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THE MAN IN HISTORY

AN ORATION FOR THE COLUMBIAN YEAR

BY

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TO
HONORABLE WILLIAM H. ENGLISH,
PRESIDENT OF THE INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

THE MAN IN HISTORY.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Man and History! What are the ideas which these two transcendent words bring before the mind of the inquirer? In what manner—by what evolution of thought and imagery—may we justly estimate the great facts for which they stand, and determine their relations and dependencies in the drama of the world?

I am not unaware that for the problems here vaguely suggested some of the greatest minds of the ages have essayed an answer. The thinkers of the Old World and the New, in ancient times and in modern times, have sought with varying degrees of approximation to reach a just concept of the thing called History and of the place which Man has in it. In the luminous thought of the great Greeks the problem of the event and the man—of the maker and the thing made—hung like a haunting shadow. Already by that most intellectual of all the peoples of the earth history was studied both in its facts and its philosophy; but the bottom questions of the inquiry remained nebulous and unresolved. Then came ages of eclipse and darkness. There were vast reaches of intervening barbarism, flecked with dim patches of light at Alexandria, at Cordova, at Florence, at Rome, and anon at Paris and the Bridge of the Cam. In modern times the mind of man has recurred as best it may to this grandest of all the departments of human inquiry, and has wrestled with the

chaos which the warring races of mankind have piled up along the far horizons of the world.

The dawn of the new era of human thought—the coming of the time when the intellectual sphere should be sufficiently widened to consider rationally the history of our race and the philosophical place of man therein—has been long postponed. It has remained for our own age to solve many of the riddles transmitted from the ancient world. The mind has begun to rise at last to higher concepts and grander visions of the vast landscape, and to note the metes and bounds of man-life on the earth. Without doubt, the landscape has not yet been wholly cleared of fog and shadow. It is only the beginning of the cosmos that is to be. It is the day-breaking of a great intellectual epoch the like of which was not even conceived in the dreams and hopes of the ages past. We have come to the morning. Of the nineteenth century it shall be said hereafter, “At the evening it was light.” The nebulae in the ethereal spaces, long floating, dim, cloud-formed, swan-like in the depths around us, divide themselves into shining worlds, and new systems of order and beauty rise on the right hand and the left.

These systems of order, which indeed the mind of man has not created, but has only gone forth to discover, are not so much material as they are intellectual and spiritual. This age is to be known hereafter for the discovery of new worlds hitherto unfound or only vaguely conjectured—new worlds not of matter, but of thought and truth. In the visible heavens Mars and Jove are no longer the Mars and Jove of the old mythology, no longer the far-off planets of Kepler and Herschel and Leverrier, but the revealed worlds of Holden and Pickering and Schiaparelli. They have rolled out of the cloudland with their satellites, their continents and shores, with their lakes and canals and vital atmosphere. Shall we not also say with their living men?

In like manner in the sky of thought the revelation of things hitherto unknown has come, as if by glorious discovery. There the vast system of Evolution, explanatory of the method of creation and all progress, has been found, with its beautiful concomitants of law and order, with its sublime principles of life-history and its inspiring promises of the things to come. There also has been found the planet of Human History, now first discovered in definite outline and sunlit disc, *felt* only hitherto as Uranus was felt by Adams ere the astronomer beheld it with the eye. History like the other worlds has taken its place under the magnificent reign of law; her planetary orb is clear and bright; her continents and her seas are there; there are her rivers and her thoroughfares; her mountain chains and her lakes of bubbling silver.

Than this no greater world has been discovered in ancient or in modern times. Than this Galileo himself with his little telescope in the old tower of St. Mark, with the skeptical doge beside him, beheld not a more glorious new system of worlds and stars. They indeed shall grow old and go out in darkness; but this New World of Man-life, passing out of chaos into order and law, is of the substance of truth and eternity. Like the orbs above us, history has emerged from chaotic fire-mist and cloud, and has rolled in clear outline upon the vision. Through the halo and splendor of the new morning we see men with sunlight for garments and with flaming sandals, walking as the trees along the luminous horizon of life.

But what is History? That is the great question with which we are concerned. In what outlines does she reveal herself, now that she has become cosmic and beautiful to the eye of science and of poetry? History is no more, as she was, a queen of shreds and patches. She is no more chaotic, lawless, perturbed, distraught with wild visions and broken dreams. Let us see, if we may, what

manner of creature this is which the better thought of our age has made visible to our senses and understandings.

In the languages and thought of men the word history has had meanings not a few. The diverse senses of the term have confused, almost confounded, the understanding of the inquirer. First of all, the word history has been used as the name of those puny writings, those formal narratives of events, which men have produced and in which they have attempted to record the annals of the past. It was in this sense that the Greeks first coined and used their word *historia*. It was written story, a narrative of things done and accomplished by men, a statement of facts and principles. Thus began the man-made transcript, the poor picture which the ingenious mind by the unstable vehicle of human speech has sought to delineate on paper, to carve on stone tablets, to print at length with movable types, to bind up in books, and to set in libraries as the story of the world.

History, in this first sense, is the thing as man has seen it, and said it, and transmitted it to his fellows. Rather is it his *picture* of the thing; it is his little ambrotype printed on sheet of tin—his photograph done cunningly on film of paper. He has set up his camera and looked through it at the world. He has covered his head with the black cloth, fixed his focus, and looked forth at the little inverted images of the landscape. Lo, in that landscape are rivers and plains, interminable forests, precipices with gnarled oaks and eagles, vast mountains capped with snow, green earth stretching to infinite distance, and giant clouds floating on high, wrought into shining palaces and islands of light and glory! And yet this poor ambrotype, this photograph, two inches by four, written into dead miniature with sun-pencil through an inch-broad lens of glass, is supposed to contain the landscape! Such is the confusion of human thought that the picture is confounded with the

landscape, and the names of the two are mixed and interchanged! The photograph, dim, obscured, blurred, less than a palm-breadth, traced with dead lines on perishable paper—this is history! This is agreed upon as the adequate transcript of the vast arena of the world, filled with life, brilliant with sun and air, tossing with activities, shadowed with infinite griefs and luminous with eternal hope!

Strange it is how long mankind were satisfied with insignificant *pictures* of the life and deeds of men! It seems to suffice that the mind had become curious to know the past, and had sought to reproduce it with letters and monuments. To this day, in the half-gloom of libraries the world over, assiduous scholars, thinkers whose eyes have been dimmed with years of application, iconoclasts with ax and torch, ambitious neophytes and wrinkled sages sit poring by daylight and lamplight over the faint lines of the man-made pictures which we call history! Out of *that* they would discover the past, determine the laws of human society, and reorganize the world.

There is thus, first of all, a written history, small, indistinct, obscure, disfigured with prejudice, seen crosswise with strabismic eyes, streaked in every part with the taints and obliquity of the minds by which it has been produced. But let not any condemn this poor record of the world. Rather let us guard it and admire it as the greatest legacy transmitted by the human race to its offspring. For by this we know whatever may be known of the past. Let it be noted with care that written history, however imperfect and meager, however blind in its transcript and explanation of the order and processes of man-life on the earth, is our only resource. Without it all the past, of which indeed we know so little, would suddenly resolve into the darkness of oblivion and be seen no more forever.

If written history were destroyed, our knowledge of the career of our race could never be regained. Other things

may be restored or built anew. All science, for example, might be quickly recreated if every word that man has written on scientific subjects were suddenly struck into night and silence. All those vast philosophies with which the human reason has so much beguiled itself might be made again out of the original materials. If every paragraph and line which has been penned on abstract inquiry were reduced to gas and ashes, the whole might spring anew out of the soil which first produced it. So also of other achievements of the mind and hand. All architecture and arts might be done anew, or by restoration, if the real architecture and arts of past and present ages were swallowed into dust and darkness.

But not so written history. Who could reconstruct a single paragraph lost from the records of the ancient world? If written history were destroyed, to what should we appeal in the hope of recovering our knowledge of the past? A few hints might still be gathered from architectural remains. Possibly something might be reconstructed by studying the existing laws of human conduct, and by tracing backwards for a short distance the lines of dim tradition; but for the rest, our knowledge of the world gone by, of the emergence of human tribes from barbarism, of the development of our race into nations and peoples, of their rise into greatness and their descent again into shame and savagery, depends wholly upon such records as ingenious man has contrived for the transmission of his deeds and fame to after ages.

