

Mr. Douglas—I said if that be the case I would certainly never imitate you in that capacity, recognizing the force of the illustration.

Mr. Sumner—Mr. President, again the Senator has switched his tongue, and again he fills the Senate with his offensive odor. . . .

Mr. Douglas—I am not going to pursue this subject further. I will only say that a man who has been branded by me in the Senate, and convicted by the Senate of falsehood, cannot use language requiring a reply, and therefore I have nothing more to say.

#### ON THE TRUE GRANDEUR OF NATIONS

THE sentiment that in time of peace we must prepare for war has been transmitted from distant ages when brute force prevailed. It is the terrible inheritance, *damnosa haereditas*, which painfully reminds the people of our day of their relations with the past. It belongs to the rejected dogmas of barbarism. It is the companion of those harsh rules of tyranny, by which the happiness of the many has been offered up to the propensities of the few. It is the child of suspicion and the forerunner of violence. Having in its favor the almost uninterrupted usage of the world, it possesses a hold on popular opinion which is not easily unloosed. And yet the conscientious soul cannot fail, on careful observation, to detect its mischievous fallacy—at least among Christian States in the present age—a fallacy the most costly the world has witnessed, which dooms nations to annual tributes, in comparison with which all that have been extorted by conquests are as the widow's mite by the side of Pharisaical contributions.

I speak of this principle with earnestness: for I believe it

to be erroneous and false, founded in ignorance and barbarism, unworthy of an age of light, and disgraceful to Christians. I have called it a principle; but it is a mere prejudice—sustained by vulgar example only, and not by lofty truth—in obeying which we imitate the early mariners, who steered from headland to headland and hugged the shore, unwilling to venture upon the broad ocean, where their guide was the luminaries of heaven.

Dismissing from our minds the actual usage of nations on the one side, and the considerations of economy on the other, let us regard these preparations for war in the unclouded light of reason, in a just appreciation of the nature of man, and in the injunctions of the highest truth, and we cannot hesitate to brand them as pernicious. They are pernicious on two grounds; and whoso would vindicate them must satisfactorily answer these objections; first, because they inflame the people who make them, exciting them to deeds of violence, otherwise alien to their minds; and secondly, because, having their origin in the low motive of distrust and hate, they inevitably, by a sure law of the human mind, excite a corresponding feeling in other nations. Thus they are, in fact, not the preservers of peace, but the provokers of war.

In illustration of the first of these objections it will occur to every inquirer that the possession of power is always in itself dangerous, that it tempts the purest and highest natures to self-indulgence, that it can rarely be enjoyed without abuse; nor is the power to employ force in war an exception to this law. History teaches that the nations possessing the greatest armaments have always been the most belligerent; while the feebler powers have enjoyed, for a longer period, the blessings of peace. The din of war resounds throughout more than seven hundred years of Roman history, with only two short

lulls of repose; while smaller states, less potent in arms, and without the excitement to quarrels on this account, have enjoyed long eras of peace. It is not in the history of nations only that we find proofs of this law. Like every moral principle it applies equally to individuals. The experience of private life, in all ages, confirms it. The wearing of arms has always been a provocative to combat. It has excited the spirit and furnished the implements of strife. Reverting to the progress of society in modern Europe, we find that the odious system of private quarrels, of hostile meetings even in the street, continued so long as men persevered in the habit of wearing arms. Innumerable families were thinned by death received in these hasty and unpremeditated encounters; and the lives of scholars and poets were often exposed to their rude chances. Marlowe, "with all his rare learning and wit," perished ignominiously under the weapon of an unknown adversary; and Savage, whose genius and misfortune inspired the friendship and the eulogies of Johnson, was tried for murder committed in a sudden broil. "The expert swordsman," says Mr. Jay, "the practised marksman, is ever more ready to engage in personal combats than the man who is unaccustomed to the use of deadly weapons. In those portions of our country where it is supposed essential to personal safety to go armed with pistols and bowie-knives, mortal affrays are so frequent as to excite but little attention, and to secure, with rare exceptions, impunity to the murderer; whereas, at the North and East, where we are unprovided with such facilities for taking life, comparatively few murders of the kind are perpetrated. We might, indeed, safely submit the decision of the principle we are discussing to the calculations of pecuniary interest. Let two men, equal in age and health, apply for an insurance on their lives; one known to be ever

armed to defend his honor and his life against every assailant; and the other a meek, unresisting Quaker; can we doubt for a moment which of these men would be deemed by the insurance company most likely to reach a good old age?"

