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# ADDRESS

DELIVERED AUGUST 5, 1846,

BEFORE

THE HERMEAN SOCIETY

OF

GENEVA COLLEGE.

By WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D.D.  
OF ALBANY.

ALBANY:

ERASTUS H. PEASE.

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1846.

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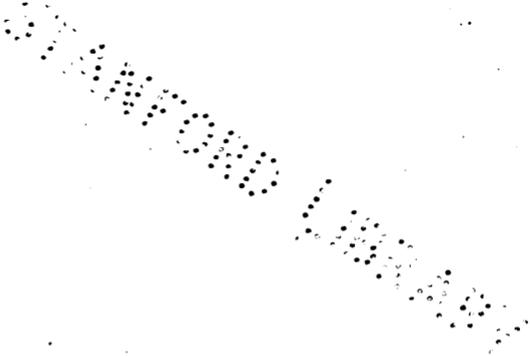
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## ADDRESS.

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The history of learning is alike changeful and unsatisfactory. It is the record of alternate depression and revival—here we find ourselves amidst the splendours of an illustrious genius or a golden age, and there amidst the deep shadows of ignorance and barbarism. If we travel back to the remotest point at which there is any light to our footsteps, independently of the light of revelation, we find looming up in the distance some names that can never die; especially the name of Homer, which must be a synonyme for the loftiest genius to the end of time. As we come down the track of ages, we meet presently with a cluster of exalted minds, who constituted the glory of the brightest age that Greece ever saw. As we descend still farther, the Augustan age,—the age of Virgil and

Horace, of Tacitus and Tully, opens upon us. And after the lapse of centuries more, we reach another bright landmark in our course, in the age of the Medici; when ancient Athens seemed well nigh to be reproduced in modern Florence. And then we come to the age of Elizabeth,—signalized by some of the brightest stars that ever appeared in England's intellectual horizon — such as Shakespeare and Spenser and Bacon and Hooker; then to the age of Louis the Fourteenth, in which Fenelon and Moliere and Bossuet were ruling spirits; and finally to the age of Anne, which, if it had less of intellectual strength, had more of intellectual polish, than any other period of English history. To each of these points — not to mention others that might well enough be included — the eye of the scholar turns with grateful exultation; and as he lingers among the monuments of genius, he half forgets that literature and science have not always exercised their benignant reign over the world.

But he has only to open his ear to the voice of history, or even his eye to passing events, to be wakened out of this luxurious dream.

The very fact that his mind lights upon only a few glorious periods, would seem to imply that there were long intervals of at least comparative darkness. And who that knows any thing of the past, does not know that this is but a faint description of the actual reality? Ages of intellectual night have, at different periods, passed over the world; and even when the day star of learning has seemed to dawn, giving promise that the glorious sun would soon appear, a few favoured spirits only have been brought within the benign influence, while the multitude have slept on as profoundly as ever. Learning has literally been a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth. She was not permitted to rest even in the groves of the Academy. She would fain have built her throne amidst the triumphs of Roman greatness; but before it was yet half constructed, barbarism came and swept it away. During the period of the middle ages, she scarcely saw the light; and though she was hard at work in those monastic retreats to which she had become exiled, yet much of her labour was lost, as it was expended in ridiculous and profitless speculations. In the dawn of a

brighter day, she lifted her eye of curiosity and admiration, and found out wonderful secrets in regard to the economy of the heavens; and when it was in her heart to have given the world the benefit of her discoveries, Superstition came, and led her to the door of a dungeon, and pointed her to the rack; and because she had not a martyr's conscience and a martyr's courage, she fell down at the feet of that monster, and solemnly abjured her own convictions. And even at this late day, when so many agencies unknown to the past, for renovating both the intellectual and moral world, have been put in operation—even now, I say, Learning has but just begun her onward march— even in our own favoured land, those who do not study, or reason, or think, constitute the mass— those who do, the exceptions.