This record then is history—as the ancients understood it. It is an account of events and institutions, done with such poor skill as the writers have possessed. It is an imperfect, an interrupted narrative of the rise and fall of nations, of the transformations of society, of particular episodes in the evolution and whirl of mankind, and especially

of the part which the great actors here and there have taken in the drama.

But what does written history signify? What is implied in the existence and study of such a fact as a historical work? Is it possible that we are curious with a mere book of records? Or do we look for something else? Do we study a book when we study history? More properly, may we find history in a book? Is this the thing for which we are searching, or do we not seek another? Do we study history—written history—merely as we would critically consider a literary product? Or do we look through it and beyond it to the things which it seeks to reveal? Is there not another and real history of which the book-history is but a passing shadow? Is it the shadow or the substance which we would discover and understand? Do we not easily perceive that all written history considered in itself is but a mere simulacrum—a reduced dead image of some great fact as much more sublime than the transcribed images of the printed page as the open heavens with their galaxies and rolling worlds are more sublime than star-maps and orreries?

It is questions such as these and the answers to them that have brought us at length to look through all written history to the *real* history beyond. In truth, the real history is the only history, and the rest is but an image. Indeed, we scarcely any longer in the more exact and scientific language of our day use the word history of the literary reproduction, but only of the facts and events which are reflected therein. He who studies astronomy may be interested with the telescope; but the telescope is not the stars. He may concern himself with the lenses and the adjustment, with the chronometer and the mounting, with the machinery of the dome and the record of temperatures; but none of these things are astronomy. The astronomy is yonder. The telescope is but an eye through which the

real astronomy is discovered. The circle and the transit are but means to the end of that star-love the seat of which is far away on high.

In like relation stands all book-history to the real history of the world. The real history is the event, and not the reflection of it in some poor labored page done by the groping genius of man. The real history stands far off yonder in the past. It issues out of primeval shadows and darkness. It comes hitherward on trial marches, turning in this direction and in that as it moves among the mists and shadows of the dawn. It covers itself with mythology and tradition. It shows itself in tribe-life and clan-life. It swings great clubs in battle with the wild beasts of the primeval world. It makes its home in caverns, in lake-villages, in rude tents, by the wave-washed shores of the sea. It issues into nationality. It founds cities and creates institutions. It becomes conscious and instinct with rational activities. It throws off its barbaric raiment and puts on the habiliments of the civilized life. It builds temples and palaces of stone, and adorns its structures, reproducing in the forms of art the concepts of the mind. The epic and the lyric are heard above the resonance of clashing shields. There is noise in the porches of senate-houses and councils in the chambers of great kings. Civilization begins her stately advances, and the world is planted with commonwealths and empires. Commerce on white wings traverses all seas. All coasts and oceans, from the Great Dipper to the Southern Cross, are visited by the adventurous sons of men. They join hands around the continents, and girdle the earth in final internationality and peace. It is a drama, with mankind for the actors, the earth for a stage, and the downhanging sky and clouds for curtains.

This is real history—history in the *second* sense. It is the great movement of the human race from its beginning

to the consummation of its career. It is an action vast as the world and long as the measuring-reed of time. It is a scene so tremendous and vital in all its parts that the most lucid narrative of the stage and the actors is but a passing glimpse, a mere image of frost-work and evanescent shadow.

We thus fix our attention upon the thing—the event itself—and call *that* history. We discover the character of events, their form and substance, the aspect which they show to the understanding, their transformation and changes. We note with wonder the variety of the facts in the human panorama. Some are transient as the wind and dew, and some seem fixed and eternal as the mountains and skies. Some events are of a kind to change the surface of the earth; to put refinement for barbarism; to substitute orchards for thickets and fields for forests; to make hillslopes into terraces; to turn the channels of rivers; to beat the grassy plain into a blistered mustering-ground under the tramping feet of armies. Other events change the nature of man rather than the aspect of the world. They are the institutions such as he seeks and creates for the gratification of his desires and the freer exercise of his powers. They are the family, the community, the state. They are social systems, priestly systems, military systems, and systems of economy. They are schools, gymnasia, assemblies of the people. They are customs made into laws, mythologies becoming science, and commotions and wars wrought into constitutions. They are industries and arts, commercial systems and the intercourse of the people. All these, whether concrete and visible to the eye or abstract intellectual forces playing upon the sentiments and purposes of men, are a part of the facts and events which constitute the real history as distinguished from the book history of mankind. They are extended through time and space. They spread over

continents and seas. They establish themselves on remote shores. They flourish in ancient river valleys. They clamber up

. . . "Castle walls
And snowy summits old in story."

They move along vast thoroughfares, worn smooth with the pattering feet of nations through ages of migration and travel. They penetrate the jungles of the tropics; voyage from land to land, and fix themselves in the very snows from which the borealis flames up and clutches with its tulip fingers the spokes of Charles's Wain.

It would appear that having passed from the written page to the consideration of the real history of the world—having substituted the momentous facts and events in which human life has displayed itself through the ages for the poor pictorial delineations of the printed leaf—we might with that be satisfied. Having found the event and named it history, we might well say "Eureka," and rest. But the progress of inquiry forbade the pause and demanded an additional interpretation. For a time after the attention of thinkers and historians was turned from the written to the real history, from the story to the fact, that seemed to satisfy; but within our own age it satisfies no longer. That kind of historical inquiry which consists of the consideration of the facts and events in the career of mankind took the place of the romantic story-telling which had formerly held sway, and men believed they had discovered the true history of the world; but the time came when the study of mere facts and events, disconnected and regarded singly and without respect to the laws of their sequence and evolution, no more could satisfy the demands of reason.

Now it was that science and philosophy entered the arena. Now it was that with the increase of light and knowledge another and higher concept of history was

gained. It became evident that the facts and the events of our human drama, however perfectly investigated and known, do not of themselves suffice. It was seen that unless the laws of order, arrangement, and causation could be applied to the phenomena of man-life, a knowledge of its aspects and partial developments was of no avail. Dimly at first, and more definitely afterwards, it was discerned that the principles of scientific knowledge must be applied to the events of human history and the events be thereby interpreted in their relations and dependencies, else all the painstaking delineations of mere facts, all the pictorial descriptions and romantic episodes with which the libraries of the world are crowded, are but inane and empty images.

The mind stood before the problem just as it has stood at a certain stage in every department of physical inquiry. For ages the planets were seen wandering through the zodiac. All of them as far out as Uranus had been found and named and studied. The old star-gazers of the Mesopotamian plain, the sages of Egypt, the Arabian astronomers of Spain, and the scholars and poets of the Italian cities had viewed the planetary worlds and marked their motions. But none as yet perceived that a planet was other than a planet. It was simply a wandering star. It moved from place to place, and was known as a fact in the heavens. Even its coming and its going were noted and foretold. All the nearer bodies of our cluster were seen and curiously traced in their capricious movements across the skies. The phenomena of the heavens were recorded in maps and charts. The sun's face was darkened in eclipse, and the moon at intervals hid herself in the ominous shadow of the earth. The facts were known, but they had no connection or significance to the understanding. Suns and worlds were discovered, but not that *system* of worlds of which they are but the component parts.

Overhead was the vast concave of the sky, studded with points of fire, and flushed day by day with the glories of the sun. But system there was none. Each fact took its own course, and was unbound with law or correlation. It was not even imagined that a great cluster of revolving spheres was fixed about our central globe of fire; much less was it dreamed that the sun himself is only a minor star in a larger system and galaxy of worlds swimming nebulous in the infinities of space.

Behold how all this by the aid of the telescope has been resolved! Behold how the revealed laws of gravitation bind it together into one! Behold how chaos passes away, and cosmos is instituted in its stead! System rises on system, until the universe is seen to be whole and consistent to all its infinite borders. Further inquiry shows us the more complete dominion of law. Unity appears under all the archways of eternity. All isolation passes away. No part of universal nature is any longer detached. Not even a meteorite dashing with portentous train of flame across the heavens is broken from the system of eternal order. No comet, diving up or down, wheeling feather-like around the remote turning-stakes of its orbit, but obeys the behest, and holds fast its place under the reign of law.

