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THE GOODLY HERITAGE OF CONNECTICUT.

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IN THE

FIRST CHURCH IN NEW HAVEN,

ON

THANKSGIVING DAY,

NOV. 19, 1840.

BY LEONARD BACON.

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LONG ISLAND
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY.

NEW HAVEN:

PRINTED BY B. L. HAMLEN.

1840.
X.

DISCOURSE.

PSALM XVI, 6.—The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, yea,
I have a goodly heritage.

THE Psalmist is speaking not in pride, but in thankfulness. He is gratefully and joyfully acknowledging God as his protector, his portion, and the source of all his blessings. “The Lord,” he says,—“The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and my cup: Thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage.”

Let us adopt as our own, to-day, this grateful sentiment of ancient devotion, once breathed from lips that were moved by the Spirit of God. We too may say, as truly as the pious Israelite,—and we ought to say it with the same fervent acknowledgment of God,—The lines are fallen to us in pleasant places. He who has made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth, and who hath determined the times before appointed, and marked out by lines of his own the bounds of their habitation,—hath given to us a goodly heritage.

We may contemplate the pleasantness of our appointed place, and the goodliness of our heritage, either as citizens of this great confederation, so fast advancing to a foremost rank among the nations of the world,—or as citizens of that particular State which we inhabit and which we call our own; a State too small to maintain its independence alone, and yet free, sovereign,

and safe from foreign aggression; a State unknown to diplomacy, and unheard of in the cabinets of Europe and the congresses of her sovereigns; a State without a navy, or an army, or a fort of its own, or an ambassador at any foreign court; and yet with a strong, firm government, and a system of laws and institutions, under which a population of more than three hundred thousand souls, enjoy as much of peace and security, and of the means of social happiness and individual well being, as any equal population on the face of the earth. It is not as citizens of the United States, but as citizens of the State of Connecticut, that we, this day, at the invitation of our public authorities, meet in the temples of our worship, to give thanks to God. This is the thanksgiving day of the people of Connecticut. Let us, then, to excite and direct our religious gratitude, call to mind some of the particulars of that goodly heritage which the God of nations has given to the people of this State.

The theme, then, of which I propose to speak, is our own State of Connecticut, and the privileges which are included in our citizenship and inhabitation here. It will not come within my design—and certainly it would be very inappropriate to the duties of the day—to institute any vainglorious comparison between Connecticut and other States of this confederacy, or to undertake to strike a balance between our advantages and those enjoyed by our neighbors. To some extent, of course, we must speak comparatively; but that may be done without unkind disparagement of the lot of others, and without any invidious or selfish exaggeration of that which is given to us.

The State of Connecticut—behold her goodly heritage. Look at her territory, suited to a free and active people—at her history—at her government and laws, the result of all her history—at the hereditary character of her population—at her schools and means of education—at the equal distribution of comforts, and of the means of happiness, among her citizens—at her religious institutions—and lastly at her capacities of improvement and of progress.

I. Her TERRITORY, considered in respect to *extent*, is small. It is but a little spot upon the map of the Union; among the twenty six States, it is the least but two. But he who knows the history of nations, knows that what a free State may gain in power, and in security against foreign aggression, by the extension of its territory, is more than lost in liberty and patriotism, and in the safe and efficient working of its government. In proportion as a free State extends its territory, the power in the hands of the government is increased; and with it the temptations to ambition on the part of the rulers, and their opportunities and facilities for deceiving and corrupting the people, are greatly augmented. In the same proportion, the individual citizen loses his importance in the body politic, and the sense of his responsibility, and of the extent to which the common welfare is dependent on his fidelity. In our narrow territory there is no such danger. The representative is not removed to a distance from his constituents, nor raised above their heads; he is in the midst of them, he is one of them, and they all know him.

In respect to the *productiveness* of the soil, the territory allotted to Connecticut is comparatively poor. It

yields nothing to man, but as the recompense of sturdy and continued toil. But upon such a soil, those rugged and manly virtues, without which there can be no freedom, most naturally find their home. As he who eats his bread in the sweat of his brow, eats it with the sweetest relish, so he under whose hands the hard and rocky soil, after many a painful and patient stroke, grows verdant and beautiful as Eden, loves that soil the more for all his labor, and is the more ready, if need be, to water it and hallow it with his blood.