If such has been the fate of learning in ages past, "What," asks the scholar, "is it likely to be in time to come? Look, search, scan the significant movements of God's providence, and tell us whether there be any signs of a brighter day." I would reverently set myself to answer this inquiry; but instead of attempting a complete answer, which would lead me

into too wide a range, I shall limit myself to a single point: — I shall endeavour to show that if we have not actually reached, we have at least nearly approached, what may be emphatically styled **THE PACIFIC AGE**; and that out of this there arises a bright prospect for the cause of learning.

It must be obvious to every one at all conversant with prophecy, that there is a pacific age clearly predicted—a period when men shall beat their instruments of death into implements of husbandry, and the nations shall learn war no more. Some of these predictions no doubt had reference to the period of the introduction of Christianity; when we know that the temple of Janus was shut in token of a universal peace. But it is manifest that many of them looked forward to a period yet more remote—to the time when Christianity shall have so far established her empire among the nations, that the corrupt passions of men shall be, in a good degree, subjugated, and the fountains of war thus dried up. That such a period will come sooner or later I have a right to assume as absolutely certain, because the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it: that it is

not now far distant — that possibly the first beams of that glorious morning may have already fallen upon us, will, if I mistake not, appear probable, if we take counsel of the spirit of passing events.

But I can imagine that it may occur to some of you, that it is with an ill grace that I am predicting a universal peace at the very moment when our own nation is vigorously prosecuting a war. The humiliating fact that we are engaged in a war, I am obliged to admit; but this fact is quite consistent with my position; for *that* is, not that peace has already gained a universal triumph, but that that event is probably not far distant. Who that has been accustomed to notice the developments of Providence, has not been struck with the fact that great changes never occur without great preparation; and that not unfrequently they are wrought by so gradual a process, that it is not easy to designate either the time of their commencement or the time of their completion? It were in accordance with the analogies of providence then, that war should die away by degrees; — that there should be some throes among the nations, even after the general reign

of peace may seem to have begun. I trust in God that the war with Mexico will be but the thing of a day; for notwithstanding the news of the signal triumph of our arms seemed to kindle up the martial spirit, as if the trophies of war were the one thing needful to a nation's glory, yet that storm of enthusiasm has already given place to a calm; and unless I greatly mistake, both the public judgment and the public feeling are beginning to show themselves urgent for the restoration of peace. I have nothing to say now in respect to the causes which originated the war; but that causes will soon be, if they are not already, in operation to extinguish it, I think the present aspect of things forbids us to doubt.

But if you point me to the blood that has been flowing in Mexico as proof that the passion for war has not abated, what say you of our late noble treaty with England, which has produced a jubilee in both nations, and which may well call forth the thanksgivings of the world? Less than three months ago there was a question pending between Britain and America, which, however insignificant in itself, was thought to have a most portentous

bearing upon the peace of the world. It was not that either the one nation or the other might not recede from its claims without sacrificing anything of much value in the way of territory; but that thing called national honour, too often identical with national pride, was enlisted; and the problem was, how each nation should preserve its self-respect, and keep out of the battle field. It was a protracted period of suspense, in which we were looking out for the worst, while we were asking God to avert it from us. We had begun to count the cost of parting with our sons and brothers, that they might go and take the chance of war—the cost of our commerce arrested, our temples desecrated, our cities wrapped in flames, our fields drenched in blood. We had approached so near the verge of the precipice, that we could look over and see the frightful rocks and whirlpools, amidst which we were in danger of being engulfed. But the prospect changed, as if deep darkness had instantly brightened into noonday. There were great spirits pleading for peace at the fountains of influence in both countries; and the God of peace caused that they should be

heard and heeded; and the consequence is that the two countries are now in friendly alliance, ready to co-operate in the great cause of human improvement. Had such a state of things as that which we have just witnessed, existed between these two nations a quarter of a century ago, or even at a much later period, who of us doubts that war—war with all its horrors, would have been found in the issue? I appeal to the fact that peace—peace with all its blessings, has actually been found in the issue of the recent difference, as evidence that I am not a mere dreamer in prophesying of a pacific age.

