

day, though decimated by famine and desolated by the plague, there is no inconsistency with any standard Great Britain has proclaimed.

The same absence of inconsistency is observable in the forcible partition of Poland under the auspices of what was blasphemously called the Holy Alliance; in the annexation of Nice and Savoy by France; in the annexation by Germany of a part of Denmark and of two great provinces of France; in the steady and vast territorial aggrandizements of Russia; in the partition of Africa which has just been accomplished; or in the partition of China, which is in process of accomplishment.

Nothing can fairly be said to have been done, in any one of these conquests, incompatible with the avowed doctrines of those great predatory governments, for they never proclaimed an evangel of the rights of man, they never incurred any obligations to use the power they possessed for the advancement of the welfare or the promotion of the liberties of mankind.

It was permitted to each, without furnishing any basis for the charge of inconsistency, to rob any weaker people of its territory, to impose its own absolute and arbitrary will upon any weaker race upon which it possessed the physical power to impose it, and to take whatever such a people had of value for themselves.

But it would be very unwise for us to forget that American democracy has had a wholly different history. Not only was its inspiring and directing force the greatest ethical movement in the history of the human race, the struggle for civil and religious freedom, but it may be said without exaggeration to owe its very existence to it.

Lord Bacon, in the true marshalling of the sovereign

degrees of honor, assigns the first place to the founders of empires; and of all such founders none deserve more generous praise than those who came hither as from the fires of civil and religious persecution in the Old World to lay broad and deeper foundations of civil and religious freedom in the world just then offered to them for their new and far-reaching experiment.

From almost every civilized nation some of its best citizens sought safety in exile from their old homes in the wilderness of the New World, where they were free to strive at least for the realization of their belief in a common brotherhood of man on earth and a common fatherhood of God in heaven. No doubt with this ennobling creed there was mingled something of the dross of the weakness of human nature, but this was but as an atom in the great mass and had no shaping influence upon the fortune or the destiny of America; for the vast multitudes who come hither were actuated by the desire to secure for all other men the same measure of liberty they sought for themselves, the liberty conferred by equality of membership in a free church and equality of citizenship in a free State.

It is not at all necessary to take an alarmist view of the problems awaiting solution here in order to insist upon the practical and commercial value of the ethical ideals which have heretofore stood the nation in such good stead. Macaulay was not a profound student of comparative politics, and his well-known prophecy of the evil days which await the republic need not greatly disquiet us, although part of his prophecy has already been verified by the result. But Mr. Webster was a wise statesman, perhaps our wisest, and a profound student of our system of government, and he has left for our instruction this grave and weighty warning:

"The freest government would not be long acceptable if the tendency of the laws was to create a rapid accumulation of property in few hands, and to render the great mass of the population dependent and penniless. . . . In the nature of things, those who have not property and see their neighbors possess much more than they think them to need cannot be favorable to laws made for the protection of property. When this class becomes numerous it grows clamorous. It looks upon property as its prey and plunder, and is naturally ready at all times for violence and revolution."

Now, it is at least quite possible that in the not-distant future American politics may transform Mr. Webster's warning into history, for our electorate is already beginning to be divided, and must, in obedience to the law of social evolution, continue more and more to be divided, by that sharp cleavage which separates those who are contented with their lot from those who are discontented with their lot.

Under whatever disguises, called by whatever names, inheriting or seizing whatever partisan organizations, the alignment of the two great political divisions of American voters, who will sooner or later struggle against each other for the possession of the government, will inevitably be upon the basis I have named. The party of the contented will be ranged under one banner, and the party of the discontented will be ranged under the other, and that alignment will steadily develop increasing sharpness of division until the party of the discontented, being the majority, has obtained the control of the government to which, under our system, they are entitled; and then they will be sure to remodel the present system for the distribution of wealth, unless we have previously done so, upon bases wiser and more equitable than those now existing.