We need not pursue the illustration. All nature on the earth beneath and in the skies above becomes organic and whole. The arrangement, the order, is seen. The systematic construction of the universe appears, and is demonstrated with the certitude of the calculus. As to material nature, unity has come, and system is established in all her realms to the uttermost periphery of space.

How then shall it be with the historic phenomena of the world? These phenomena until the present age of inquiry have remained in the condition of the planets and stars before Galileo and Copernicus, before Newton and Kepler. The facts and events of the historical drama, like the

worlds on high, were found aforetime and followed for certain distances along their tracks of dawn-light; but the tracks of dawn-light began and ended in darkness. The human world was a world of isolations, of broken parts, of disconnections and capricious individualities. The idea that the parts of man-life are bound together by the threads of law and order had not yet been caught by the greatest minds of the world. The concept that a general motion might be discovered among the fragments of our past had not yet risen upon the tallest genius of mankind. There was order in the skies, and disorder on the earth. Law was established above us and lawlessness around us. Our human universe was piled and heaped in every part with the activities and institutions of mankind; with the relics of ancient civilizations; the ruins of cities and states; the fragments of constitutions and the waste cargoes of fleets and navies; but these appeared to the thought and imagination of the age only as a chaotic flotsam and jetsam of the seas, blown up by lawless winds and thrown in disordered masses along the shores of time.

It was necessary that a new concept should at length be reached of man-life and its phenomena in the world. The reign of disorder could not last forever. The idea must at length suggest itself that as in material nature so in the universe of life and action cosmos reigns, with law for his Minister of State. This concept came, and with it the first true notion of the history of the human race. Order appeared, and the facts and events of the world began to arrange themselves into a systematic whole. The firmament of waters was divided, and the dry land was seen. The laws of sequence and causation reached out silently and sublimely over the facts and events of our race-career, and history arose like a beautiful exhalation of the morning.

One of the most remarkable stages of human progress is

that in which the mind first passes in historical inquiry from the contemplation of the disordered facts and phenomena of human life to the laws and correlations whereby they are bound together. It is an advance from the materialities to the spiritualities of history. With the progress of knowledge it was at last perceived that the study of facts and events, however completely those facts and events may be investigated, is not the study of the real history of mankind. That study has advanced already from the book to the event, and it now advances from the event to its *causes and relations*. History becomes philosophy in the highest sense of that great word.

At first the law of universality among the affairs of men was not discovered ; but it began at length to be discerned in partial applications here and there. At first it was noted that this group of phenomena and then that group was bound in its parts by the principles of causation and sequence. Then higher and more far-reaching relations were discovered. Facts which had hitherto been supposed to be remote and dissociated were seen to have a necessary and binding tie. One event was seen to follow the other as its result ; the one sprang from the other as its cause. It was perceived that, though continents of space and vast reaches of time intervened, the event yonder had to the event here the relation of cause and effect, and that without the one the other had never been.

The central principle of the New History is this law of universal causation. The bottom concept of it is that everything is caused and nothing causeless ; that every fact of our human drama, whether material or immaterial, simple or complex, ephemeral or eternal, is linked to some antecedent fact or facts as its cause and to ensuing facts as its results. There is thus a concatenation of all events soever on the right lines of cause and effect, of antecedence and consequence, of originating force and final re-

sult. A law of the correlation and conservation of forces is present and recognized in all human affairs as well as in the facts and processes of the material world.

This notion of the regularity and order of all human affairs has firmly fixed itself in the mind. The vision has widened. Further and further the deeds and institutions of mankind have been traced in their connections and dependencies, and everywhere they have been found to cohere in a common system. The concept of universal relation and dependence has flashed upon the thought. A few of the bolder thinkers have declared it. It has come like the Newtonian laws for the heavens, like the Darwinian discovery for the natural history of life. The new notion of the human drama has adjusted itself with beautiful fitness to the vast panorama of events, and the old notions of disconnection, of disorder, of isolations and individualities, of caprices and interferences have passed away like the shadows of night.

This advance from the consideration of mere facts and institutions and men—regarded aforetime as the be-all and the end-all of the inquiry—is the *third* estate of history. It is the stage of Order and Law. This is the New History which has substituted the sequence of events for the events themselves, and the law of causation for the law of chance. The New History has planted herself on the relations and movements of the man-world, and order and progress have become the key-words of her empire. She has lifted the mind to a point of observation from which our race-career may be viewed as a whole, may be seen moving forward by steady and orderly sequences from stage to stage in a determinate course from the beginning, through the middle, to the end of human activities on the earth.

The true history of man, of society, of civilization, is now seen to consist of a progress and betterment in all re-

spects analogous to the evolutionary processes of material nature. The one movement is as perfect, as ample, as absolute as the other. The one as little as the other admits of exceptions, contingencies, and variations of the common law. The life of man is as whole as the life of nature. The life of the race is as complete as the life of the universe. The events in which man has been the actor and the institutions which he has created have their sequences and developments in an order as definite as that which determines the crystallization of minerals, the succession of the seasons, the cycles of the forest. The history of mankind is, in a word, one complete and ample web with not a single outhanging thread or broken nap or raveled selva in its whole time-woven fabric. We might as well attempt to find in the material universe some particle of matter over which gravitation's law does not extend, binding it to all the rest with a force proportional to its mass, as to seek to find in all the vast expanses of history one human atom which is not bound in organic and vital union with the whole, correlated with all the rest, and essential to the equipoise for time and eternity!

This absoluteness, entirety, and evolutionary progress of all the parts of the man-drama in the world is the beginning and the end of history. The gaining of an adequate notion of this sublime truth is the alpha and omega of historical inquiry. The race becomes one. Its deeds and aspects are the parts of a single evolution. Its events and its institutions are only the phenomenal expressions of a common and universal life. Its seeming ascents and descents, its irregularities and twistings, its deflections to right and left, are but the visible stages, the optical illusions, of one unvarying forward march from the barbaric forms of our primeval estate to the sun-blazoned and glorious activities of an enduring and perfect civilization.

The discovery of the oneness and universality of human history has come late; but having come, it prevails. It is like the newly discovered laws of the material world. We have seen how those laws were extended by inquiry from isolated facts, from individual instances, from small groups of phenomena, to larger and still larger assemblages of facts, until the whole of material nature has passed under the dominion of law and has become a unit. In the same way the integrity of history, its oneness and continuity, its completeness and absoluteness have been established. The analogy of the inquiry by which the unity of material nature has been demonstrated with that which has confirmed the unity of man is final and complete.

Every branch of physical science has proceeded along the same lines which have now determined the principles of the New History. Our belief in the essential unity of the human race and of all its historical developments has been fixed by the same reasoning which has brought us to a knowledge of nature. Geology is not so much an account of the discovered and discoverable facts of the vast rocky beds beneath our feet as it is an exposition of the laws by which, with chaos and upheavals, our ancient globe of turbulence and fire has been transformed into order and beauty and made the abode of life. Biology is no longer a mass of descriptive delineations of the plants and animals inhabiting the earth, or even of their environment and manner of existence. Rather is it the tracing of the lines of development from the ever-lower to the ever-higher orders of life; the discovery of vital sequences and successions; the finding of connections and dependencies among the different orders of living beings; the demonstration of the means by which the varieties of life have been deduced from the common original of all. Astronomy is not the study of planets and stars, but the investigation of the laws and motions which make the

sidereal heavens a universe of order. They who are skilled in star-craft are no longer concerned with mere descriptions of isolated worlds and suns, or even with the systems into which they are gathered, but rather have they bent their energies to the discovery of those vaster laws which determine the birth and death of worlds. It is the processes and general progress of the starry spheres, the tendencies which the universe discovers of its own origin and destiny, that now absorb the interest of those great thinkers who from the mountain-tops of four continents are peering into the depths of space.