I cannot forbear to remark in this connection, that not only the fact of the late adjustment of our difficulty with England, but some things pertaining to the manner in which it was brought about, look strikingly significant of the epoch of peace—I refer particularly to some of the sentiments in Sir Robert Peel's late valedictory. He represents Lord Aberdeen as having dared to avow that "the time has now come, in which there is a moral obligation resting upon the members of a Christian cabinet, to exhaust every effort,

before incurring the risk of war;" and what his lordship dared to utter, Sir Robert dared in the most unqualified manner to endorse. Noble sentiment, worthy to be written on the face of the heavens, that it may be read by all the dwellers upon the earth! Noble statesmen, who dared to utter and to endorse such a sentiment, when the nations have only begun to learn that the *amor patriæ* and the *amor belli* are not necessarily identical! I can forget the wrongs which England has done to my country in the days of her youth, and look towards her with a filial and grateful veneration, when I see her standing forth, in the person of her great men, the advocate of peace; when I hear even those who sit in the shadow of the throne, uttering sentiments which, if faithfully carried out, would drive war into everlasting exile.

I have spoken more particularly of the relations of our own country to the subject of peace; but let me say, if we look abroad, we find nothing to impair, but much to strengthen, our confidence in the doctrine which I am endeavouring to maintain. Be it so that the sword has not yet become a ploughshare nor

the spear a pruning hook, and that nations have not yet altogether given up the work of death—still there is manifestly a reluctance to engage in it, an appreciation of the horror which it involves, that formerly did not exist; and the consequence is that there is a growing sentiment all over the civilized world in favour of a mediatorial adjustment of national differences. It deserves also to be considered that nearly all the more recent wars have evidently been designed by Providence, to aid the great cause of civilization, and thus in their remote effects, to minister to the universal prevalence of peace. Witness the wars which the French have been carrying on in Africa, and the British in India and China—criminal as they were in their origin, and terrible as they have been in their progress, it can scarcely admit of question that He who causes the wrath of man to praise Him, has permitted those barbarous nations to be thus invaded with reference to their being ultimately delivered from superstition and oppression, and incorporated into the great family of civilized and christianized man.

But along with the growth of a pacific spirit among the nations, there is also the multiplica-

tion to a most surprising extent of the means of defence; and that both upon the land and upon the water. What has not been already accomplished in this respect by the two great elements of steam and electricity—while yet each of them, we have reason to believe, has only begun to develop its mysterious energies. Suppose an invading foe to land at the extremity of our country—the news which in other days was borne by horses, is now committed to the lightning; and in a moment it is spreading far and wide at the distance of thousands of miles. We wish to send an army to defend our territory—formerly they must have reached their destination by a long and tedious march; and when they reached it, peradventure they were worn out with the greatness of the way, and ill prepared for the exhausting services that awaited them; but now they move over the land or over the water with a speed which the wind can scarcely overtake, and with as much security and comfort as if they were in their own dwellings. And they are there, ready to face the invading foe, before so much time has passed, as would have been necessary in other days, to their having commenced their march.

You see at once what a mighty advantage these great discoveries of the age give to the prosecution of a defensive campaign on the land.

And there are other discoveries which are scarcely less important in maintaining a *naval* defence. It has been ascertained, for instance, that war steamers designed for purposes of defence, at home, can be constructed with a capacity for one-third greater speed than vessels which are built for purposes of attack—of sufficient strength to cross the ocean. And inasmuch as speed is the great requisite for success in a naval steamer, it would be at fearful odds that the unwieldy ships that might come hither on an errand of invasion, should encounter the less imposing, but more elastic craft with which we might people our waters for our own defence. We could quickly show them that the stripling's sling is more than a match for the giant's armour; that our lighter vessels, made to dance upon the water, are, after all, terrible in a game of fire and blood.