The one party will be, under whatever name, the party

of capital; and the other party will be, under whatever name, the party of labor. If any doubt had existed upon this subject among men accustomed seriously to reflect upon political problems, it ought to have disappeared in view of the developments of the last two presidential elections and of the present growing tendency alike of capital more and more to consolidate itself in great masses as in preparation for the coming struggle, and of the brotherhood of American labor more and more to consolidate itself in one organization in like preparation.

Ominous signs are indeed almost daily discernable that those leaders of confederated labor who are really loyal to it and are not purchasable by the party of capital have discerned that the true remedy for what seems to them the present unjust inequality in the distribution of wealth is through legislation.

If yesterday they foolishly resorted to attempts to overawe the nominees of the party of capital, sitting as legislators, by a display of force and threats of violence, by to-morrow they will probably have learned that the ballot in America, while not so noisy, is far more peremptory than the dynamite bomb. It does not explode, but it controls; and its control will be as resistless as fate if the party of labor decides to clothe all its demands, as it has already clothed many, in acts of legislation, for then will occur what the Duke of Wellington foresaw, "a revolution under the forms of law."

My purpose, therefore, is to point out, without the slightest bitterness, to the members of the contented class, the commercial value of ethical ideals as the safest source of the political aspirations of the majority of our people and the most conservative influence in our national life, and also to

point out to them the grave dangers, from a business standpoint, in these days of possible conflict between capital and labor, of continuing to substitute money for morals as the permanent and controlling force in American politics.

In pointing out these dangers I accept to the fullest extent the proposition that this is an age of business, and I am quite willing to admit that the moral law is difficult of application to existing conditions. It is very apparent that difficulty is increased by the conduct of other nations which are now controlled by a consideration only of their material interests, the securing by force of new markets, the expansion of trade by war, the subjection of weaker peoples to the will of the stronger, and the ultimate partition, by blood and iron, of the whole habitable globe.

For us to enter upon a like course of expansion seems to many devout clergymen, to many successful politicians, and to many true patriots, our wisest policy. The gravity and the suddenness of our change of views in these matters is fitly illustrated by the recent voyage of capitalists of New York to England to indulge in expressions of sympathy and promises of alliance with a government which is now maintaining in the Transvaal camps of concentration as brutal and as inexcusable as those of Weyler in Cuba, the detestation of whose horrors only three years ago greatly helped to drive us headlong into war with Spain.

I am not aware that history offers another example of so grave a change of opinion in so short a time; but I cannot help believing that the destruction and denial of ethical ideals, so far as regards American democracy, is very poor religion, very poor business, and very poor politics.

The first ethical ideal which it seems to me it would be wise for us, even from the point of view of the stock ex-

change, to guard most zealously just now, is the ideal condition of society with which President McKinley closed his congratulations upon the opening of the exposition at Buffalo,—that of peace on earth and good will to men; for it may well happen that the safety of our institutions requires that the masses of our people shall continue to cherish the ethical ideals of Christianity, and that whoever lessens respect for them inevitably weakens the reverence of the majority of voters for the principles upon which our government is founded.

I observe with especial sorrow that many Protestant clergymen mistakenly suppose that they can safely substitute at this day and in our country the teaching of Mohammed for the teaching of Christ. We all know the temptations to which such clergymen are exposed.

It is so much more comfortable to "swim with the tide," and it is so much more certain that the incomes on which themselves and their families are dependent for the comforts and luxuries of life will share in the commercial prosperity of the country if the doctrines preached by them and advocated in their religious journals recognize that the making of money is the first duty of man in the new century, and that keeping one's self unspotted from the world, so far from being, as was formerly supposed, true religion and undefiled, is a foolish and sentimental expression, incapable of application in the rough world in which we live, where each man's duty is to take care of himself.

Knowing the despotism the practical men in the pews exercise over the pulpit in such matters, we ought to think with great charity, not only of the clergymen who fail to preach Christianity and who substitute Mohammedanism in its place, but also of the missionaries who, in distant lands and sur-

rounded by traders and soldiers, have persuaded themselves that the robbery and murder of weaker peoples, with their attendant horrors, cannot really be helped in an age so practical as ours and so determined to pursue only practical ends, and that therefore such crimes are no longer to be unsparingly condemned; but, after making all the allowance the most abundant charity can suggest, it will still remain a grave and menacing peril to American respect for the moral law if clergymen are permitted without rebuke to preach the righteousness of unnecessary or aggressive warfare, the killing of weaker peoples in order to reduce them to subjection, and the robbing them of their possessions.

