

The Principles of Progression.

In times like the present, so full of excitement, when the sound of war, and the music of battle are so frequently heard; when every daily pulsation breaks upon us with either forebodings of ill or good, and opinions vibrate from side to side like some great pendulum; we say in times like these, we ought to stop in our career for a moment and consider; to look abroad upon the great world spread out before us, inhabited by so many intelligences, and say, decide plainly and fairly upon the question, whether or not this part of the nineteenth century is really in a state of improvement, beyond a period, numbering forty, thirty, twenty, ten, or even five years ago. Or, bringing it nearer home, whether we, as a people are in fact progressing in the march or work of civilization, refinement, knowledge, and wisdom, and in those national characteristics, those distinguishing elevating properties, which so fully commend themselves to the approbation of mankind—those things which most certainly exalt a nation.

It is a matter in which every intelligent mind is interested. No one can, indeed, throw it from him, and however difficult may be the problem as to how far his own individual responsibility extends, nevertheless, it is a duty to which he is impelled by every consideration which is worthy of man, to ascertain that responsibility, as he will assuredly be accountable for it, to the full extent of his influence, and sphere of action.

Progress commences with the individual; it starts with the smallest integral part. In nations as well as in art, everything has an atomic origin. An Edifice is not completed with a thought, or erected as an entity, but, commenced with the corner stone, it progresses in regular order, until it becomes the perfect building. Nature has also her origin and climax, beginning in elements, and completing in symmetrical individuality.

Progress beginning with the individual, he represents the cause, and as all causes have their concurrent effects, we look for, or it is natural to look for, results which cannot be expected of the mass. Masses never work of themselves; it is paradoxical to say that any great event ever occurred without its starting point; that large masses were ever moved without the impulse given them by some ruling spirit. It is a matter of fact, and it is well for us to consider it well, as members of society, that every individual, wields a powerful influence on the side either of good or ill, and no man can estimate this influence properly, who does not give it his studious attention. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," and one individual may produce an impulse, that may be felt to the very boundaries of society, however little he may think of it at the moment.

In speaking of progress we do not particularize, we mean progress in anything that tends to make men wiser and better; but we do particularize, when we say that in so far as we have failed to accomplish that which we ought to have accomplished, or perfected, every individual is accountable and chargeable; and so far as we have progressed; so far as we have availed ourselves of the opportunity, and improved it for the good of mankind, we are worthy of, and receive approbation.

Viewing progression then from such a standpoint, should we not look to ourselves, and ask the question, "what have I done toward this progress?" And asking this question, must not many of us answer, that we have retarded, rather than assisted in the progress of events for good? How many of us can say, we have used our best efforts for the amelioration and elevation of the condition of our fellows; have labored in the paths of science, yearned to disseminate truth, sought to spread knowledge broadcast; desired only, to live for the benefit of others?

If, in looking back upon the past, or, if in comparing the present with the past, we find we have not progressed, and are not in a state of progression, we are responsible for it, as individuals; and it is equally true, that the progress of the future, will depend entirely upon your exertion, and our exertion; and upon our shoulders, will rest the odium if it fails, or the applause if successful, and real. See to it then, that every means placed in your reach, is used in a manner that will eventuate in results, which will show in sublime colors, the part you are taking, and tell powerfully and grandly upon the broadest expanse of society, and upon the world, even to the latest generation. It is your duty, and it is expected of you.

Powers of Government.

We presume it will be conceded by all that the powers of the Government are ample, according to the law of Nations, to suppress the present Rebellion, and to place the Country out of danger, and secure it against the possibility of another. We believe it has not only the inherent power to do so by force of strength, leaving out of question the great principle by which the Rebellion was originated or instigated, but we believe it can be doubly done by knocking from under it, its only support, in conjunction with the military power. If the war be prosecuted, having in view the policy of Emancipation, we believe the end is inevitable, and that shortly, and slavery being prohibited thereafter, all possibility of a repetition of a rebellion will be utterly destroyed, as its pabulum will then have been exhausted. But in case of a suppression of the Rebellion many grave questions may arise. By secession, and rebellion, have the revolted States forfeited all right to the allegiance of their citizens, and are they thereby remitted to the condition and rights of citizens solely of the United States? If so, "the Federal Government, as well as the Constitution, as by right of conquest, may enforce such terms upon the reorganization and restoration of those States as may be necessary to secure present safety, and avert danger in time to come." Yet, let whatever question that may, arise, we have confidence in the Government that it can suppress the Rebellion. If it can restore the country to peace and quiet once more, it can meet every question that may arise whether of policy, right, or justice. We are not one of those who believe that we present a humiliating spectacle to other nations, because nearly half of our national temple is in ruins, because of the blind folly, and mad ambition of that portion, but we believe that it is now rising, and will soon rise "in fresher beauty, firmer strength, and brighter glory"—and above it shall float the good old flag, every star restored, for all generations.

A Challenge from Secretary Wells.