Do you not perceive that these improvements in the art of defence, greatly diminish the temptation to hostile invasion? Each nation can say to any other, assuming a me-

nacing attitude, especially when the ocean rolls between them — “Come, if you will — Come, if you must; but come not without counting the cost of your enterprize. Be it so that you are greater than we; but you ought to have attained a gigantic stature, in order to measure weapons with us successfully, when we are on the defence.” Welcome every discovery of science, that can be rendered subservient to chaining the evil passions of men! Thanks to the Maker of heaven and earth, that He renders even his lightning that scathes and blasts, the minister of peace!

The last thing which I mention, though not the least on which I rely, to justify the opinion which I have expressed in regard to the present prospects of the world, is, that Christianity, the religion of peace, is now making rapid progress among the nations: I will not venture an opinion as to the time that is to elapse before the reign of Christianity becomes universal; but I hazard nothing in saying that the leaven is now at work, which is ultimately to diffuse itself through the lump; that the tree is already planted, that shall ere long overshadow the whole earth. But Christianity

purifies every heart in which she gains a lodgment. She keeps in check and ultimately dislodges men's evil passions; she inculcates the spirit of forgiveness both upon individuals and upon nations; she will not hear a word about strife and war, but with all her charity, she points downward to the fires that never go out. Oh yes, she is a very angel of peace. "Peace on earth and good will to man," is the motto which she brought with her from the skies; and wherever she moves in her life-giving career, the blessings of peace follow in her train. I say, then, every thing that betokens the progress of Christianity, betokens also the progress of peace. I contemplate the greatness of the missionary enterprize, and I see "Peace" inscribed upon that. Peace breathes in every prayer that is offered for the extension of the Redeemer's cause. Peace smiles and glows in every green spot which the hand of missionary zeal has caused to appear in the desert of Paganism. I can scarcely look in any direction, but I see Christianity at her all-gracious vocation; and if all other signs were wanting, I could easily

enough repose in this as evidence that an age of peace is soon to bless the world.

But what are the bearings of the pacific age upon the prospects of learning? In answering this question, it will be needful that we bring into view the disastrous influence of war, no less than the benign influence of peace.

I say then, war engrosses a nation's time and energy. No war is ever prosecuted for any considerable period, without bringing immense numbers into military service. The wars of Napoleon, for instance, brought all France into the field—all, I mean, who were capable of bearing arms, or whose services were not required to help forward the cause of blood in some other way. The war that gave us our independence, justifiable as we believe was its design, and glorious as we know has been its result,—that war, during the seven years that it lasted, gave to almost every man in the land, some practical lessons in military duty. And while such multitudes are occupied in the field, others are engaged in arranging and sustaining these martial operations; and if there are any who are not included in either of these classes, they at least find themselves

absorbed by the excitement incident to the passing scenes. Observe it is not merely time, but physical and intellectual energy, that war puts in requisition: the faculties of either body or mind or both, are tasked to the utmost; or where there are exceptions, the mind is in a feverish habit, little favourable to the control of its own powers. How adverse such a state of things must be to the *culture* of the mind, in other words, to the progress of learning, I need not attempt to show. The prosecution of literary pursuits requires leisure; but war robs a nation of its leisure. It requires that the mind should enjoy a settled tranquility; but war knows no such thing as tranquility. If you can point me to a great scholar who has arisen amidst a protracted scene of national strife, I will point you to an individual who was a rare instance of good fortune in being able to detach himself from the convulsions of the state, and a no less rare specimen of human nature in being able to keep calm in the midst of a tempest.