The *compactness* of this territory—its moderate irregularity of outline and of surface—is a part of the goodness of our heritage. No lofty mountain range, no broad arm of the sea, divides our citizens as into two separate and distant communities, or makes one part of our State difficult of access to the other. Our coast, indented with harbors, teaches our people to be at home upon the ocean. Our broadest rivers, spanned by bridges, whitened with sails, and resounding with the dash of oar and wheel, instead of dividing, unite us. The hills that break our soil into so rough a surface, nourish from perpetual springs the many streams that glide with murmuring music to the sea; and these streams, subdued and controlled by human skill, become industrious, like living creatures, and labor, unwearied and unfed, to supply the wants and multiply the enjoyments of man.

Such a territory, in its limited extent, in its hard but not ungrateful soil, in its compactness, and in its various incitements to industry, is well suited to be the abode of a free, homogeneous, hardy, and patriotic people. To the state of which we are members, the lines are fallen in pleasant places,—yea, she has a goodly heritage.

II. Her HISTORY, also, is such as is suited to exert upon her people the best moral influences. The influence of a people's history upon its present character, and upon its coming destiny, is of the greatest moment. That community which has no history, has naturally no self-respect, no dignity, no elevation or strength of character; it may be kept together till it grows into a whole, but while it has no past, it is an aggregation of parts rather than a unity; it has no common spirit. That community which can not look back upon its origin with respect—whose annals are a continued record of selfishness, crime and shame, is greatly deficient in respect to that which constitutes a people's best earthly heritage. How rich then is the heritage of our time-honored commonwealth. Her origin was not commercial merely, nor military, but religious. Men of God, fleeing from the wrongs of the old world, came hither to build an altar; and as soon as their pilgrim feet were planted on this soil, there sprang into being in the wilderness, the beauty of a civilized, free, Christian State. And from our origin to this day, the changes which have passed over us, have been only such as were suited gradually to perfect and establish all our institutions. Our present existence, as a State, is not dis severed from the past. And for us the past—that is, the past of our own existence as a distinct community—is alive with examples of stainless integrity, of noble public spirit, of stern self-denial, of heroic self-sacrifice. The names of such patriots in civil life as the Ellsworth and Johnson of the Federal Constitution, the Sherman and Trumbull of the Revolutionary era, the Winthrop, the Haynes, and the Eaton of our still earlier annals—and

the names of such martyrs in the cause of their country, as Wooster, and Hale, are to all Americans, but most of all to us to whom they peculiarly belong, of priceless value. What a power for good—what a treasury of patriotic sentiments and impulses, is there in the memory of that dire struggle for right, and for ancient and chartered freedom, which marked the era of 1776.

III. OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM, including both the form of our *government* and the body of our *laws*, is not with us an untried experiment; nor is it an experiment of merely some fifty or sixty years standing. It is the growth of two full centuries. Our town meetings, our various gradations of magistracy, our annual elections, our mode and forms of legislation, our principles of civil and political equality, have not been brought in by some violent revolution, the scheme of speculative politicians, seeking to pull down, that amid smoke and ruin they may erect, if they can, some new and utopian structure of society. All these things, which in other countries might be attempted in vain, are with us of an old and steady growth. Our history, our character as a people, and our political system, are all intermingled by reciprocal connections and influences, and can not be torn apart. Hence it is that our people are not only theoretically free, free by the provisions of the Constitution, but really free, and fully alive to the sense of their freedom; and the political equality of the rich and the poor, of the proprietor and the tenant, of the employer and the employed—their equality before the law—their equal share in the protection and benefits of government—their equality at the ballot box—is not only talked about, and recognized in speculation,

but felt in all quarters as a palpable reality. There is nowhere upon earth a political system which more completely answers the purpose of spreading its equal and perfect protection over every family and every individual, or which is better suited to give scope and exercise to all the faculties of every citizen, for his own and for the common welfare.