Indeed, our silence in presence of the appalling and even unnamable atrocities recently perpetrated in China by the nations calling themselves Christian is a terrible blow dealt to the faith of common men in a religion whose professors thus allow its fundamental principles to be trampled under foot without a word of protest or reprobation; and if the faith of our laboring people in the ethical ideals of Christianity is once destroyed by its professors here, as its professors destroyed it among the laboring people of France a hundred years ago, there will be lost one of the most valuable and conservative influences we possess,—an influence which it is not too much to say may yet prove to be absolutely indispensable to the preservation of that respect for law and order upon which, in the last resort, American society must depend for its peace.

Let us therefore ardently hope that the true American ideal of peace on earth and good will to men will again take possession of our hearts, and enable us, clergymen and laymen alike, to believe that it is not robbery, or conquest, or slaughter, or expansion, or even wealth, but righteousness only,

which exalteth a nation; for if, in a free state like ours, you substitute the Mohammedan ideal, which is now so popular, of war on earth and the subjection of the weak to the strong, you help to undermine the very ground upon which respect for private property, when gathered in great masses in few hands and often displayed in vulgar and offensive forms, must ultimately rest.

If fighting and killing are to be encouraged; if those who indulge in them are to be especially honored, and if oppression of the weak is to be cherished, it will be difficult to prevent the class of the discontented from familiarizing themselves too thoroughly with fighting and killing, and from learning to cherish in their hearts a desire to oppress their weaker but more wealthy fellow citizens.

It seems to me quite too plain for dispute that no single member of a weaker race can be killed; no hut of such a race, however humble, can be burned; no one can be selected for special honor for his part in such pitiful warfare,—without its helping to light the torch which starts the fire by which some hapless negro is to be burned at the stake in our own country, not only in defiance but in contempt of law, and all such acts must be surely followed by greater insecurity for the surplus wealth which the contented class possesses.

We all read the other day that in a community almost within sight of Wall Street, where the cruel plot for the killing of the king of Italy was hatched, plots as cruel are now hatching for the killing of more crowned heads of the Old World; and I beg you to believe that that insensate rage against the sense of inequality and of pretended superiority to their fellows which these maddened members of the working classes attribute to crowned heads to-day may easily be transferred to-morrow to those of our citizens whose distinc-

tion rests upon the possession of too abundant riches; and for that reason, while the Mohammedan ideal of war on earth and the subjection of the weak to the strong must always lessen the security of private property in America, the Christian ideal of peace on earth and good will to men will always increase it.

It is quite possible there may also be great commercial value for us at the present time in the ethical ideal that all men are born equal, and equally entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I fully recognize the present unpopularity of this ideal. I know that to declare one's belief in it is to expose oneself to the dreadful charge of disloyalty; but as in matters of religion American democracy rested at its birth upon the message of the herald angels, so in politics it rested at its birth upon the doctrine of the equality of men.

It is true that doctrine was not formulated in words until the necessity arose for binding the scattered colonies together in their effort to assert their right to be an independent nation; but it was an essential part of the very atmosphere which the first settlers breathed when they landed on these shores. There never was a single step taken of any enduring character toward civil government in the colonies which was not, consciously or unconsciously, based upon it.

From Massachusetts Bay to Georgia many theories of government found expression, and there were "many men of many minds" engaged in the work of settling the continent; but through all instinctively ran one great underlying ethical doctrine—that of equality of political rights.

Subsequently, no doubt, the importation of slaves from Africa, and to a much greater degree the inventions which made slave labor profitable, colored the judgments of many

Southern men and induced them to believe that that doctrine was inapplicable to a weaker people of a different color and from a different clime, and that they and their descendants, even if born here, might be rightly held in slavery forever.

