

physical courage in both cases was just the same, and will never be excelled.

The only difference was an ethical difference: the fathers were fighting in a just cause, and the sons were fighting in an unjust cause. The truth is that physical courage has always been the most commonplace of virtues, and could always be bought at a very cheap price, so that it has become an unflinching proof of decadence for any people to become hysterical over exhibitions of animal courage without regard to the moral quality of the service in which it was displayed or of the comparative weakness of the adversary.

Just the contrary is true of moral courage. It is among the rarest of virtues, and its services are of far greater value in the democratic ages than ever before. Indeed, the days may not be distant when the existence of law and order in America may depend upon it, for it may be found that it, and it alone, can protect us from the dangers which Mr. Webster believed would follow our present condition, "a rapid accumulation of property in few hands."

For that reason the commercial value of such courage in a government by the majority can hardly be over-estimated; and surely, if we are to find it a bulwark of defence in our day of need, we ought to be now commending it by our example, showing how really brave men face grave problems of government and set themselves, as brave men should, to finding the best possible solution of them.

It is perhaps inevitable, but it is none the less to be regretted, that a distinct lowering of moral standards should follow a state of war, inducing us to cherish the delusion that if we talk loudly enough and boast foolishly enough of our physical prowess by sea and land, and give our time and thought only to warlike actions and preparations, as we have

been doing for the last three years, all serious moral and domestic questions will somehow settle themselves.

Such a delusion is equally childish and cowardly, and it is only necessary to glance at such questions to discover that instead of settling themselves they are daily growing in gravity, and how unwise it is, instead of facing them, to be actually running away from them. It is certainly in no spirit of criticism, and with no feeling of censoriousness, that I thus call your attention to the corroding influence of war and commercialism upon moral courage, but simply because a recrudescence of moral courage in dealing with these problems closely concerns the present peace and the future welfare of our beloved country.

As one example, take our attitude toward the corrupt use of money in our elections and in our representative bodies. Even the dullest intelligence must see that if we continue to destroy, as for some time past we have been destroying, the belief of the majority of our fellow citizens that elections are honestly conducted and laws are honestly made, we are destroying the best possible basis for the security of private property; for there can be no reverence for law where laws and law makers are bought with money, and I fear we are rapidly destroying the possibility of such reverence in the minds of the masses of our countrymen.

We ought never to forget that in democratic governments the black flag of corruption is very likely to be followed by the red flag of anarchy. Yet we close our eyes in sheer cowardice to this evil and the danger it is creating, and we gravely pretend to each other that it does not exist, while we all well know that it does exist. Representatives of vast accumulations of property, guardians of great trusts, individuals profiting by the opportunity offered here for suddenly acquiring



colossal fortunes, and even those of us who have no fortunes, have not hesitated to give whatever money is needed to be applied to the purchase of the electorate and, when necessary, of the representative bodies elected by them.

Our municipal governments have long been a by-word of hissing and of shame, and they have been so because we decided we could make money by corrupting them. We have given freely to assist in electing persons known to be ready at the first opportunity to betray the sacred trust of the people committed to their keeping, in order to put the spoils of such betrayal in our own pockets. Many State legislatures have become equally objects of contempt and derision for the same reason. Then these corrupting influences have not hesitated to advance a step farther and lay their hand upon members of both branches of the national legislature until at last, so callous have we become upon the subject, that, if the case I am about to imagine occurred, I venture to assert that no earnest protest would be made by men of our class against its consummation.

Suppose an ambitious man, desiring to obtain the only success now deemed important in American life, should set himself to the work of making a large sum of money, and, having in any one of the ways now open to such efforts, succeeded beyond his hopes, he looked around to see what other distinction was open to him wherein he could use a portion of his gains so as bring to himself the most gratification; and that he should decide that he would give himself most pleasure by debauching the electorate of a State and thereby securing for himself a seat in the Senate of the United States.

Suppose, also, that he had so far imbibed the present American spirit as to feel quite sure that there was no need

for secrecy in these operations, but that they were rather a subject of legitimate pride; and that in the course of time he had so far succeeded that only a minority of citizens and legislators of his own party stood between him and the realization of his desire, but that the members of that minority proved to be incorruptible, either by the baser temptation of money or in the more plausible form of public office, and that, continuing bravely to stand for the purity of American politics and the honor of their native State, they succeeded in defeating the success of such debauchery,—would their conduct be received with the applause it deserved?

