

bound of civil liberty obtained that wise men look for.

Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on: but when he ascended, and his apostles after him were laid asleep, then straight arose a wicked race of deceivers, who, as that story goes of the Egyptian Typhon with his conspirators, how they dealt with the god Osiris, took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the careful search that Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, lords and commons, nor ever shall do, till her Master's second coming; he shall bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection. Suffer not these licensing prohibitions to stand at every place of opportunity forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking, that continue to do, our obsequies to the torn body of our martyred saint.

Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making. . . . A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and some grain of charity might win all these diligences to join and unite into one general and brotherly search after truth; could we but forego this prelatial tradition of crowding free consciences and Christian liberties into canons and precepts of men.

If it be desired to know the immediate cause of all this free writing and free speaking, there cannot be assigned a truer than your own wild and free and humane government; it is the liberty, lords and commons, which your own valorous and happy counsels have purchased us; liberty which is the nurse of all great wits; this is that which hath rarified and enlightened our spirits like the influence of heaven; this is that which hath enfranchised, enlarged, and lifted up our apprehensions degrees above ourselves. . . . Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties. . . .

And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter? Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing. . . . For who knows not that Truth is strong, next to the Almighty; she needs no policies, nor stratagems, nor licensings to make her victorious; those are the shifts and the defenses that error uses against her power; give her but room, and do not

bind her when she sleeps, for then she speaks not true, as the old Proteus did, who spoke oracles only when he was caught and bound, but then rather she turns herself into all shapes except her own, and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as Micaiah did before Ahab, until she be adjoined into her own likeness.

Yet is it not impossible that she may have more shapes than one. . . .

In the meanwhile, if anyone would write, and bring his helpful hand to the slow-moving reformation which we labor under, if Truth have spoken to him before others, or but seemed at least to speak, who hath so bejesuited us that we should trouble that man with asking license to do so worthy a deed? and not consider this, that if it come to prohibiting, there is not aught more likely to be prohibited than Truth itself: whose first appearance to our eyes, bleared and dimmed with prejudice and custom, is more unsightly and unpleasible than many errors.

\* \* \*

### MILTON'S MESSAGE OF LIBERTY.

From Macaulay's Essay on Milton, First Published in the Edinburgh Review for August, 1825.

If ever despondency and asperity could be excused in any man, they might have been excused in Milton. But the strength of his mind overcame every calamity. Neither blindness, nor gout, nor age, nor penury, nor domestic afflictions, nor political disappointments, nor abuse, nor proscription, nor neglect, had power to disturb his sedate and majestic patience. His spirits do not seem to have been high, but they were singularly equable. His temper was serious, perhaps stern; but it was a temper which no sufferings could render sullen or fretful. Such as it was when, on the eve of great events, he returned from his travels, in the prime of health and manly beauty, loaded with literary distinctions, and glowing with patriotic hopes, such it continued to be when, after having experienced every calamity which is incident to our nature, old, poor, sightless and disgraced, he retired to his hovel to die. . . .

His public conduct was such as was to be expected from a man of a spirit so high and of an intellect so powerful. He lived at one of the most memorable eras in the history of mankind, at the very crisis of the great conflict between Oromasdes and Arimanes, liberty and despotism, reason and prejudice. That great battle was fought for no single generation, for no single land. The destinies of the human race were staked on the same cast with the freedom of the English people. Then were first proclaimed those mighty principles which have since worked their way into the depths of the American forests, which have roused Greece from the slavery and degradation of two thousand

years, and which, from one end of Europe to the other, have kindled an unquenchable fire in the hearts of the oppressed, and loosed the knees of the oppressors with an unwonted fear. . . .

We deplore the outrages which accompany revolutions. But the more violent the outrages, the more assured we feel that a revolution was necessary. The violence of those outrages will always be proportioned to the ferocity and ignorance of the people; and the ferocity and ignorance of the people will be proportioned to the oppression and degradation under which they have been accustomed to live. Thus it was in our civil war. The heads of the church and state reaped only that which they had sown. . . . If they were assailed with blind fury, it was because they had exacted an equally blind submission.

It is the character of such revolutions that we always see the worst of them at first. Till men have been some time free, they know not how to use their freedom. . . . The final and permanent fruits of liberty are wisdom, moderation, and mercy. Its immediate effects are often atrocious crimes, conflicting errors, skepticism on points the most clear, dogmatism on points the most mysterious. It is just at this crisis that its enemies love to exhibit it. They pull down the scaffolding from the half-finished edifice: they point to the flying dust, the falling bricks, the comfortless rooms, the frightful irregularity of the whole appearance; and then ask in scorn where the promised splendor and comfort is to be found. If such miserable sophisms were to prevail there would never be a good house or a good government in the world. . . .

