prize-fighter.

They say war elicits acts of heroism and self-sacrifice that the country does not know in the lethargy of peace.

Heroism and self-sacrifice! There are more heroic and sacrificial acts going on in the works of peace than the brazen throat of war could proclaim in a twelvemonth. The track of every practising physician is marked by heroic disregard of life that Napoleon's Old Guard might envy. Every fire like that of Chicago, every flood like that of Johnstown, every plague and famine like that of India, are fields carpeted with the flowers of heroic self-sacrifice; they spring up from the very graves and ashes. And these flowers do not have growing up beside them the poisoned weeds of self-seeking or corruption which are sure to precede, to attend, to follow every war.

The dove of peace that brings the leaves of healing does not have trooping at her wings the vultures that treat their living soldiers like carrion. When Lucan has seen throughout the

catalogue of the national miseries that followed the quarrel of Cæsar and Pompey, he winds them all up in the terrible words, "*multis utile bellum*"—"war profitable to many men."

There is now much questioning of the propriety of capital punishment; it is strongly urged that the State has no right to take the life even of a hardened criminal, whose career has shown no trace of humanity or usefulness, and has put the capstone of murder on every other crime.

And yet we are told it is perfectly right to take a young man of the highest promise, a blessing to all who knew him, the very man to live for his country, and send him to be cut down by a bullet or by dysentery in a cause he cannot approve.

But there is a still newer theory come up about war as applied to ourselves. It seems that we share with a very few other peoples in the world a civilization so high, and institutions so divine that it is our duty and our destiny to go about the globe swallowing up inferior peoples and bestowing on them, whether they will or not, the blessings of the American—constitution?—well, no! not of the American constitution, but of the American dominion—and that when we are once started on this work of absorption they are rebels who do not accept the blessings. Now, if this precious doctrine were true, it utterly annihilates the old notion of patriotism and love of country; for that notion called upon every nation, however small or weak or backward, to maintain to the death its independence against any other, however great or strong or progressive.

According to this Mohammedan doctrine, this "death or the Koran" doctrine, the Finns and Poles are not patriots because they object to being absorbed by Russia, and the Ham-

burgers are rebels for not accepting the beneficent incorporation into France graciously proffered to them by Marshal Davoust.

But I will not enlarge upon this delicate subject by modern Americanism. It is bad enough for the nations we threaten to absorb. It is worse for us, the absorbers. I will ask you to remember what befell a noble nation which took up the work of benevolently absorbing the world.

When Xerxes had been driven back in tears to Persia, his rout released scores of Greek islands and cities, in the loveliest of lands and seas, and inhabited by the highest and wisest of men. There is nothing in art or literature or science or government that did not take its rise from them. Their tyrant gone, they looked around for a protector.

They saw that Athens was mighty on the sea, and they heard that she was just and generous to all who sought her citadel. And they put themselves, their ships and treasure, in the power of Athens, to use them as she would for the common defence. And the league was scarcely formed, the Persian was but just crushed, when the islands began to find that protection meant subjection.

They could not bear to think that they had only changed masters, even if Aristides himself assigned their tribute; and some revolted. The rebellion was cut down, Athens went on expanding, she made her subject islands pay money instead of ships, she transferred the treasury to her own citadel; she spent the money of her allies in those marvellous adornments that have made her the crown of beauty for the world forever.

Wider and wider did the empire of the Athenian democracy extend. Five armies fought her battles in a single year in five lands; Persia and Egypt, as well as Sparta, feeling the valor of her soldiers.

And the heart of Athens got drunk with glory, and the brain of Athens got crazed with power, and the roar of her boasting rose up to heaven, joined with the wail of her deceived and trampled subjects. And one by one they turned and fell from her, and joined their arms to her rival, who promised them independence; and every fond and mad endeavor to retain her empire only sucked her deeper into the eddy of ruin; and at length she was brought to her knees before her rival and her victorious fleet, and her impregnable walls were destroyed with the cry that now began the freedom of Greece.

It was only the beginning of new slavery; enslaved by the faithless Sparta, who sold half the cities back to Persia. Patching up once more a hollow alliance with Athens, enslaved by Macedonia, enslaved by Rome, enslaved by the Turks, poor Greece holds at last what she calls her independence under the protection of the great civilizing nations who let her live because they cannot agree how to cut up her carcass if they slay her.

Brethren, even as Athens began by protection and passed into tyranny and then into ruin, so shall every nation be who interprets patriotism to mean that it is the only nation in the world, and that every other which stands in the way of what it chooses to call destiny must be crushed. Love your country, honor her, live for her, if necessary die for her, but remember that whatever you would call right or wrong in another country is right and wrong for her and for you; that right and truth and love to man and allegiance to God are above all patriotism; and that every citizen who sustains his country in her sins is responsible to humanity, to history, to philosophy, and to Him to whom all nations are as a drop in the bucket, and the small dust on the balance.