If not, I venture to say that it is very poor politics for the party of capital thus openly and cynically to notify the party of labor that no respect is due to law or to the makers of law; that it is wholly a question of money and not at all a question of morals; that the right to make laws is now as legitimate a subject of bargain and sale as that of any merchandise, and that therefore nobody ought to pay any respect to law except where it happens to comport with his pecuniary advantage to do so.

I may be needlessly concerned about the matter, but I confess, in spite of my ardent Americanism and my confidence in the law-abiding spirit of my countrymen, I am disturbed when I see what I regard as one of the best protections of the future thus openly undermined and destroyed, while the moral cowardice of those of us who do not ourselves corrupt anybody prevents our uttering a word of protest against it.

Upon the ground of expediency alone, regarding it only as an element in our commercial expansion, in our growth of trade, in our increase of wealth, in the prosperity of our stock exchanges—even from this standpoint it is assuredly



great practical folly to destroy the ethical ideal of law, as we are striving so earnestly to do.

There is another very grave problem which we are also refusing to consider, and by which refusal the ethical ideal of law is also being destroyed. It is the problem presented by our negro population, now approaching ten millions of souls. We gave them the suffrage, and we have allowed some of them to be killed for possessing it. We appointed some of them to office, and have stood meekly by when they were shot for having our commission in their hands. They are being burnt before our eyes without even a pretence of trial. We are allowing State after State openly, even contemptuously, to nullify a solemn amendment of the constitution enacted for their protection, to secure which we poured out our treasure without limit and shed the blood of our sons like water.

All of us, whether in public office or in private station, now concur in trying to ignore the existence of any such problem at our doors, while, laughing like the Roman augurs in each other's faces, we indulge in self-congratulations about the blessings we are carrying to another ten millions of dark-skinned races in far-distant lands.

I fully appreciate the difficulty in finding the best solution of this awful problem, but I do insist that our evasion of it is utterly unworthy of American manhood. It is not fair to the men and women of the South to leave them to settle it as they please, so long as we have duties connected with it; and it is useless to suppose that a problem involving ten millions of people is being solved by a few industrial schools fitting an inconsiderable fraction of the youth of both sexes for occupations most of which they will not be allowed to follow, and thereby unfitting them for the only occupations

in which they will be at liberty to earn their bread; and it is equally useless for us to pretend that by making contributions to such institutions we have done our whole duty in meeting the test this problem presents of our courage alike as citizens and as men.

We ought in the North as in the South to face our responsibilities toward these descendants of a people we brought here against their will and solely for our own profit, and we ought seriously to discuss and determine, in Congress and out of it, what is the best possible relation to be established between them and us; and then we ought to have the courage to give that relation the sanction of law and to see that such law is respected and obeyed.

Such treatment of this problem would be a far greater security for our future peace than many new regiments and many new ships of war. At present the condition of the whole subject is lawlessness, and such a condition is disgraceful to us all and is fraught with the serious dangers which lawlessness always brings in its train—as the exact opposite of the ethical ideal of law.

Indeed, the ethical ideal of the legislator and the citizen, as men zealous to know their public duty and brave enough to do it, is also rapidly being destroyed by our failing even to attempt to deal seriously and adequately with many other problems now imperatively demanding our attention. Among these problems are the reform of our present shameless and corrupt pension legislation, costing us over \$150,000,000 a year, although a quarter of a century ago it was demonstrated by the tables of mortality that \$35,000,000 was the maximum sum which could properly be expended for legitimate pensions; the reform of much other equally shameless and corrupt legislation, of which a fair specimen is that



known as the river and harbor bill; the courageous maintenance and extension of the merit system in appointments to subordinate positions under the government; the reform of the present system of taxation, so as to make wealth bear its proper share of the cost of government; the subjecting of the great monopolies which now control so much of the business of the country and so many of the necessities of life to inspection and control by public authority; the devising of some just system of preventing the rapidly increasing conflicts between employers and employed; and the establishing of just and proper qualifications alike for immigrants and for electors.

It certainly would tend to make private property far more secure in America if the less fortunate majority of our population saw us of the more fortunate minority giving courage and time and thought to efforts to solve these problems and others like them, and thereby to lessen some of the evils which in many cases bear so heavily and so unjustly upon the poor.