War depraves a nation's taste. Our intellectual tastes, not less than our moral habits, are formed, in a great degree, by the influence

of circumstances; especially by the general character of the times in which we live. And what taste is war specially adapted to cherish? Undoubtedly a taste for military glory. Let but a single company of soldiers pass through your streets, with martial step, and waving plumes, and thrilling music, and if you notice what is passing within, it is more than probable that you will find your heart bounding with exultation at the thought that when they come back, they may come laden with the honours of victory; or if they never come back, that gratitude and patriotism may hallow with fresh offerings their distant graves. Instead of a single company, let there be an immense army, marching through the country to the scene of war; and the martial spirit that glows in their own bosoms, will quickly kindle in the bosoms of the population through which they pass, and you need not marvel if the most enthusiastic demonstrations should await them wherever they move. Let the report of some brilliant, though bloody, victory go forth through the land, and the drum's beat and the cannon's roar shall call to the keeping of a jubilee; and those who hold back shall do

it at the peril of being regarded cold friends to their country. During a time of war, there are influences constantly in operation to cherish the desire for military distinction; and the danger is that it will soon become the nation's ruling passion, and will mock at all the efforts that may be made to restrain it. If I were to attempt to analyze this desire, I should certainly find that in it, which Christianity would disown — that which would indicate that instead of being breathed into the soul by an influence from above, it had been kindled by a spark from the world below: but the point to which I wish now to limit your attention is, that it cannot co-exist with a prevailing desire for literary eminence; nay, that the former is absolutely fatal to the latter. The one has its element in strife, the other in repose; the one is fed by violent excitement, the other by calm reflection. No nation, no individual, ever became distinguished for learning, where such distinction was not an object of strong desire; but I repeat, such a desire never existed where the ruling passion was for military renown.

War contracts, I may say even enervates, a nation's intellect. The intellect, though it may live as an immortal thing, can never flourish or fulfil its proper destiny, if it be fed merely by excitement—the chief aliment that war supplies to it. I know indeed that the intellect of the few on whom the conduct of war devolves, is tasked to the utmost; but even in their case it is shut up within narrow limits; and though there have been some great warriors who have also been great scholars, especially in the department of science, yet their acquisitions will almost uniformly be found to have been made in the time of peace. But even admitting that the faculties be brought into vigorous exercise by war, yet who does not know that the fact that they always operate in the same direction, secures but a very imperfect intellectual development? Besides, let it not be forgotten that the moral feelings exert a mighty influence upon the intellect, in rendering it more or less susceptible of improvement. War fills the soul with unhallowed passions—with malice and revenge, with the lust of power and the lust of victory and the lust of blood; and the soul cannot long harbour such inmates

but the intellect will be the worse for having been in communion with them. Let any nation—I care not how intellectual or refined—be engaged for many years in war, and as sure as the ordinance of Heaven is immutable, that nation's intellect will be found less elastic, less energetic, less fitted to explore regions of sublime or useful thought, than when it first gave itself to this disturbing and unnatural occupation.

If such is the direct action of war upon the mind in respect to the culture of its faculties, mark now how different is the effect of peace. If war engrosses a nation's time and energy, so that it has neither the leisure nor the faculties to give to the pursuits of learning, peace furnishes ample time for reflection and study, and ample quietude to secure to the faculties an undisturbed operation. If war depraves a nation's taste, consecrating military glory as a thing to be worshipped, peace breaks down this ignoble idolatry, and calls forth high intellectual aspirations. If war sheds mildew upon a nation's intellect, contracting its sphere of vision, and forming out of the passions a ministry of darkness and feebleness, peace

gives to the same intellect a greatly increased vigour, by enlarging the field of its operations, and delivering it from the maddening influences within that war had generated. It is in the light of peace alone that a nation's mind can act with composure and freedom, or find those excitements to thoughtful and earnest effort, which are necessary to its attaining the highest elevation.

I know not whether history furnishes a more striking illustration of the disastrous influence of war upon at least some of the faculties, than we have in the case of Napoleon. That man, the wonder of his age, and destined to be the wonder of all the ages that shall succeed him, was born with the elements of a most extraordinary character. Every thing pertaining to his intellect was colossal. His perceptions were intuitive—clear as the light and quick as the lightning. His comprehension was vast—it disdained the limits which most other great minds have felt constrained to recognize. His power to diffuse his influence every where or to concentrate it at a point, to combine the elements for a tempest, or to hush the tempest by a word, was a fit and terrible