So also of human history. It is not the book-written account of the man-drama of the world—not merely the facts and events, the phenomenal aspects, the isolated situations and developments of the human race—but it is the forward march of man. It is the movement of mankind from stage to stage. It is the causes, the relations, the dependencies, of all institutions and of all events. It is the cosmic arrangement of all things human into One Thing, and the integrity of that one thing in all its parts. It is the law of progress and amelioration, extending through all the deeds and all the works of man. It is the immaterial, the spiritual, thread which runs through and binds together in a complete and orderly evolution, not only the activities, the works, and purposes of mankind, but the human race itself from its undiscovered origin to its ultimate destiny.

It was of vast importance that this New History should come into the world and possess its thought and substance. It was necessary that the old history with its doubts and dogmas, its phantasms and chimeras should pass away. The concept of the extension of the reign of law over the affairs of the intellectual and moral world must come and prevail, in order that progress should be confirmed and civilization become rational and enduring. This trans-

formation of the substance and the notion of history is of immeasurable value to mankind. It is analogous to that great and salutary change which has passed over the human landscape from the recognition of law as the controlling principle of physical nature.

Of a certainty law has always reigned. We shall not suppose that the *discovery* of order and regularity among the parts of the material universe has altered the facts and principles of that universe, or changed either its course or constitution. The material and visible state which we inhabit was orderly and beautiful from the first; but the mind did not perceive it. All chaos is really in the mind, and not in nature. Nature has never been chaotic. Those epochs of world-history which have seemed to be lawless and devoid of order were so only to the extent of the weakness and blindness of that reason with which they were considered. The higher and stronger reason is able to discover that chaos itself is only the inverted side of order—only a part of the infinite cosmos which is over all.

While it is true that the order of nature has not been changed or improved or deflected by a hair's breadth from the lines of its predetermined course and unfolding; while the absoluteness and regularity of the material world have not been amended by any agency of man or by any change and improvement in his own views respecting his environment,—the *recognition* of order and regularity has brought to him the vastest benefit, being no less than the institution of the civilized and orderly life in the place of the life of barbarism. Until the perception of order and law in nature, man was necessarily barbaric. Here lay the weakness of the ancient world; it knew not order. The element of discord was in it—not indeed in nature herself, but in the mind.

Consider for a moment the poor and inadequate notions of the greatest minds of the ancient and mediæval ages re-

specting the laws and phenomena of nature. It was in vain that the Old World enlightenment strove to lighten. It could not illumine save in the narrow circle of the torch. A flat world and a concave sky could not contain a civilization fit to civilize. A ball of fire drawn in Phœbus's chariot across the sky could not dispel the darkness or fructify the world. Olympus sufficed for poetry, but not for the creation of a universe. The boundaries of nature were contracted around the mind; the sky was a roof, the earth was a floor, and the seas a rim of night and terror.

It is impossible for us to estimate the reactionary effects which the substitution of science for superstition has brought to the human spirit. The false and meager concepts which it held aforesime respecting the world and universal nature are dissipated. The earth at length swings free in space. The mythological monsters that held it up and bore it on have melted away like the fog-specters of the Brocken. The roof has been broken from the skies, and the infinite depths revealed. The atomic secrets of nature are opened to the understanding; the laws of life begin to be discovered, and at last, with the coming of Newton and Darwin, there is day.

It can not be doubted that the knowledge of the laws by which matter is governed, nature directed in her course, and the equipoise of all material things maintained, has been of incalculable importance to mankind. The incoming of such knowledge has opened great vistas and illumined far-off landscapes. It has put back the torn horizon of cloud and superstition till it now rests but dimly on the illimitable seas of thought. It has made possible the belief in the steadfastness and orderly movement of all things in the heavens and the earth. It has furnished a resting-place and vantage-ground from which the spirit may look forth into a realm of universal order, promise, and hope. The result has been the birth of confidence, the unspring-

ing of truth in the human soul. Man walks no longer among the pitfalls of interference, caprice, disorder, and darkness, but proudly and firmly along the sun-lighted pathways of law and regularity.

All this is said of the rise of the physical sciences and the consequent improvement in the intellectual and moral state of man. If the discovery of the laws of universal causation and of the reign of order in the natural world has had so great an effect upon the mind and has planted therein the foundations of a new civilization, what shall we say of the acceptance of law and order as the vital principle in the affairs of men? Man-life, as well as world-life, has become orderly, evolutionary, and progressive. It has ceased to be a life of chance and confusion, of temporary liftings and recessions into barbarism, of patches of light and continents of darkness. What must be the tremendous results of this new concept of the history of mankind?

Certainly our world-drama was always under the reign of law. From the first day it was as orderly as now. It is only our altered station and view that have brought the change. The change from chaos to order is not in history, or our stars, but in ourselves. The life, the development, the activity, the deeds, and institutions of mankind were never other than regular and progressive; never infected with caprices; never blown into eddies and sand-dunes by whimsical winds along our time-worn shores. It is only our view of the sublime phenomena that has been blurred; only our thought about our race and its movement that has been darkened with doubts and distressed with fears.

No branch of merely physical science has been so important to the welfare of mankind as has the Science of History. None other has brought so great and salutary changes affecting the conditions of life and the progress of

society. We have had indeed a vast development of the sciences called natural. These include the new geology, the new astronomy, and the new biological exposition of the laws and natural history of life. All of these branches of inquiry have done much to alter and improve the prospects of the human race. By them the conditions of happiness and greatness have been brought near, even to the door. But the physical sciences—all of them together—are not equal to the noiseless, though well-nigh omnipotent, force of that historical science which has now asserted itself as the one supreme branch of human knowledge. It can not be doubted that an acquaintance with the laws and processes of human development,—the stages of evolution through which our race has passed, the principles of causation and sequence running through all the works, purposes, and institutions of mankind, the perception of the oneness, integrity, and completeness of the world-drama in which we are the actors and participants,—rises above and embraces all other kinds of knowledge as the sky embraces the clouds.

The discovery of order and unity in the affairs of mankind outruns the discovery of America and the discovery of Neptune. The belief in the wholeness and uniformity of all nature is not so important as the belief in the wholeness and uniformity of man. The concept of the unvarying, undeviating, and inevitable progress of the human race, of the absoluteness and indivisibility of its work and destiny in the world, overtops, if I mistake not, every other concept of which the mind with its present powers is capable. That view of the life of man, of human society, of peoples and nations, of the deeds which they have done and the institutions which they have created on the earth, of the wars which they have fought, the treaties they have devised, the unions they have formed, the empires and republics they have founded, the conquests they

have made—at least in part—over nature, and the subordination of nature's forces to the superior energies of the will,—this view of human life is the one view which gives coherence and sublimity to our man-world, and makes the Planet of History the greatest of the stars.

History in its newest and best sense is the foundation of the civilization that now is and that is to be. Inanimate nature is dominated by life. Life is dominated by intelligence and reason. Reason has its crowning expression in the mind and purposes of man. Knowledge rises through analogous gradations from material nature to human life. Science applies herself first to the lowest and afterwards to the higher and highest facts of the world. She first busies herself with air and fire, with the waters and the rocks. Afterwards she turns to creeping vines and flowers, to lichens and forests of pine. Then she rises to the consideration of animate existence. At length she reaches man, and makes him the subject of her study. She views him as an individual. She analyses his substance, his parts, and his powers. Then she weighs him as a member of a community, the personal fragment of a people, the atom of a race. At last she views him as a part, an infinitesimal part, of mankind, held by universal law to his little place and functions in a world of activity and reason.

Thus far the evolution of knowledge is strictly scientific. Passing on, however, to grander ranges of subject-matter and becoming historical in spirit and theme, science takes up the tribe, the clan, the family of migrating barbarians, the settling peoples, the growing nations, the outbranching and progressive races of men, and last of all the events, the institutions, the intellectual and moral progress, the hopes and aspirations of mankind. Upon all this the New History lays her hand. It is the last and sublimest stage in the evolution of knowledge. History, the first to be

sought by man, is the last to be revealed ; first to babble, she is last to speak. Prating aforetime of gods and heroes, she now reasons of growth and law, of the development and unity of man. She views the human race as a single organic life under its own laws of evolution, growing, increasing in volume and capacity, and reaching out to all continents, subduing and occupying all, reducing nature to obedience and service, mastering the world, and finally turning to the consideration of itself as the highest entity and noblest expression of force within the domains of nature.