IV. The HEREDITARY CHARACTER of our people is another element of that goodly heritage which has been allotted to our State. The industry, the inventive ingenuity and skill, and the enterprising spirit of our people, are proverbial wherever our name is known. Nowhere upon earth, are there in an equally numerous population, fewer unlaboring hands, or fewer unthinking minds, or fewer consumers that eat the bread which they have not earned, than in Connecticut. Nor is this the mere effect of an external necessity, but, to a great extent, the genius and inbred character of the people. Nowhere upon earth, is there a more perfect order and tranquillity than in Connecticut. Nowhere is there a more profound or universal reverence for law. Nowhere is the idea of resistance to the law, of mob violence, of any public disorder, more generally or heartily repelled. Nowhere is every palpable immorality a more effectual badge of ignominy than in Connecticut. Nowhere is profaneness more contemptible or disgusting to the common feelings of the people. Nowhere is the spendthrift, the drunkard, the gamester, the adulterer, or the seducer, more despised and detested. Nowhere upon earth is there more of security against crime;—nowhere is there more of innocence, purity and affection, around the fireside ;—nowhere does the

grass grow greener over the grave of buried love. All this enters into the hereditary common character of the homogeneous people of Connecticut, born of the old Pilgrim stock.

V. Another part of the fair heritage of Connecticut, is her **SCHOOLS AND MEANS OF EDUCATION**. Some of the neighboring States appear to have made a better use of their advantages within a few years past, than we have made of ours, and are thus outstripping us in the course of improvement. But when we speak simply of means and advantages, what State upon earth has more to rejoice in, or to account for, than our own. There is not a human dwelling within the boundaries of the State, which is not within a convenient distance of a school-house. There is not a child to which its parents or guardians may not give, without any considerable sacrifice, a good education for the duties of life in a free and enlightened community. There is not a youth upon a farm, or in a work-shop, who may not by due diligence and self-denial find good means and helps for self-education. Seats of learning, unsurpassed on this side of the Atlantic, open their doors, not to the rich only, but to multitudes of those who in other countries, or in other parts of our own country, would be doomed to ignorance. Hundreds from other States, and not a few from distant lands, resort to us, that they may share in these means of education.

VI. It belongs to the goodly heritage of Connecticut, that the **COMFORTS OF LIFE, AND THE MEANS OF HAPPINESS, ARE**, in a degree rarely found elsewhere, **EQUALLY DISTRIBUTED** among her citizens. Some of our people have more and others less; some enjoy

a profusion greater than is for their real welfare, while others suffer need, are poorly fed and thinly clad, and shiver in winter over a scanty fire in dwellings through which the keen wind whistles. But how few are the very rich; and how far would they be from being called rich in other countries; and how slightly would their wealth be estimated in some other parts of our own country. And of the poor, how few are there who know what poverty is, in the bitter meaning of that word, as it is known in European cities and provinces, or even in the city of New York. Need I undertake to say how great a public blessing this is? “Give *me* neither poverty nor riches,” was the wise man’s prayer, “lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, *Who* is the Lord; or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.” And if the happy medium between lazy, proud, luxurious riches, and squalid poverty, is the most desirable lot for an individual—how happy is that State in which the extremes of wealth and of want are equally unknown. In such a place, so pleasant, have the lines fallen to us.

VII. The noblest part of our inheritance—that which under the providence and grace of God is the best security for the enjoyment and the permanence of all the rest—is our **RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS**. The whole structure of society here was originally framed with the design of securing for a pure and free Christianity the fairest opportunity for the exercise of its powers. The division of our territory into towns, and the incorporation of each town into a distinct and complete municipality, in which the people are accustomed to deliberate on their interests as a local community, and to

regulate their own concerns, not by their representatives even, but by their own votes and by-laws,—is the best arrangement of society, in order to the voluntary establishment and maintenance, and the successful operation of Christian institutions. Thus it comes to pass, that by a law stronger than any written enactment, every town, every village large enough to constitute a congregation, must have its church, its minister, its public worship on the Sabbath, or its inhabitants will be ashamed to acknowledge their own residence. The equality of the people,—an equality kept up not merely by the laws, but by schools in which all are taught, by the equal distribution of property, by their constant exercise of political power, and by their constant mutual intercourse in the feeling of mutual dependence,—is far more efficient than any system of inequality could be, in preparing the whole people to receive as their own, with a just appreciation, and to enjoy with common interest and advantage, a competent and faithful Christian ministry. The people being, not only in theory but in fact, of one rank, there is nothing in the structure or state of society to prevent the pastor from being equally near and dear to all. Our schools and academies, our village libraries, and the vast circulation of books and papers, make intelligent hearers; and where there are colleges and theological seminaries such as ours, intelligent hearers will demand intelligent preachers. Thus, amid all the changes which time has wrought around us, our religious institutions show no symptom of decay. No where upon earth can be found a population of three hundred thousand souls, in one compact territory, so well supplied