representation of the power that rules the world. His earliest tendencies were for military life; and while he was yet comparatively a stripling, he could make his voice heard to the ends of the earth. His movements soon became terrific; and they who chronicled them knew that they were sending forth that which would make the nations turn pale. He looked forth upon the whole world as his field; he had glorious visions of universal conquest; he thought that a chaplet of victory was to be woven for him in every land; and then it was that the giant became mad, and in his madness began to meditate a project that was to end in suicide. When that desperate plan of penetrating into Russia was formed, it was evidence enough that the mind that projected it had lost its balance; and when his marshals counselled him, and even expostulated with him, against the enterprize, he treated them as if they had been but children; thus showing still further that he was the subject of deep seated intellectual disease. He had his own way, and the end of that way was death. He went to Russia indeed, and shed an ocean of blood;

but he came back without a solitary laurel ; he came back to witness his own utter and final discomfiture ; he made a brief call at Elba, and then went off in a prisoner's glory to spend the residue of his life leisurely in mid-ocean, where the tempests without might unite with the tempests within, in howling forth their angry rebukes for his having made himself the scourge of the world. He was emphatically *the* man of one idea ; he knew no other element than the glory that pertains to conquest ; his ambition made him delirious, and in his delirium, he rushed upon his own sword.

Suppose, for a moment, that Napoleon, with his gigantic powers, had devoted his life to learning and philanthropy — suppose that his training had been at the university of Paris instead of the military school at Brienne, and that he had come out an accomplished scholar instead of an accomplished soldier — suppose he had given himself to the investigation of physical, intellectual or moral science, instead of military tactics and military exploits — who can estimate the amount of blessing that must have followed in his track ? Who can

mark that point in the future at which grateful offerings should have ceased to perfume his memory? Who can tell how much more advanced the world might have been than it now is, in knowledge, in civilization, in the resources of intellectual strength and greatness? I know indeed that God's providence, has made Napoleon the minister of good; but let it never be forgotten that in estimating the actions of men, we are to have respect to their legitimate tendencies, and not to those remote effects which, under the direction of almighty power and infinite wisdom, they may be made to produce. Had he given himself directly to the great cause of human improvement, he would have been an angel of mercy to the world; but as it was, he was an angel of terror and death; and not the less so because God's all-seeing eye reached farther than his, and God's wonder working hand made his strange career a channel of blessing.

I have spoken hitherto of the influence which war and peace respectively exert upon a nation's intellectual attainments, chiefly as they have a bearing upon the mind itself; but there are other influences less direct, that must

be taken into the account, if we will arrive at an intelligent and satisfactory result. War robs the cause of learning by appropriating a nation's resources to the cause of blood. It dries up all the fountains of public prosperity. It brings a blight upon the interests of agriculture — the fields that might yield luxuriantly are left to protracted barrenness, because they whose office it is to cultivate them have been summoned away to the field of slaughter. The manufacturer, unless indeed he be a manufacturer of the weapons of death, has nothing to do; for why should he put his wheels in motion, when no one asks for the product of his labour? Commerce — how utterly war annihilates that — for who can assure the merchant that his ship that rides majestically out of the harbour, may not be scathed and riven by the enemy's fire, while yet it has only commenced its way across the ocean? And last of all, war is a fearful consumer of life — it sweeps from the earth a multitude of capable and efficient labourers, who, if they had lived, might have added much to the stock of a nation's wealth. Why, my friends, have you any idea of the cost of war?