History is thus the summation of the wisdom of mankind. It is the knowledge and consciousness of the human race respecting itself, refined and sublimated to the last degree. It is the continent of all things else which we possess of intellectual treasure and civilizing force. It is that to which all other forms and elements of intellectual and spiritual aspiration go forth and into which they flow. History is that universal air in which all forms of light and beauty, smitten with sun and dew, flourish with blossoming and fruit. It is the river which draws into its channel all the fountains of humanity, all the water-brooks of thought. It is the ocean whereto the living currents of the world slowly and grandly make their way and with which they are at last resolved. From that ocean at the first they arose in invisible mist, and in it at the last they find their final rest.

In this world-drama where, then, stands the Man? Is he lost in the tremendous system that involves him, or does he still shine star-like in the spaces? Has the actor disappeared in the splendors of the play? Is he tossed like small dust with the machinery of a self-moving and ever-shifting stage? Without doubt, history is man's affair; and he is the principal affair of history. It is his because he is a part of it; because it is the great act in which the

destinies of himself and his kind are somehow endlessly enfolded. There is a history of matter, of that inorganic bottom which nature has laid under the feet of all. There is also a history of animated nature, of those irrational forms of life which inhabit the lands and waters of our globe. But in the better sense, history belongs only to man, and he to history. Whether he makes it or does not make it, thus much may be truly said, that he only is capable of knowing it and acting in it.

We have seen what the thing called history really is; that it is not a mere transcript of human affairs, not an isolated event, not a mass of material débris and struggling lives of men; but that it is all events and all human destinies bound together as the related parts of a common movement under the dominion of universal law. We have seen that it is the relations and correlations, the dependencies and sequences, the principles and laws of the facts and events of man-life which constitute the essence of history in its truest and noblest form. Where, then, in this great plexus of causation, this vast fabric of forces and changing developments, stands the man?

The inquiry is propounded, not of mankind as a whole, but of the individual. As to the human race, that may almost be identified with the thing called history. The one is commensurate with the other, and each is unthinkable without the other. Mankind in this larger sense is in its processes and evolutions history made visible. The one is the corporeal expression and visible form of the other. But there is still a difference between the human race and the history in which its life is expressed. There is a difference between the movement of affairs and the affairs themselves. There is a difference between the affairs and the actors. There is also a wide difference between events as they appear to the senses and judgments of men and the principles which control and determine them. Finally,

there is a difference between principles and laws and those movements and processes of human society to which the principles and laws apply. It can not be said that facts and events are men, or that men are events, or that the sequence of events is strictly a part of the activity and purpose of the human race. But we are here in deep waters, and are dealing with high abstractions in the manner of pure philosophy—a thing we would fain avoid. What we hope to elucidate is the place and the part of the man as an individual in the great aggregate of forces which surround him and bear him onward.

We may note, first of all, that a marked change has taken place in the relations of man to history as he has advanced from his place in primitive society to his place in the great society of the present time. If there were but one man in the world, his conduct would constitute the history of his epoch. We are wont to say that the conduct of man is determined by himself. He might, therefore, under the supposed conditions be regarded as the maker of history. As the head of a family or tribe his influence would still be great, and the event would seem to issue from him; but even in the simpler relations of primeval life his force and predominance would already begin to abate. Even when he stands alone the forces of nature would largely determine his activities and limit the event. Hunger would be his teacher, rain and sun his law-makers, the wind his secretary, and cold his magistrate. So that even when alone man can not strictly be said to be the *maker* of the history of his time.

With the coming of the larger forms of ancient society, man as man began to recede from sight. There were still great leaders in battle and song; but the race multiplied and man declined; that is, he became less potent as a causative force in the world. The event became prodigious, and the man small. As the race gathered vol-

time it seemed to take a force and direction of its own, and to go forward on lines of development which were clearly not determined by any of its members. The events of the drama ceased to answer to the conscious plans and purposes of the actors, and began to respond more and more to general antecedence and causation. Such has been the uniform tendency of human affairs from the beginning until now.

Two general views have prevailed respecting the relations of man to history. One class of thinkers, in the face of the fact that the relative force of the individual has become less and less at each stage of the stately progress of the race, have insisted on regarding the man as the fountain-head of all historical events. Others, beginning with the same phenomena, namely, the manifest expansion and development of history as an organic and all-pervading fact and the comparative obscuration of the individual in the general volume of forces, have insisted that the man is naught; that he himself instead of being the causative agent is but the conscious product of energies and combinations of force that are over and above him, before him and after him, and wholly independent of his will.

Thus have arisen the two opposing interpretations of the place of man in history. The one, in its extreme and absolute declaration, is the doctrine of free-will and spontaneity applied to human affairs, and the other is the dogma of fatalism. The one would make man the cause of everything, while the other would make him the cause of nothing. The first would regard all history as flowing from the cogitations, purposes, and consciousness of the individual mind, and the other would regard not only the plans, desires, and will of the individual as proceeding from general causation, but the man himself, with all of his sentiments, beliefs, aspirations, and hopes as only the

necessary product of an antecedence which brings him into the world and shapes his destiny.

I am aware that at first view it appears paradoxical and impossible that history should proceed from any source, but from the man himself. *Prima facie*, it seems self-evident that he is the maker of the whole. Whoever merely glances at the problem must regard it as demonstrable that all affairs, all events, all movements and phenomena of the world-drama are but the products and results of the energies, intelligence, and purposes of men. Who but they, the inquirer may well demand, *could* be the origin of human events, the cause of whatever is? It seems so plain to the eye of sense that man does plan and purpose, that he does make and determine, that the fact does fall from his hand as the sword or the plow-share falls from the blacksmith's anvil,—that to doubt his agency, his origination, his creation of the event seems absurdly to question the evidence of all the senses and perceptions of the mind. How, therefore, can history be other than the work of the individual in collaboration of plan and purpose with other individuals like himself?

Opposed to this view, however, is the other to which we have referred. This changes completely the point of observation and makes man himself to be but the result of historical antecedence—the product of his age. That he is so seems to be established by many indubitable facts. The proposition that man is born and lives by the compulsion of his age becomes with little study a truth as palpable as any. Look at the individual at any time and in any country. Glance at his place in antiquity, in the mediæval ages, at the present day. Select the man from any situation whatsoever, and see whether he has to any extent determined even himself, to say nothing of the events of his epoch. Did he before his coming mark the time of his birth? Did he determine and choose his country?

Did he reckon the conditions of climate and scene into which he should be thrown, and the consequent limitations of his powers? Did he fix his birthplace in river valley? on mountain slope? in populous city? on solitary steppe? in moaning forest? by the pebbly beach of the infinite sea? Did he choose his race and blood? Did he select his own paternity?—his father? his mother? the physical and moral union of their lives in him? Did he make himself a Hindu? a Persian? a Greek? a fire-worshiper? a pagan? a Christian? Did he prepare beforehand to be a soldier? a poet? a priest? Could he fix himself by preference and will in Babylon? in Rome? in Peking? in London? Could he by prearrangement adjust the historical conditions into which he would be born, and of which he must avail himself or perish? Could he make for himself a scene of action among the Athenian democracy? the Roman patricians? the Gallic warriors? Would he be a Hun or a missionary? a Crusader or an Infidel? a prince or a boor? a fool or a philosopher? man or woman? slave or general? black, brown, or white? strong or weak? blind or seeing? dwarf or herculean? capable or incapable of action and accomplishment? Has any man in any age or country to any degree whatever influenced, not to say determined, the antecedent conditions of his own life and activities? If he have not done so, then how can he be said to be the maker of history? To make history he must first at least devise himself; and if he can not do that, how can he do the infinitely greater thing?