The second objection is founded on that law of the human mind, in obedience to which the sentiment of distrust or hate, — of which these preparations are the representatives, — must excite a corresponding sentiment in others. This law is a part of the unalterable nature of man, recognized in early ages, though unhappily too rarely made the guide to peaceful intercourse among nations. It is an expansion of the old Horatian adage, *Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi*; if you wish me to weep, you must yourself first weep. Nobody can question its force or its applicability; nor is it too much to say that it distinctly declares that military preparations by one nation, in time of professed peace, must naturally prompt similar preparations by other nations, and quicken everywhere, within the circle of their influence, the spirit of war. So are we all knit together that the feelings in our own bosoms awaken corresponding feelings in the bosoms of others; as harp answers to harp in its softest vibrations; as deep responds to deep in the might of its passions. What within us is good invites the good in our brother; generosity begets generosity; love wins love; peace secures peace; while all within us that is bad challenges the bad in our brother; distrust engenders distrust; hate provokes hate; war arouses war.

Life is full of illustrations of this beautiful law. Even the miserable maniac, in whose mind the common rules of conduct are overthrown, confesses its overruling power; and the vacant stare of madness may be illumined by a word of love. The wild beasts confess it; and what is the story of

Orpheus, whose music drew, in listening rapture, the lions and panthers of the forest, but an expression of its prevailing influence? It speaks also in the examples of literature. And here, at the risk of protracting this discussion, I am tempted to glance at some of these instructive instances—hoping, however, not to seem to attach undue meaning to them, and especially disclaiming any conclusions from them beyond the simple law which they illustrate.

Looking back to the early dawn of the world, one of the most touching scenes which we behold, illumined by that Auroral light, is the peaceful visit of the aged Priam to the tent of Achilles to entreat the body of his son. The fierce combat has ended in the death of Hector, whose unhonored corse the bloody Greek has already trailed behind his chariot. The venerable father, after twelve days of grief, is moved to efforts to regain the remains of the Hector he had so dearly loved. He leaves his lofty cedarn chamber, and with a single aged attendant, unarmed, repairs to the Grecian camp, by the side of the distant sounding sea. Entering alone, he finds Achilles within his tent, in the company of two of his chiefs. Grasping his knees, he kisses those terrible homicidal hands which had taken the life of his son. The heart of the inflexible, the angry, the inflamed Achilles, touched by the sight which he beholds, responds to the feelings of Priam. He takes the suppliant by the hand, seats him by his side, consoles his grief, refreshes his weary body, and concedes to the prayers of a weak, unarmed old man what all Troy in arms could not win. In this scene, which fills a large part of a book of the Iliad, the poet, with unconscious power, has presented a picture of the omnipotence of that law of our nature, making all mankind of kin, in obedience to which no word of kindness, no act of confidence, falls idly to the earth.

Among the legendary passages of Roman history, perhaps none makes a deeper impression than that scene, after the Roman youth had been consumed at Allia, and the invading Gauls under Brennus had entered the city, where we behold the venerable senators of the republic, too old to flee, and careless of surviving the Roman name, seated each on his curule chair, in a temple, unarmed, looking, as Livy says, more august than mortal, and with the majesty of the gods. The Gauls gaze on them, as upon sacred images, and the hand of slaughter, which had raged through the streets of Rome, is stayed by the sight of an assembly of unarmed men. At length a Gaul approaches, and with his hands gently strokes the silver beard of a senator, who, indignant at the license, smites the barbarian with his ivory staff; which was the signal for general vengeance. Think you, that a band of savages could have slain these senators, if the appeal to force had not first been made by one of their own number? This story, though recounted by Livy, and also by Plutarch, is properly repudiated by Niebuhr as a legend; but it is none the less interesting, as showing the law by which hostile feelings are necessarily aroused or subdued. The heart of man confesses that the Roman senator provoked death for himself and his associates.