To support a single brig or schooner of war for a year, and in time of peace, at the lowest estimate, costs thirty-one thousand dollars; to support a frigate, one hundred and seventy thousand; to support a ship of the line, two hundred and ninety thousand. The army of the United States, consisting of less than twelve thousand men, cost, during the year 1842, four millions of dollars; the Florida war cost from thirty to fifty millions; the conquest and occupation of Algiers by the French, extending through a period of twelve years, cost that nation the enormous sum of one hundred and twenty millions of dollars. Suppose the hundredth part of this last mentioned sum, had been devoted to the amelioration of the character and condition of man — how changed would have been the aspect of this dark world! But it belongs to the reign of peace to rescue the world's treasures from the destroyer, and appropriate them to the intellectual and moral benefit of man. Peace will have much to give, and she will have a heart to give it. When she is asked to create and endow noble institutions she will not have to decline, because all her resources

are needed to carry forward the horrible work of human butchery. She will display her banner in every valley and on every mountain top, as a signal that the well spring of knowledge and wisdom is open to all. War, covetous war, grasping war, never made one generous offering to the cause of learning: peace lives and reigns, that learning may live and reign under her dominion.

But war not only prevents the establishment of new institutions of learning, or starves those that already exist, by monopolizing a nation's resources, but it not unfrequently interrupts, for a long time, all academical exercises, by the terror and agitation which it produces. You are all familiar with the fact that, during the war of our revolution, a large part of our colleges suspended their operations — Harvard and Yale and Princeton and Columbia, became severally the seats of military parade, if not of barbarous attack; and I remember but the other day, in reading a eulogy that was lately pronounced on a distinguished son of Harvard, to have noticed that his great attainments were considered the more remarkable, in view of his having been educated at the period of the

revolution, when every thing conspired to contract the advantages for intellectual acquirement. If England herself were to become the seat of an invading army, and her soil were to be moistened, as ours has been, with the blood of her sons, even Oxford and Cambridge, might like our own Harvard and Yale, be driven into exile, till some olive branch should appear as a token that the storm of war had abated. Peace knows no such interruptions. She leaves learning to keep quietly and vigorously at her work. She stands in the gates of every literary institution, proffering her blessings to its inmates.

There is yet another way in which peace operates indirectly in favour of learning — I refer to the influence which she exerts through Christianity; for if, as we have seen, the rapid progress of Christianity betokens the dawn of the pacific age, not less does the progress of peace favour the universal triumph of Christianity.

War is the everlasting enemy of all that is good; and as Christianity is the very essence of goodness, it were to be expected that that monster would concentrate upon her his most

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malignant hate. War opposes her progress in every form and under every variety of circumstances. Is religion likely to flourish, even in the most Christian community, which has become the seat of war? Rely on it, the tone of moral feeling will there, quickly be depressed; infidel and licentious maxims will become prevalent and popular; the irreligious will wax more bold in their irreligion; and even the virtuous and good will not improbably keep their hearts with less diligence and serve God with less fervour, by reason of the exciting and unhallowed influences by which they are surrounded. And how will war be likely to act upon the interests of religion abroad—especially upon the extension of the kingdom of Christ in Pagan lands? Why it can only act with a most disastrous influence: while it will check the current of missionary zeal, and consume the resources of missionary enterprise, and, as the case may be, prevent access to the missionary field, it will arm the poor heathen with prejudices against the gospel; and they will ask, as they often *have* asked, how it comes to pass that those who take delight in shedding the blood of their fellow

men and carrying desolation through the world, should ask *them* to become converts to a religion that tolerates such offences against even the light of nature; and if they are told that they must recognize a distinction between the character of the religion and the character of its professors, marvel not, if they should answer by quoting from our own oracles, "The tree is known by its fruit." But, on the other hand, let a nation be at peace with itself and with all other nations, and you may expect, if that be a Christian nation, that it will become more and more Christian;—its path will be like the shining light ever growing brighter. Peace will leave the mind of a nation free to attend to the things that *belong* to their peace. Peace will beckon the heavenly visitant from the skies, to exert his quickening powers upon the dead in trespasses and sins. Peace will pour her gifts into the treasury of the Lord; will send forth bands of faithful servants to the missionary work; will remove one of the chief obstacles to the reception of the gospel by those who sit in the region of the shadow of death. You remember how it was at the introduction

of Christianity — peace found a temporary lodgment among all the nations; and no doubt it was owing much to this that the gospel made such rapid progress and wrought with such mighty power. Let a similar state of things exist now — and we trust in God that it is destined soon to exist — and what hinders but that there may be a correspondingly rapid extension and growth of our holy religion — what hinders but that Christianity in her mild and gracious triumph may speedily march through the world ?