with the teachings and the saving influences of true and pure Christianity, as this population of Connecticut. We have indeed our variety of sects, but with inconsiderable exceptions which need not be noticed particularly, they all receive one gospel, and worship one God, through one Mediator whose blood cleanseth from all sin. Such is the prevalence and living force of true Christianity here, that those systems of false doctrine which deny man's future accountability, and take away the sanctions of conscience, find no permanent lodgment among us, no place for an organized existence. We have, indeed, among our population, men of loose principles, unbelievers, universalists, and perhaps atheists; and occasionally we see an effort on the part of such men to organize, and to have institutions of their own. But how difficult is it, on this soil, to build a synagogue of Satan; and when such a structure has been reared, and the people have had the opportunity of seeing its operation, how difficult is it to keep the doors open.

VIII. But that which completes and crowns the goodness of our inheritance, is its **CAPABILITY OF IMPROVEMENT**. It is ever characteristic of God's bounty, that the highest and best of his blessings are not thrust upon men, to be possessed and enjoyed of course, but are rather put within men's reach for them to attain by their own efforts, and thus to enjoy in the exercise of their own faculties. This is the way of God's bounty to us as a people. For two hundred years, progress, continual progress, has been one of the elements of our prosperity. And yet in no respect have we even now reached the limit of the good in-

volved in the capabilities of our condition. You have only to look around you, and you see how much is still to be done to make this goodly heritage fairer and richer for ourselves, and for those who shall come after us.

Our physical and material wealth, the riches of our soil and territory, may yet, by judicious measures, by scientific investigation of our resources, by skill and enterprise on the part of individuals and of the public, be incalculably augmented. The resources of this State, properly explored and developed, might support half a million of inhabitants, without exhausting the means of subsistence or of comfort. See what has been done, or is now in the process of accomplishment. Our soil, under the hand of skillful and unresting industry, is developing its riches, and rewarding the laborer with harvests more precious and more abundant. Our mountains are revealing their hidden treasures,—the quarry and the mine. Our water courses are resounding with new enginery, and new applications of industry. Improved means of communication are almost annihilating distance; the rapid car, upon its iron pathway, winding along the hillside, or shooting across our valleys, gives new compactness to our territory. Commerce, impelled by new forces, brings to us in greater profusion the gifts which are scattered from God's hand in every clime.

And will not our history brighten as it advances from one era to another? New examples of illustrious virtue, of fidelity in places of public trust, of stern integrity, maintaining itself in the face of temptation, of magnanimous self-denial and self-sacrifice for the pub-

lic good,—and new illustrations of what can be done by a patriotic, united, and determined people, are yet to adorn our records, and to instruct and quicken the minds of our posterity.

Nor is it to be imagined that our laws and polity are incapable of improvement. What progress have we seen within a few years past. Look at a single instance. Old barbarous punishments by mutilation, branding, and scourging, have been struck from our statute-book, and systems of penitentiary imprisonment and discipline, more efficient as penalties, and far more salutary in their effects on the offender, have been introduced. And still from year to year, and from age to age, that in our laws which has ceased to answer its original intent, that which belongs to the harsher legislation of less enlightened times, and that which does not meet the actual exigencies of society, must be changed or taken away. Representation must be equalized; a balance must be wisely kept between the sovereignty of the State as a whole and the rights of the constituent parts; arrangements must be made from time to time, to bring into the service of the State, in places of legislation and of executive or judicial magistracy, the ablest and worthiest of her citizens. Far distant be the day when the people of Connecticut shall entertain the impotent thought that all they have to do in respect to their laws and their polity, is simply to enjoy and to admire the wisdom of their ancestors. When a people's civil institutions, instead of living in the people's life and growing with their growth, become fixed, petrified, unchangeable, it is a symptom of approaching convulsion and death.