Indeed, the influence of ethical ideals upon American democracy ought to be considered of value if only because the cultivation of such ideals will inevitably tend to make more really patriotic all classes of our countrymen, for such ideals lift us all above the unsatisfied standards of public duty with which we are vainly trying to content ourselves.

They bring us into the air of a higher and purer love of country, and they set us face to face with the early American spirit in its best estate. In such communion a sordid and selfish public opinion, with low methods to mean ends, tends to disappear, and a cowardly and corrupt public life becomes less possible.

You may not agree with me, but I am sure you will pardon

me for speaking of what seem to me to be the grave evils of the present tendencies of our national life and the serious dangers which, because of them, threaten the future of this government of ours, which our fathers sought to rest upon the enduring basis of liberty regulated by law,—a government which has the devotion of all our hearts to such degree that to keep it strong and pure and free we would all gladly lay down our lives; and while we must never despair of the republic, we must never cease our efforts to make it more worthy of the greatness of the opportunity offered it,—that of the leadership of the nations toward a civilization more peaceful, more serene, and more humane than the world has ever known.

Meanwhile it is consoling to know that, notwithstanding our failure to discharge our civic duties, many of the currents of our national life flow smoothly on, for the daily and obscure labors of the vast majority of our fellow citizens continue year after year in all the different phases of our national existence, and the laborers themselves have been sowing and reaping, working steadily at the tasks appointed them, taking the sunshine and the rain, mutely enduring the sufferings and the burdens given them to bear, and quitting themselves worthily as good men and women ought to do; and that daily confronting of the daily task, and doing it with patience, contentment, and courage, is as true to-day as ever; while it is also true that the recompense of such deserving labors, while less proportionately, is actually far greater in all measures, material and spiritual, than ever before, so that after all abatement we may regard the past with abundant gratitude and the future with absolute confidence, while on the threshold of the new century it is still true that the happiest of political fortunes is to be an American citizen, and that



fortune is sure to grow happier "with the process of the suns."

The present paralysis of our moral courage; our present cowardly tolerance of leathsome corruption and its kindred evils, which seem seriously to threaten our peace; our present animal lust for blood; and the general degradation of the national spirit we are here considering,—will prove to be only temporary evils and will soon pass away, for the American conscience is not dead, but sleepeth, and even if we do not, our children will return to the old ways and the old faith.

Let me repeat once more for your encouragement and my own those inspired words of the first great American: "The nation shall under God have a new birth of freedom, and government of the people by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

I am very grateful to this learned society for the repeated expression of its desire that I should address it. This year your invitation overtook me in the South, where—

"By the beached margent of the sea"

—I had just been reading a tale, the scene of which was laid in Italy, and cherishing the illusion that I was again standing for a moment on "the parapet of an old villa built on the Alban hills." Below I seem to see—

—"olive vineyards and pine plantations sink slope after slope, fold after fold, to the Campagna, and beyond the Campagna, along the whole shining land of the west, the sea met the sunset, while to the north a dim and scattered whiteness, rising from the plain, was—Rome."

And then, turning the leaves in the hope of finding another familiar scene, I was surprised to read these words:

"There are symbols and symbols. That dome of St. Peter's yonder makes my heart beat, because it speaks so

much—half the history of our race. But I remember another symbol, those tablets in Memorial Hall to the Harvard men that fell in the war—that wall, those names, that youth and death, they remain as the symbol of the other great majesty in the world—one is religion and the other is country."

Reading those words, I seemed to hear again the illustrious laureate of your illustrious dead, who gave their youth for liberty, and standing here they seem indeed to—

—"come transfigured back,  
Secure from change in the high-hearted ways,  
Beautiful evermore, and with the rays  
Of morn on their white shields of expectation."

In the spirit of their great sacrifice let us all cherish, in cheerfulness and in hopefulness an abiding devotion to both symbols,—that of religion and that of country; and let us labor together to the end that all the elevating influences which wait upon civilization may be more widely and generally diffused among all classes of our countrymen, and that we may all more ardently cherish the ethical idealism which seeks after peace and liberty, after equality and fraternity, and after respect and reverence for law.

In these ways, and in others we know not of, our American system of social and political life, by far the best ever yet enjoyed upon earth, may be placed upon the broad and enduring basis of true religion and true patriotism, and then at last the nation long foretold may appear, whose foundations are laid in fair colors and whose borders are of pleasant stones, and to it the promise of the prophet may be redeemed: "All their children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of their children."