I do not forget that Christianity has higher relations than those which she bears to learning — relations to man's immortal spirit, that no power can ever dissolve; and that it is at her feet we must sit, if we would learn what we must do to be saved. But the design of this discourse limits me to the influence which she exerts in the development of the intellect and the diffusion of knowledge; and I hesitate not to say that even here she shows herself mighty to bless. Be it that she has her throne in the heart — yet it is her province to quicken every faculty of the mind, and especially to quicken the conscience in aid of the improve-

ment of the other faculties. She awakens and cherishes both the love of knowledge and the love of truth, while she opens a field in which the well directed mind may expatiate forever, and yet never come within sight of a boundary. I am aware that here and there a great light has arisen in the world of letters or of science, where the influences of Christianity have either operated but feebly or been altogether unknown; but I venture to say that history does not furnish an instance of any thing like a general diffusion of knowledge where the banner of the cross has not been planted; and as a general rule, just in proportion as Christianity prevails among a people, we may expect to find a taste for intellectual improvement. Am I not justified then in saying that the prospects of learning brighten, as they are viewed in the light of the pacific age; inasmuch as Christianity is the foster mother of learning, and peace is the handmaid of Christianity?

I confess, my friends, that the subject we have been contemplating fills my own mind with enlarged and grateful emotions, as I dwell upon it in connection with the future desti-

nies of our race. The history of man's intellect down to the present hour, is, with comparatively few exceptions, the history of deep darkness, of withering bondage, of noble aspirations stifled, of great and immortal faculties yielding nothing. I ask, wherefore has been this criminal perversion of God's noblest gifts? Wherefore has learning witnessed to so many ages of imprisonment, and even in her best days, exercised so contracted a dominion? The answer is, she has had her lot in a world of enemies; though the only one whose name I will now call is war. But we think we see signs of no equivocal import that war is soon to die; and we trust that her other foes will also be slain and buried in the same grave. The pacific age stretches into the far distant future. I see it embosomed in millennial glory. I hear it celebrated in millennial anthems. I enquire for man's intellect, and behold it is quite another thing than what I have been accustomed to contemplate: he has become so great that, if he were to meet an angel, it would scarcely seem arrogant that he should call him brother. I see the means of knowledge multiplied a hundred fold and extended every

where : I see great and venerable institutions of learning planted on the ruins of superstition and barbarism : I see the world peopled with cultivated minds : I see truth and virtue reigning over all. Hail, thou pacific age ! Come and renovate man's intellect as well as his heart ! Be it so that it is our privilege to witness only thy auspicious dawn — yet we believe that our children and children's children shall rejoice in thy noonday splendours !

Scholars, I leave this subject now to your reflection, in the hope that it may minister somewhat to your encouragement. Young gentlemen who compose the society which I have been invited to address, I congratulate you that you are entering upon active life at a period so favourable to the prosecution of high intellectual and philanthropic aims. Let your profession be what it may, or your condition what it may, remember that nothing can absolve you from the obligation to do your utmost to give to these twin sisters, peace and learning, a universal dominion. And forget not that *their* triumph must be identified with the triumph of Christianity ; and that, in the promotion of Christianity, though you

do much more, yet you most effectually labour for the accomplishment of this object. I ask you in behalf of your alma mater, who sends you away with her honours and her benedictions; in behalf of your country, who has much good and active service for you to perform; in behalf of the world, that requires your aid to carry forward the work of her renovation; in behalf of the golden age which at best is only dawning, and which your efforts may cause to brighten more rapidly, I ask you, I implore you to be faithful to your obligations as scholars. Then shall learning and peace recognize their obligations to *you*, by shedding their hallowed influences around your footsteps, by appearing as chief mourners at your funeral, and by unitedly entwining a wreath to lay upon your grave.