We see that Secretary WELLS, has issued the following challenge through his Assistant Secretary—Mr. Fox, which was read before the Chamber of Commerce on Saturday last:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, Jan. 13, 1864.
Geo. W. BLUNT, Esq., New York:—

MY DEAR SIR—The charges against the Navy Department for building slow steamers is best answered by a comparative public trial, and I am authorized by the Secretary to make arrangements to run one of our vessels against the fastest side-wheel Steamer in the country; foreign or American. The Adriatic, Illinois, Fulton, Eagle and some of the Cunard line are, I believe, in New York at this time. The Eutaw, one of the only class of side-wheel Steamers constructed by the Department, and known as a double-ender, is now at the Washington Navy Yard, and will be sent around to New York if a race can be arranged. Her tonnage is 974 and her draught eight feet six inches, and she will run against the same tonnage and draught in any weather. If her competitor is much larger, the race to take place in smooth water. Very respectfully,
G. V. FOX.

The New York Herald, in its usual felicity of language, attempts to sneer at the idea, by proposing that the Secretary shall match three steamers like the Eutaw, against the rebel steamers Rappahannock, Alabama and Florida, and if our steamers overtake the Rebels we may pocket the stakes. We confess we do not see, however, the pith of the argument with which the Herald seems to be so confident, and to chuckle over with so much grace. In the first place the Secretary proposes to run one of our Steamers against the fastest side-wheel Steamer in the Country, foreign or American. It is supposed, therefore, that such competitor will be in actual view, and not a myth. In the second place the rebel steamers have not been seen, or if seen, under such maritime disadvantage that it was impossible to overtake them. Taking everything into consideration we do not see where the disrepute attached to our vessels by the Herald lies, and believe that if a fair opportunity is offered, the superiority of our vessels will be demonstrated and that fully. It is a fact beyond dispute that the rebel vessels are good sailers, but we will not admit any argument, or praise, in their favor, which will in any respect disparage our own. American vessels have always taken the lead with all Nations, as to model, and sailing qualities, and we believe our Navy has now some of the best vessels that float in any water.

Denmark and Germany.

The question between Denmark and Germany, will very likely cause a great many to look up their maps, and books, and refresh themselves in Geography. Such excitements produce their good results, as other things. Places, during contention, often become of great importance; but more on account of their associations, than of their real value. Who would have thought five years ago, that Bull Run, or Belle Island, would be of so much notoriety; of such consequence, that the historian will represent them in the most glowing colors, on the immortal pages that tell the story of this generation. And the question between Denmark and Germany, may enroll in a struggle, almost all the Nations of Europe. If so, places now scarcely known, may be the scenes of the most splendid contests, that the world has ever witnessed. NAPOLEON'S or ALEXANDER'S battles may be fought over, and with the most reckless intrepidity, or with passions heated to their highest pitch, hundreds of thousands may be left on battle fields, monuments of the fallacy of governments, or of the stupidity of men.

We would recommend to all who are interested in this great struggle, about to take place, to commence a study of the grounds, as well as the principles involved in it. It is interesting to the Military, as well as to civilians. We have given the world many lessons in the art of war, and it is to be seen whether it will accept the teachings, or in return, add much to what we already know on that subject.

Deception.

CHARLES LAMB once said, of all the lies he ever put forth—and he put forth a good many—indeed, he valued himself on being "a matter-of-lie man," believing truth to be too precious to be wasted upon everybody—of all the lies he ever put forth, he valued one the most. This was an honest confession, and though it was but adding jest to facetiousness, teaches us a lesson, of frankness, and we may take it and apply it as a criterion to our own deportment. How few openly avow their faults, how few are willing to say the same that LAMB said. Would you not say that a thief had some feeling of humanity who had returned the stolen property of some needy person; or the brigand, who had protected innocency? Would you not think it manly in any one to declare his real purposes? And yet in our daily associations we see those who are the very representatives of deception, and they look upon it with all the complacency possible.—Every word they speak, and every act they perform tells their real character. Most of it arises from selfish motives; to carry a point, subterfuge, prevarication, deception are the means used, and this is repeated so frequently, that the act becomes a habit, indeed is often a necessity. Many are addicted to this deception and some without being aware of it, but really we know of no better word to apply to it than that applied by O. WENDELL HOLMES to many similar things, and that is, it is "decidedly vealish," and deserves to be placarded such, so that the world may see it.

The Awful Calamity at Santiago, Chili.

Our readers have doubtless read, before this, of the awful calamity at Santiago, Chili, which resulted in the burning of the Cathedral, and with it, the loss of over two thousand lives, mostly women and children. In about an hour after the fire occurred, the roof fell in, and the most awful scene followed, that was, probably, ever witnessed before. It is spoken of as being without a parallel, and as eclipsing all other catastrophes of a similar nature. We simply mention the fact, as being worthy of record; referring the reader to the lengthy accounts already published; but we hope it may be a warning to architects, in the erection of edifices of this, and all other kinds, where may be congregated, any considerable number of persons. If there is any one thing above another, which is desirable, and even absolutely necessary, and should be demanded, for public security, and protection, it is that a proper egress should be provided, in all such buildings. No one can feel himself secure, under such circumstances, nor, does it produce a very pleasant feeling, when we consider, that such a calamity, is apt to befall us at any time, and, it may be, when we least expect it.