So in respect to the common character of the people,—how much may yet be done for its improvement. We have seen, for a few years past, the rapid progress of one great moral and social reformation. Our people were fast becoming, in common with all their neighbors, an intemperate people. The cry of alarm was raised, the intelligence and good sense, the self-respect and the conscience of the people were appealed to, and not only was the evil stayed, but the effect of that earnest self-reformation will remain upon the hereditary common character. Connecticut will ever be the more industrious, peaceful, and orderly in the habits of her population, the more active, manly and energetic, the more happy and contented, for this great effort. And who will tell us that nothing now remains to be done that shall make our people still better,—nothing that shall make them, as a people, more intelligent, more magnanimous and public spirited, more refined, more happy?

The improvement of our schools has been, of late, much talked of. Something has been done. How much more may yet be done. Why may not the public schools of Connecticut, so magnificently endowed, so encompassed with genial influences, be made, in the quality and amount of the education which they shall give to all the children of the State, superior to the schools of any other community. Why should not Connecticut be again, in this respect, and be forever, a model State for all the world? And how much our higher institutions of various names, may yet be made to advance, it is not necessary to show in detail. As Athens was of old “the eye of Greece,” so Connecticut

may be, from age to age, the eye of America. She may make herself, among all our States, nay, among all the States of earth, the richest in that most incalculable wealth, the wealth of cultivated mind. She may make herself an intellectual metropolis, an emporium of knowledge, for the hemisphere.

That state of society in which the distribution of wealth and of all the means of enjoyment shall be absolutely equal, is of course impossible, if it were desirable; but in proportion to the progress of society in all other respects, will be its approximation towards that condition in which suffering from absolute want shall be unknown. We have the poor among us, the unfortunate, the shiftless, and the vicious; and the character of human nature itself, and the conditions under which man is placed in this life, make it certain that there will always be some such. But in proportion as our commonwealth advances in the development of all its capabilities, and in the use of all its physical and moral advantages, those inequalities of condition, which elsewhere deform and demoralize society, will become more unfrequent and inconsiderable.

But to our progress in all other respects, it is essential that there be a continual progress in respect to the ascendancy and power of true Christianity. We must become, as a people, more generally and more thoroughly imbued with the fear of God, or our prosperity in outward and material things, will be like the prosperity of fools, that destroys them. The multitudes in all our towns that are habitual neglecters of public worship, must be gathered into our Sabbath congregations; and thus all our population must be brought un-

der the actual influence of Christian institutions. Our churches must grow in knowledge, in faith, in purity, in devotion, and *thus* in the strength of numbers. Our ministry, instead of aiming to do as well as their predecessors, must aim to do better, and must grow stronger in learning, in skill to divide the word of truth, in humble devotedness to their work, in that manly freedom and simplicity of thought which is the best security against errors, old or new, and in all that can give them power for good. Why may not this be? Why may not this little tract, upon which are already accumulated so many blessings—upon which already is exhibited so much of the power of Christianity to illuminate and quicken, to adorn and refine, and so much of that Divine efficacy in saving men from sin, which ever accompanies the living Gospel,—be “filled with the knowledge of the Lord?” Why may we not hope, and labor in the hope, that this shall become in the sight of God and man a holy land,—our hills like those of Judah and of Galilee, and our green valleys like the vale of Sharon?

Such are the obligations to thankfulness involved in our heritage, as citizens of Connecticut. Who could look to-day from one of our hill-tops, without some grateful emotion? Look over the expanse of hill and vale, and “waters glancing in the sun,” on towns, villages, scattered dwellings, white spires, and here and there a manufactory, shut for to-day in Sabbath stillness—look, and remember how many happy family gatherings there are within the circle of your vision, how many human hearts are beating with affection, how many voices are uttered in true devotion,—and say,

is not this a goodly heritage—"the glory of all lands?" What words are more fit than those which were extorted from the unwilling prophet, surveying the encampment of God's favored people,—

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob!
Thy tabernacles, O Israel!
As the valleys are they spread forth,
As gardens by the rivers' side.
As aloe trees, which the Lord hath planted,
As cedars beside the waters."

What duties, now, rest upon those to whom is given so fair a heritage? Every privilege, every blessing, brings with it some inseparable duty.