All questions implying the power of man to fix his own place and manner in the world must be met with a general negation. It must be agreed that man does not determine his place in history; that he does not choose his country, his age or his race; that he does not make the elements of his own life and activity; that he does not originate or greatly influence the laws and conditions of his environ-

ment. Nevertheless, he who holds the opposite view returns unvanquished to the battle and appeals vehemently to the truisms of his contention. He cites the manifest originating power and controlling hand of man over the incidents and events of history. He goes forward from material facts and conditions to abstract and moral considerations, charging the adverse opinion with absurd predestinarianism, with materialism, with every species of fatalistic philosophism invented by a blind and absolute science. Your history, says he, dethrones man and makes him of no reputation. It reduces him from an agent to a thing. It takes all will and purpose out of history and makes it to be but the aggregate result of physical forces, leaving it on the plane of a mere natural philosophy. Such a view is against the evidence of the perceptions of the mind and the common testimony of the human race.

What—continues the debater—is the witness of all observation and recorded annals?—what but that men themselves, individuals, persons either singular or many, have originated, caused, produced the facts and events of the historical drama? Who but man has reclaimed and peopled and civilized the domains of the world? Did any city ever found itself? Did ever a state begin of its own accord? Did ever any institution or event rise anywhere but by the uplifting hands of men? Did not Cecrops found Athens, and the Twin Robbers draw the ramparts around primitive Rome? Did not the legionaries of Claudius on the Thames bank build a fort to command the river and make the first huts in the metropolis of the world? Did not Moses and Solon and Numa Pompilius make laws for the Jew, the Greek, the Roman? Did not the son of Philip conquer Asia? and did not Hannibal shake his fist at Rome? Was Charlemagne nothing but a name? Were Luther and Cromwell only the open and unconscious mouths of religious and democratic insurrections? Was

Richelieu only a puppet, wired and pulled by fate? Was Napoleon only a barren ideality? Did not Omar the Great take Jerusalem, and Godfrey recover it? Do not men rear palaces and temples and adorn them with immortal arts? Did not Michael Angelo fling up a vision of angels and cherubim to the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel? and did not the Man of Genoa—even against the conspiracy of the age, the contempt of kings and sages, and the anger of the sea—bring his triumphant *Santa Maria* from the far-off, bright Azores to

—“Bahama, and the dashing
Silver-flashing
Surges of San Salvador”?

Did blind fate or the living man discover the New World?

Thus triumphantly cries out the advocate of man-agency and man-purpose as the originating forces of history. But the antagonist is not silenced. The believer in the predominance of the laws of universal causation merely smiles at the declamation of his adversary, and goes on. He takes up the unexhausted debate, and drives home thrust on thrust. Your argument, says he, is mere phantasm and stoneblindness. Men produce nothing—nothing! They control nothing—nothing! They contribute not a single feather-weight to the world. They give no atom to the aggregate of things material or things eternal. On the contrary, they are themselves like bubbles thrown up with the heavings of an infinite sea. There on the surface they flash for a moment, and are gone forever. Men do not, as you say, create the elements or direct the course of history. The builders of that sublime fabric are invisible to mortal sight. They live forever, and have power over all the phenomena of man-life, shaping and constructing all. The man lives for a day and constructs nothing. Cecrops did not, as you say, found Athens.

Minerva had been there before him and had planted the olive-tree on the Acropolis. She had contended with Neptune and driven him away! Cecrops did not make the site, but only discovered it. He did not discover it, for he was sent thither by history to find it! Greece had already been prepared in an alembic older than the Hellenic race. There was the broken shore. There were the hills and the mountains. There were the oak woods and Olympus; the grottoes and the whispering groves of myrtle; the cerulean sky and the hexametric pulse of the soft seas falling on the shore. There had been prepared the antecedent conditions, not only for Athens and Sparta, but for Cecrops and Theseus as well; for Agamemnon and Homer; for Lycurgus and Solon; for the Delphic shrine and the Parthenon; for the Olympic games and Salamis.

Into this region—as into all regions—history sent her law-makers and her poets. She dispatched thither her warriors and her orators, her philosophy and her arts. She it was who heaped up the tumulus of Marathon, and still sends there her spectral Greeks to fight in the clouds by night. She it was who urged Hannibal with his elephants across the Alps, and who held back Cæsar for a moment on the banks of the dividing river. She it was who whirled the battle-ax of the Lion Heart on the hills above Jerusalem, and who put the reluctant hand of John to the parchment of the Charter. In that trembling scrawl were the English Constitution, the freedom of the Netherlands, and the Declaration of Independence!

The advocate still continues: Did Alexander make himself? If so, he did *not* make Philip and Aristotle! The one as his father and the other as his teacher are accredited with making him! It might therefore better be said that Aristotle was the conqueror of Asia. But he also was the product of a certain paternity, and in a larger and truer sense the product of a certain age. Were the Draconian

laws the work of him whose name they bear, or were they only the bloody remnants of ancient savagery and night? Were the Ten Tables made or compiled? Were they anything but the reduced and simplified expression of immemorial usage? Is there any such thing as *making* a law in any age or country? What is a law-maker if not one whom history appoints to ascertain the thought and habit and purpose of some of her peoples? Neither Moses nor Zoroaster nor the camel-driver of Mecca was the maker of the code of Israel, of the Fire Bible of Persia, of the Arabian Islam. The Hebrew law may be found in broken fragments among the lore and usage of peoples older than Moses, older than the flight from Ur. How are constitutions made?—how but in the forge and fire of time and toil, by heat of war and rain and shine of peace?

Nations go to battle as the clouds enter a storm. Are there not unseen forces behind the one as well as impelling the other? Do clouds really fight, or are they not rather driven into concussion? Are there not unseen forces behind both the nations and the clouds? Are not battle-rack and cloud-rack alike in this, that the one is the result of the contending forces of history and the other the shock of electrical currents and fight of viewless winds? The visible clash is nothing. The armies and the leaders, whether on the earth or in the heavens, are but the visible signs of battle; and victory goes to him, whether man or cloud, that is flung with greater force and momentum against the other.

What was Rome but a catapult, and Cæsar but a stone? He was flung from it beyond the Alps to fall upon the barbarians of Gaul and Britain. What was Martel? The very name of him was *Hammer*! He was the hammer of Europe beating Africa. What was Alfred but the bared right arm of Saxon England? What was Dante but a wail of the Middle Ages? and what was

Luther but a tocsin? What was Columbus but the homing pigeon of an epoch of darkness and despair? What was William of Orange but the doubled fist of Holland? and Holland but the doubled fist of Protestantism? What was Washington but the unsheathed sword of our New World democracy? and what was Napoleon but a thunderbolt rattling among the thrones of Europe? He did not fling himself, but *was flung!*

Such is the cause in court. Such are the arguments with which each of the great pleas is supported. Here on the one side is the Man set forth as the Author of History; and here on the counter side is History set forth as the maker of the Man. The contention is as far-reaching as the origin of the human race, as strenuous as the cords that bind our destinies, and as profound as the seabed of life. The time has arrived for a charge and a verdict.

The whole tendency of this momentous inquiry respecting the place of the man in history has been to reduce the agency of the individual and to show the prevalence of the laws of general causation over the human race and its activities. Just in proportion to the illumination of the understanding and the widening of our field of vision has the acknowledgment come of a reign of law, not only in the domain of the material world, but among all the facts and phenomena of history. Every advance in our scientific knowledge, every correction of our reason, has confirmed what was aforesaid only a suspicion, but has now become a belief, namely, that the influence of man, as man, on the course of events in the world is insignificant. Though the event itself is human, the evolution rises above the agency of man and fixes itself into the general laws and sequences which bind all things together. As for the individual, he works at the event, labors upon it, imagines even that he shapes it with his hand; but he does not really determine its character or its place in the

general movement of the world. He is conscious of his own endeavor, knows his plan and purpose, perceives the changes that are going on around him in which he participates, takes this place or that place in the drama according to his will and the will of his fellows; but for the rest, the act goes on independently of his powers and plans, and the event comes out at length by its own laws of development, and is above and beyond the designs and understandings of men.

It is clear that history in its larger and truer sense is an evolution, more far-reaching and important than all the local and incidental aspects of human life. The man operates in it and is of it, but does not direct its course or final result. In the natural world every organic body is built up of cells by forces which relate to the whole structure. The cell is put into this part or that part according to the necessities and plan of the general organism. Each cell is seized and perfected by the agency of laws which have respect, not to itself, but to the larger life to which it is subservient. The cells are placed according to the fitness of things, and are made to conduce to an interest other than their own. Their life is swallowed up in the grander life that feeds upon them. They are subordinated to a plan so much vaster and more important than themselves that the disproportion of each to the organic whole is inconceivable.