Indeed, many of the statements we now read of the necessity of the strong and wise governing the weak and ignorant are almost literal reproductions of the arguments advanced by the slaveholders of the South in defence of slavery just preceding the outbreak of the Civil War. That divergence from our original ideal produced the pregnant sayings of Mr. Lincoln, "A house divided against itself cannot stand," and its corollary, "This nation cannot permanently endure half slave and half free." He saw clearly that American democracy must rest, if it continues to exist, upon the ethical ideal which presided over its birth—that of the absolute equality of all men in political rights.

I am well aware that it is supposed that exigencies now exist which require us to disavow that ideal, and to abandon the doctrine of equality we inherited, and to which Mr. Lincoln so frequently expressed his devotion. We are asked to take a new departure, to turn our backs upon the old doctrine, and to declare that our fathers were mistaken when they brought forth a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to such an impracticable proposition as the equality of all men before the law. We are told that the exigencies of modern business and modern trade require a wholly different ideal to be set before the new century; that our present duty is to conquer any weaker people whose territory we covet, and to subject them to such government as in our opinion will best promote our profit and their welfare.

Of course many of the Southern people, brought up in the

belief that the subjection of the weak to the will of the strong was a divine institution, eagerly welcome our apparent conversion to their creed; and while I do not question the excellence of the motives of these new guides in American patriotism, I venture to warn you that if you follow them you abandon your best heritage,—that of being a beacon light and a blessing to all the oppressed of the earth.

Great popularity no doubt just now attaches to money, and great unpopularity to morals, on the ground that money is modern and practical, while morals are antiquated and impracticable; and, as conclusive arguments, they tell us that England has destroyed two republics in the interests of the capitalists who own the gold and diamond mines of South Africa; that Germany has seized a vast territory in China; that France has appropriated Madagascar; that Russia is benevolently assimilating Finland and absorbing Manchuria; and that Japan is casting longing eyes upon Korea; and they insist that, unless we bestir ourselves to like measures, we will be found to be laggards in the race of to-day, which is a race for new markets won by war, for the exploiting of weaker peoples, for larger armies, for ever-increasing navies, for expanding trade, and for greater wealth.

I confess I should have thought the growth of our own beloved country in material wealth and prosperity in the last thirty years of unbroken peace and of amity with all mankind had more than satisfied any avarice which could have found a place even in the dreams of civilized men. The marvellous story of that material progress is still dazzling the imaginations of all serious economists, and it is literally true of it, "State the figures however high, while the dispute exists the exaggeration ends."

The results of the thirty years from 1870 to 1900 prove be-

yond all question, and even beyond all cavil, that in order far to excel, not only all nations of the past, but also all nations of the present, in growth of agriculture, of manufactures, of commerce, of exports and of imports, and, above all, in population, it is not necessary to step beyond our own great, rich, and powerful country to subdue any weaker people, of whatever color, in any quarter of the globe; so that we are urged to betray the loftiest and noblest traditions of our history without even the poor excuse of needing the money we hope to make by such betrayal of the inspiring doctrine which Jefferson formulated and for which Washington fought. Those thirty years demonstrated that in order to be a world Power we need not be a robber nation.

There is still another ethical ideal which may soon prove to be of very great commercial value in American politics—the ideal of the citizen, whether in or out of office, exhibiting moral courage in dealing with important public questions. However much we may differ on other subjects, I cannot doubt we all recognize and regret that we are just now exhibiting a very pitiful moral cowardice in shirking such questions,—a cowardice which may be fraught with great evils, for it is still true that unsettled questions have no pity for the repose of nations.

It is somewhat trying to the patience of the most patient to listen to the noisy and senseless rhetoric which seeks to hide our lack of moral courage by extolling that mere physical courage which all men of the fighting races and many brutes possess, and which flamed just as high in the breasts of the conscript youth of France, fighting to subdue other kingdoms to be trodden under foot by their imperial master, as it flamed in the breasts of their fathers, rushing to fling themselves upon embattled Europe in defence of the liberties of France. The