Other instances present themselves. An admired picture by Virgil, in his melodious epic, represents a person, venerable for piety and deserts, assuaging by words alone a furious populace, which had just broken into sedition and outrage. Guizot, in his "History of French Civilization," has preserved a similar instructive example of the effect produced by an unarmed man, in an illiterate epoch, who, employing the word instead of the sword, subdued an angry multitude. And surely no reader of that noble historical romance, the  
Vol. 8—19

"Promessi Sposi," can forget that finest scene, where Fra Cristoforo, in an age of violence, after slaying a comrade in a broil, in unarmed penitence seeks the presence of the family and retainers of his victim, and, by his dignified gentleness, awakens the admiration of those already mad with the desire of vengeance. Another example, made familiar by recent translations of Frithjof's "Saga," the Swedish epic, is more emphatic. The scene is a battle. Frithjof is in deadly combat with Atlé, when the falchion of the latter breaks. Throwing away his own weapon, he says:

— "swordless foeman's life  
Ne'er dyed this gallant blade."

The two champions now close in mutual clutch; they hug like bears, says the poet:

" 'Tis o'er: for Frithjof's matchless strength  
Has felled his ponderous size;  
And 'neath that knee, at giant length,  
Supine the Viking lies.  
' But fails my sword, thou Berserk swart!  
The voice rang far and wide,  
' Its point should pierce thy inmost heart,  
Its hilt should drink the tide.'  
' Be free to lift the weaponed hand,  
Undaunted Atlé spoke,  
' Hence, fearless, quest thy distant brand!  
Thus abide the stroke.' "

Frithjof regains his sword, intent to close the dread debate, while his adversary awaits the stroke; but his heart responds to the generous courage of his foe; he cannot injure one who has shown such confidence in him; —

" This quelled his ire, this checked his arm,  
Outstretched the hand of peace."

I cannot leave these illustrations, without alluding particularly to the history of the treatment of the insane, which teaches, by conclusive example, how strong in nature must

be the principle that leads us to respond to the conduct and feelings of others. When Pinel first proposed to remove the heavy chains from the raving maniacs of the hospitals of Paris, he was regarded as one who saw visions, or dreamed dreams. At last his wishes were gratified. The change in the conduct of his patients was immediate; the wrinkled front of evil passions was smoothed into the serene countenance of peace. The old treatment by force is now universally abandoned; the law of love has taken its place; and all these unfortunates mingle together, unvexed by those restraints, which implied suspicion, and, therefore, aroused opposition. The warring propensities, which, while the hospitals for the insane were controlled by force, filled them with confusion and strife, are a dark but feeble type of the present relations of nations, on whose hands are the heavy chains of military preparations, assimilating the world to one great mad-house; while the peace and good will, which now abound in these retreats, are the happy emblems of what awaits mankind when they shall recognize the supremacy of the higher sentiments of our nature; of gentleness, of confidence, of love;

— "making their future might  
Magnetic o'er the fixed untrembling heart."

I might also dwell on the recent experience, so full of delightful wisdom, in the treatment of the distant, degraded convicts of New South Wales, showing how confidence and kindness, on the part of their overseers, awaken a corresponding sentiment even in these outcasts, from whose souls virtue, at first view, seems to be wholly blotted out.

Thus from all quarters, from the far-off past, from the far-away Pacific, from the verse of the poet, from the legend of history, from the cell of the mad-house, from the assembly of transported criminals, from the experience of daily life, from