First, there is the obvious duty of maintaining this inheritance, that it may pass, unimpaired, to our successors. We hold it not for ourselves alone, but for others also. While it is ours, for the time being, with all its riches, to enjoy, we have no right to squander it, to alienate it, or to let it waste away. It is an old entail; we hold it for our life-time only, as the trustees of our ancestors for their and our posterity. We stand between the ages that are past and all that are to follow, and through our hands the inheritance won by our fathers,—the fruit of their toil and prayer, of their heroic daring and self-sacrifice,—is to be transmitted to those for whom it was designed and won as truly as for us. He who does aught to impair this heritage, is a traitor to past ages and to coming generations, to the State whose existence is measured by slow centuries, and to thatholy and eternal Providence which has committed to him this great trust.

But merely to maintain this inheritance, and to pass it on to our successors as good as it came into our hands, is not enough. There may be times when all a people's energy will no more than suffice to maintain and keep for their children that which their fathers gave them. But such are not the times in which we live—times of universal activity, enterprise and improvement. We can not do our part as citizens of a State so privileged, in an age so auspicious, and so critical, unless we leave the commonwealth better than we found it. He who intends merely to do no harm, has missed the only end worth aiming at, and casts away the dignity and happiness of living. If you would truly enjoy this inheritance, you must live for something higher than merely to enjoy and to do no harm. No ; far from us be these low ignoble aims. It is our privilege and our duty to make this fair heritage fairer and richer, so that those who shall enjoy it when we are gone, may remember us in their thanksgivings, with the same gratitude with which we remember our fathers.

The trust will soon pass from our hands. Many of our families, to-day, will remember who it was that on the last thanksgiving day was there, loving and beloved, but now is there no more. So it will be, till these circles, broken and broken again, shall have disappeared from earth. Blessed are they of whom it shall be said, when the record of their life is completed, that having served the will of God in their generation, they rest from their labors and their works do follow them.

NOTES.

A, p. 5.

THE ancient républics, and those of the middle ages, were all originally of very small territorial dimensions. Their names are the names not of countries, but of single cities. In every instance the extension of territory resulted in the gradual transference of power from the many to the few, and its concentration in the hands of the chief or chiefs of the state, and thus in the subversion of freedom. The attempt was once made to erect a commonwealth in England; but how memorable was the failure. The attempt was once made to erect a republic "one and indivisible" in France;—who but a madman desires to see *that* experiment repeated? Whether a popular government can be extended advantageously over a wide territory or a vast population, in any other way than by the confederation of small states, has never yet been shown by experiment. The confederations of Holland and Switzerland, and those of Grecian history, are, like our own union, illustrations of the natural connection of the republican with the federative principle.

In our country the purest republicanism exists in combination with the most perfect confederation. In respect to foreign nations, America—as they call us—is one State. In respect to each other, we are twenty six free States, all equally sovereign. Each State is secure against foreign aggression, in the strength of the great union. The safety of the union against the concentration of power in the hands of its chief magistrate or of his minions, whether by military usurpation or by gradual corruption and the decay of republican vigilance and energy in the people,—lies not so much in the distribution of powers among the various departments of the federal government, (though this is invaluable,) as in the local, independent energy of the State governments. The great and vital interests of society, the most important objects for which government exists, are in the hands not of the Union, but of the States. The enlightened patriot, therefore, looks to the States rather than to the general—or as it should rather be called, the *federal* government. Let each State maintain freedom, justice, order, knowledge and public virtue within itself,—

let each State sustain itself in the dignity of well-doing, and keep alive in its own citizens the spirit of freedom and of patriotic activity, and all is safe. The corrupting tendencies of our system are chiefly in the national government; the conservative power is with the States.

At present, no considerable inconvenience is experienced, and no danger is apprehended from the territorial extent of any of our States. But when our large States shall be full of population—when the State of New York, for example, shall have ten millions of people—then there will be dangers such as few now anticipate. When each representative in the legislature of a State shall stand for a constituency of from sixty to a hundred thousand—when the central administration of the State shall have in its hands the power and the means of corruption which can not but exist, where a population nearly as large as that of England is to be governed—when all this power and all the offices of such an “empire State,” shall be the prize to be struggled for at every election—when at the same time the individual elector shall feel that he is only one individual among two millions of voters—then it will be seen whether a large State is as favorable to freedom and the well-working of a popular government as a small one.