In like relation stands man to history. He is a conscious cell built into the wall of the world-drama according to the exigency of the tremendous structure. True it is that he goes to his place without *feeling* the compulsion that is upon him. His own will, being a part of the general scheme, coöperates with the plan and purpose of man-life considered as a whole. He takes his station here or there by preference; but the preference itself is a part of the universal plan. He perceives, within a narrow limit,

the work that is going on around him, and his own part therein. He is able to discover the nature and probable design of that small section of the general structure in which he stands and upon which he exerts his feeble agency. If the event in his part of the field conforms to his purpose and expectation he imagines that he has been the determining force therein; and his fellows, if he be great, ascribe to *him* the agency which he claims.

It is here that the delusion begins which makes man—the individual—to be the author of history. In many cases he seems to himself to be so. The records of his age are made up accordingly and transmitted to after times. So the tradition arises here and there that this man or that man determined the history of his epoch. In fact, each man, as the scientific history declares, is but the product of his age—a local force which the general laws of causation demand and find; or, to return to the analogy, the man is but the living, conscious cell which historical causation seizes and assigns to its place in the general structure of the world.

It is difficult for us to apprehend with clearness the subordinate place which history assigns to the individual. We are the individual; and it is hard for us to go to our own place and stand among the small. We are recusant against the law that governs our lives and destinies. There is a natural residue of resentment in the human mind against that principle which makes man to be no more than a local circumstance in a general plan which he is not even able to apprehend. The man, being proud—vain of his achievement in the sphere of his activity—would fain regard himself as the creator of greater things. He cajoles himself into the belief that he is so, and does not willingly agree to that plan which makes him to be but a conscious cell in the walls of history. Before he will assent, he must be reasoned with and convinced. He must be shown that

his agency extends to so limited a sphere, and is so brief in its operation, as to be necessarily disregarded in that general plan which is as long as time and as profound as space.

No estimate of history, and of the place of man therein, can be adequate or satisfying which does not recognize the complete subordination and immersion of the individual in the world-drama of which he is but an incident. The man must be brought to see the disproportion between his agency—whatever it is—and the tremendous organic whole in which his destiny is laid—a disproportion as striking and incommensurable as that of the finite to the infinite.

Consider for a moment the limitations which are inexorably fixed around all the boundaries of human life. Note the limitation of time. The average duration of the life of man is almost infinitesimal. It is a handbreadth. It is naught as compared with the stretch of the ages. According to our world-time the event is thousands of years old, and is still young. History in making her facts and preparing her results demands multiplied centuries. She pays little attention to the brief generations of men who rise and flourish under her extended dynasty. To the man she assigns one decade of activity, or two, or three, and then he goes. He goes to return not. But the event does not go. It accomplishes itself in its own way. Like the millennial oak, it regards not the vicissitudes of season or the puny tribes of living creatures that vociferate and play for a day beneath its tremendous branches.

A like limitation is that of place. Man is bound to a single locality; but the event has the world for its country. Until the present century man was narrowly circumscribed to the little arena of his origin. He is still circumscribed, and whatever he accomplishes is in the nature of the case as local as himself. What he builds stands there, a brief

monument of the small sphere of his action. Man flies not, but only walks. If he swim, it is in the shoal waters of the surf. The birds and the fishes outgo him, and the four-footed creatures have greater speed. If we consider his mind, his faculties, and aspirations, even they are limited to places and conditions. In saying this we do not forget the flight of thought, the excursion of intellectual force, the outreaching of human purposes; but all these are, in comparison with the greater schemes of history, no more than the circumference of leaves or the flight of insects. The man is obliged to recognize not only the brevity of his day, but also the limitation of his activity to a certain spot of earth little affected by his presence and totally indifferent to his destiny.

A third limitation laid by nature on man is the weakness of all his powers. He weighs not as much as the St. Bernard that trots by his side. The ox easily outdraws him. The horse—even when bitted and reined—dashes away with him and his carriage. The smallest of nature's forces round about tosses him hither and yon. He can not see in the night, or survive without shelter and fire. Shall we call such a creature as this the maker of history? History is stronger than the winds, mightier than the sea. In her hands all forms of life that inhabit the globe are but as the microscopic creatures on the slides of the naturalist! To her all seasons and years, all climates and places, all continents and dominions, are but the materials of a purpose which she cherishes and pursues on unbent lines from the beginning to the end.

We thus accept the subordination of man to history. We recognize the fact that the individual has small place in the general movement of the world-drama—small influence in affecting the results of the present or final action. It is not meant that man is naught, but only that he is weak and transient. It is not meant that the structure of

history is built up of materials other than human ; but the individual parts are only the cells and molecules of the organic whole. The individual has his sphere of activity and his local force ; but these are only the cell-life, the corpuscle and tissue in the universal organism.

Every man in the world is a miniature battery. He has his small cup of force the size of a gun-cap ! In it are the acid, the carbon, and the zinc. Out of it reaches a gossamer thread which attaches itself to the tremendous lines of universal causation girdling the earth and binding nature. The little gun-cap battery discharges its modicum of electrical force into the general circuit, and to that extent contributes to the motive power of the world ! Here, however, the agency of the individual ceases, and the reign of law begins. Here the work of man, as man, in the drama of history ends, and he himself is absorbed in an action the nature of which he does not understand and the final results of which he may not foresee or imagine.

To this general scheme—involving the universality of history and the subordination of the individual—all men and all events inevitably conform. Each has its place and its purpose—a place and a purpose little discoverable by human faculties, but tending ever, as we are able dimly to discern, to the betterment and perfection of the human race. It is in the light of this view of history and of man that every fact and event is to be weighed and understood. In the radiance of this brief candle of knowledge the man himself is to be estimated and considered. He takes his place under the dominion of universal forces, and contributes his little part to the destiny of the race.

Thus is history to be known ; and thus are all men to be measured and interpreted. Certainly we shall not take away from the conspicuous actors of past or present ages their well-earned title of great. To be great is to answer the call of an epoch. It is to respond to the conditions of

one's age, and to fulfill them. It is to take the rank and office which history has assigned beforehand, and to make strong that part of the eternal ramparts in which the living agent may be builded. It was thus that the sages and warriors of the ancient world answered in their lives to demands which went before them and to conditions which determined their activities and fame.

We do not say that there has not been human spontaneity in the world. We do not say that the Hindu poets who sang the songs of the Vedas were no more than the sounds of reeds filled with the natural wind—no more than the rustle of leaves or the whir of wings through the thickets by the banks of the Indus; they were more than that, for they had thought and hope and love, and whoever has thought and hope and love is immortal. We do not say that Zoroaster and Guatama had in themselves nothing of plan and purpose worthy to abide in the soul of the race and survive forever. But these primitive reformers of great races were none the less the products of conditions that preceded them, and were none the less born in answer to the imperative call of history.

Time would fail to take up and follow the illustrations which rise on full wing from every land and clime. An age came when the world was full of mythological follies and spurious forms of thought. It was necessary that these should be whipped back into the primeval darkness out of which they had risen. Socrates was invented by history for this work. He was her whip, and the sting of it falls yet with sharpness on the back of all sophistry and lies. He came not of his own accord, but coming he found his office, and must fulfill it. His destiny led the way even to the dungeon and the hemlock. Socrates was not so much the son of Sophroniscus and Phænarete as he was the son of Athens, the son of Greece, the son of the Hellenic race, the son of reason and of the ages. Were

not Phidias and Praxiteles the art-blossoms of centuries of time? Were they not born out of Egypt as well as Hellas? Would either have been possible at an earlier or a later age? The marvels of the Acropolis rose under the hands of these masters; but the masters themselves rose under the hands of migration and war, of poetry and patriotism, of triumph and pride of race, of Attic enthusiasm and intercourse with the gods!