I can not but think that there has been no mistake in our national policy greater than that of marking out at the west, and admitting to the Union, State after State, each large enough, in territory, for an empire.

B, pp. 7, 8.

To show how enlightened minds, in other States, think of the unity of our colonial with our revolutionary and post-revolutionary history, I take the liberty to introduce here the following sentences from a letter of a friend at a distance.

“I envy a New England student of our American history. With him the revolution begins before the Declaration of Independence, or even the battle of Lexington; and he is not obliged to look at it as an event occurring in spite of previous tendencies and influences. It is all one steady current, from the spring to the sea. Not so, we * * * * folks. I forget whether it is the Nile, or the Mississippi, or both, which runs no longer in its ancient channel, but which deserting its former bed, because choked up with mud and sand, has had to

break a new way out. In this colony, — there was a kind of 'Red River raft,' which blocked up popular feeling. We had to rebel in spite of ancestral opinions."

C, pp. 8, 9.

The religious views of the first settlers in New England, led them to plant themselves in churches—each settlement an independent religious congregation, dwelling in such neighborhood as permitted them not only to meet on the Sabbath and on other occasions for united worship and religious communion, but also to watch over each other's Christian deportment. Hence the political division of New England into towns, each town being originally independent. Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield became one jurisdiction, by the voluntary combination of those distinct and independent settlements. New Haven, Milford and Guilford, by confederation, formed the jurisdiction of New Haven Colony, to which other settlements, equally independent, were afterwards admitted. The original towns are older than the State; and in those towns, the original church is older than the town.

The American structure of society has no peculiarity more remarkable, or more interesting to a philosophical foreigner—none, I may add, more important to the whole system—than the existence and municipal powers of towns, the arrangement by which every citizen in the State is also a member of a local body politic, invested with full power to manage its own affairs. We talk much—and foreigners talk much—of our democracy; but in plain truth, and in the right use of words, the only literal democracy known to our political system, is a town, a parish, or a school district. With these exceptions, our government is every where representative—an elective aristocracy; and the power of the people is simply that of electors. In the town the people act, not through their representatives, but directly; they inquire, they deliberate, they resolve, they enact laws, they levy taxes, they make appropriations of money, they receive the reports and audit the accounts of their agents, they approve or disapprove the administration of their own local affairs.

The towns, then, are the fountain heads of our republican system. There the whole people are continually trained to a practical acquaintance with the management of public business, and with the principles and forms of government. There they become acquainted

with each other's qualifications for the public service, and learn whom to send as their representatives to the legislature of the State. There, though the demagogue may prosper for a time, his arts are by and by discovered, and in the end plain good sense and honesty win the confidence of those who only want to entrust their interests to capable and faithful agents.

It has been remarked that should the national government be subverted or dissolved—should the President and Congress be surprised and taken prisoners—society would not, as in other countries, under similar calamities, be dissolved; the States would remain as before. We may go farther than this. In those States which are divided into towns, the State government itself might be subverted and extinguished by some sudden shock, and still society would not be disorganized. Society so constituted has no one seat of life; violence may assail it; its government may be overthrown; it may be struck down wounded; and the feet of conquering armies may tread it in the dust; but still—as in Connecticut under the usurpation of Andross—it lives, and

“Vital in every part,
Can not, but by annihilating, die.”

D, p. 14.

The exploring and developing of the physical resources of the State, is one of the first duties of its government. But as yet, how little has been done in the performance of this duty. The geological survey now in progress, is a noble beginning, and we may hope it will be followed by other investigations of a similar nature. Why should there not be in this State, as in Massachusetts, a thorough and scientific agricultural survey? The individual farmer, however enterprising or intelligent, unless he happens to be a man of princely fortune, can do but little towards such inquiries as are necessary to the complete development of our agricultural resources. An impartial, accurate investigation, at the expense of the State, respecting the facilities afforded by our soil and climate, and by the habits of our population, for the growth and manufacture of silk, or of sugar from the beet, might be the basis of some temporary legislative aid to these two branches of production, or might seasonably extinguish many vain hopes and chimerical speculations.

LONG ISLAND
HISTORICAL
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