Civil and political order was one of the necessities of mankind. It was demanded for the further evolution and progress of the race. The antecedent conditions of Rome were prepared through ages of time. Her situation was prepared. A division of mankind suitable for so great a work was prepared and imported from distant lands. The old Kingdom was prepared, then the Republic, and then the Empire. The world itself was prepared for conquest and centralization under the sway of the Cæsars. A condition was prepared for the planting of a new religion, destined to conquer all Europe and to become a prevailing force in the New World.

What shall we say of the subordinate parts of that immense fact called Rome, issuing as if by birth from the paternity of the ages? What shall we say of its individual actors—of them to whom the making of Rome and so large a section of civilization has been attributed? What shall we say of Cincinnatus and Regulus, of Scipio and Marius, of Pompey and the baldheaded Julius who beat him down, of all the Cæsars, of the poets, historians, law-makers, and orators who, from Augustus to Constantine and from Constantine to the Palæologi, rose and passed across the stage of that tremendous drama? Were they not all but the fruits of time, the progeny of old paternities, the products of forces and conditions which were older than the first appearance of the Aryan race in Europe, older than Egypt, Chaldæa, and India? These were but the tran-

sient actors in a scene which, extending through twenty-one centuries of time, was itself but a single act in that world-drama which absorbs the energies and enfolds the destinies of all men and nations from the beginning to the end of time.

Mark also the incidents of the Middle Ages. Peter of Picardy, little old monk in woolen mantle, preaches a holy war against the Infidels. He rouses barbarian Europe and leads a crusading host in wild array of fight to fall upon the defilers of the Holy City. For two centuries the world is in turmoil, and Peter is its master. Such has been the story of our book-history, and to that the opinion of mankind has long conformed. But who was Peter? and how should he be a force among the nations? Ignorant, superstitious, angry, mounted on a mule, how should he make history? Does history proceed from a fool and a mule? Nay, nay. Consider for a moment the far-off antecedents. Yonder the Arabian Prophet arises. He has been preparing since the flight of Abraham! He comes and converts his people from idolatry. He and his generals conquer the East. A race of iron-forging Turcomans out of the Altaï make their way westward, and smite Persia. Assyria and Asia Minor fall before their prowess. They accept the doctrines of Islam from the conquered, but can not be stayed till they possess themselves of the City of David and sit cross-legged on the holy tomb.

Hitherto, Christian pilgrims had been well treated by the polite Arabians in the East; but to the Turcomans all Christians were *giaours* and dogs. Meanwhile the barbarians of Western Europe had become converts to Christianity. Through more than four centuries they had been wrought up to the stage of fiery zeal and warfare. All of these conditions had been prepared in the vast laboratory of history; and no man had been consulted! When the news came of outrages done to pilgrims in Palestine, what

should barbaric Christendom do but explode with volcanic glare and smoke, scoria and cataclysm of both nature and man until the rage should appease itself with blood and destruction? Now came Peter and Urban; then Godfrey and the Lion Heart; Barbarossa and Saint Louis. What were these?—what but the products of agencies working through three continents and compelling men to battle as the clouds are compelled by the winds. There along all roadsides from the Alps to Antioch three million of the Crusaders piled their bones. It was the wreck of European fanaticism—a wreck of feudal elements thrown in bleaching lines, not by the hands of man, but as the work of history. Was not the hermit born in Asia as much as in Europe? Did he lead the Crusade? or was he not rather himself, with all the rest—Baldwin, Raymond, Godfrey, Plantagenet, Red Beard, peasant, Pope, king—borne along on the turbulent flood rolling through the centuries, pursuing its own course and swallowing men like bubbles?

Or mark the intellectual progress of the world. This also is accomplished by human agency; but the men in whose brains the dawn-torches of the new centuries are carried are prepared for their places by the same laws which make them necessary. In no other light can the intellectual leaders of mankind be understood and interpreted. The time came when the human mind demanded a new concept of the heavens and the earth. The old concept no longer sufficed. The Ptolemaic system of the planets and stars became a mock in the high courts of reason. Such a notion of the universe must be cast forth and thrown on the refuse heaps with all mythologies and lies, with all false notions of nature and goblins of the mind, there to decay with the offal of the ages.

Order must be found and instituted in the skies. The epoch of discovery was first prepared; and then the discoverers. They were necessary in their season to fill the

expectation of the world. It was thus that history found Galileo and Copernicus. Afterwards she devised Newton and Laplace. These she commissioned to speak to men of new facts in the starry spheres, new worlds and suns, and new laws for the government of all. True it is that the great astronomers were the organs of intelligence, the teachers of order, the evangelists of sublimity for all men and nations; but they were themselves born into the world of an infinite paternity, and were developed by the compulsion of forces that had been working among mankind since the dawn of the civilized life.

In like manner the old concepts of animated nature passed away. The intellect was no longer satisfied with those notions of irregularity, accident, lawlessness, and chance which had prevailed respecting all living beings and the laws of their creation. The mind demanded that the natural history of life be rewritten in intelligible language, and for this work she chose not only her age and her race, but also her man. A still small voice was heard above the roar and confusion of the nineteenth century. It was the voice of Darwin proclaiming a new law for man and nature. It was a voice that stirred the topmost branches of the tree of knowledge. It moved like a viewless sound through all the courts and corridors of civilization. It caught like an electric spark in the understandings of men, and the prevailing crude opinions of the race respecting the phenomena of life were transformed into sublime and beautiful order. But Darwin himself was the product of his age. He was the son of England and Humanity. He was demanded and found and developed by antecedents and conditions as old as the revival of learning, as old as the curious speculations of the Greeks, as old as the spirit of inquiry in the bosom of mankind.

The theme becomes an echo of itself. The illustrations of its truth spring from every age and from every phase of

human progress. The old concepts of statesmanship vanish from the human mind ; and even the ancient view of philanthropy is changed for a more rational concept of the good deeds and holy characters of men. Peace and war are no longer determined by the personal wills and puny arms of the actors in the conflict. Nations and peoples in all the forms of their activity and accomplishment are seen to be but the effects of causes—the offspring of the past. The heroic figures who impersonate their epochs, who express in their lives the highest thought and purpose of their century, are *made* by historical forces, are borne aloft for the brief day of their activity on the billows of the eternal seas.

Thus came Cromwell out of the stormy bosom and motherhood of Anglo-Saxon England. The field of his activity had been long preparing, by armies and parliaments and kings, by religious insurrections, by battling opinions and the onset of races. His paternity extended through a millennium of time and fixed itself with a thousand roots among the institutions, tyrannies, and turbulence of the Dark Ages. William the Silent was also born out of the loins of a mighty and unknown fatherhood. He came with the blood of the Teutonic races, by the heroic struggles of their tribes, by the compulsion of instincts and trials which made freedom by sword and shield the war-cry of the primitive Germans and the inheritance of their descendants.

Washington, the serene Father of his country, was himself the son of a larger country—the country of human liberty. He was the gift of destiny and Providence to an age whose hinder parts were still held in the meshes of feudalism. He was commissioned by a power above himself to cut his country free from a tyrannous and despairing past. He was the sword and counseling voice of an epoch which nurtured him for his great office and gave

him to mankind. Napoleon truly called himself the child of the Republic, the son of Destiny. Lincoln and Grant were the agents of a great age. They were sent to break the Black Man's fetters, to crush the oppressor in his wrong, to decorate with some new glories the temple of Freedom which history by our fathers' hands had reared as the shrine of patriotism and equality.

The discovery of America was the greatest secular event in the history of mankind. Time had prepared for it through centuries of longing and doubt. *Ne plus ultra* had been written on the Pillars of Hercules; but the human soul still said *Plus ultra!* The vision of hope was on the waters. The pressure of the ages bore hard on the shoulders of man, but the dream of Atlantis was still in his brain and spirit! The Man of Genoa came. He was also the man of Italy, the man of the Mediterranean, the man of all seas and shores. Destiny set him on her hand and said to him fly!—and he flew. He went and came again. He returned with gyves on his wrists, and a New World for his trophy. To Castile and Leon he gave it; but in a larger sense he gave it to mankind as an arena of reviving progress, freedom and eternal hope. Great was his embassy in the midst of the centuries, and he himself was glorious. He was sublime in thought and supreme in action. Now the ages have crowned him—he is immortal! The aureole of everlasting fame is on his head. But History made the Man—made him and gave him to the world.