There is only one cure for the evils which newly acquired freedom produces; and that cure is freedom. When a prisoner first leaves his cell he cannot bear the light of day: he is unable to discriminate colors, or recognize faces. But the remedy is not to remand him into his dungeon, but to accustom him to the rays of the sun. The blaze of truth and liberty may at first dazzle and bewilder nations which have become half blind in the house of bondage. But let them gaze on, and they will soon be able to bear it. In a few years men learn to reason. The extreme violence of opinions subsides. Hostile theories correct each other. The scattered elements of truth cease to contend, and begin to coalesce. And at length a system of justice and order is educed out of the chaos.

Many politicians of our time are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition, that no people ought to be free till they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story who resolved not to go into the water till he had learnt to swim. If men are to wait for liberty till they become wise and good in slavery, they may indeed wait for ever.

Therefore it is that we decidedly approve of the

conduct of Milton and the other wise and good men who, in spite of much that was ridiculous and hateful in the conduct of their associates, stood firmly by the cause of Public Liberty. . . .

The glory of the battle which he fought for the species of freedom which is the most valuable, and which was then the least understood, the freedom of the human mind, is all his own. Thousands and tens of thousands among his contemporaries raised their voices against Ship-money and the Star-chamber. But there were few indeed who discerned the more fearful evils of moral and intellectual slavery, and the benefits which would result from the liberty of the press and the unfettered exercise of private judgment. These were the objects which Milton justly conceived to be the most important. He was desirous that the people should think for themselves as well as tax themselves, and should be emancipated from the dominion of prejudice as well as from that of Charles. . . .

To this all his public conduct was directed. For this he joined the Presbyterians; for this he forsook them. He fought their perilous battle; but he turned away with disdain from their insolent triumph. He saw that they, like those whom they had vanquished, were hostile to the liberty of thought. He therefore joined the Independents, and called upon Cromwell to break the secular chain, and to save free conscience from the paw of the Presbyterian wolf. With a view to the same great object, he attacked the licensing system; in that sublime treatise\* which every statesman should wear as a sign upon his hand and as frontlets between his eyes. His attacks were, in general, directed less against particular abuses than against those deeply-seated errors on which almost all abuses are founded, the servile worship of eminent men and the irrational dread of innovation.

That he might shake the foundations of these debasing sentiments more effectually, he always selected for himself the boldest literary services. He never came up in the rear when the outworks had been carried and the breach entered. He pressed into the forlorn hope. . . .

We are not much in the habit of idolizing either the living or the dead. And we think that there is no more certain indication of a weak and ill-regulated intellect than that propensity which, for want of a better name, we will venture to christen Boswellism. But there are a few characters which have stood the closest scrutiny and the severest tests, which have been tried in the furnace and have proved pure, which have been weighed in the balance and have not been found wanting, which have been declared sterling by the general consent of mankind, and which are visibly stamped with the image and superscription of the Most High. These great men we trust that we

\*The *Areopagitica*, extracts from which will be found in another column of this Public.

know how to prize; and of these was Milton. The sight of his books, the sound of his name, are pleasant to us. His thoughts resemble those celestial fruits and flower which the Virgin Martyr of Massinger sent down from the gardens of Paradise to the earth, and which were distinguished from the productions of other soils, not only by superior bloom and sweetness, but by miraculous efficacy to invigorate and to heal. They are powerful, not only to delight, but to elevate and purify. Nor do we envy the man who can study either the life or the writings of the great poet and patriot, without aspiring to emulate, not indeed the sublime works with which his genius has enriched our literature, but the zeal with which he labored for the public good, the fortitude with which he endured every private calamity, the lofty disdain with which he looked down on temptations and dangers, the deadly hatred which he bore to bigots and tyrants, and the faith which he so sternly kept with his country and with his fame.

\* \* \*

## RAILROADS THE SERVANTS OF SOCIETY.

Charles Erskine Scott Wood at a Banquet Given by the Portland (Ore.) Chamber of Commerce to James J. Hill and Other Railway Officials—As Reported in the Oregon Daily Journal of November 10.

I know a virgin wilderness in central Oregon—where, Mr. Hill, you can hide from him who wandereth up and down the earth seeking whom he may devour. Where the railroad magnate is as good as the cowboy; and there in a soothing solitude, you may forget that there is such a thing on the globe as a president, a railroad or a bank. I go there myself. The only banks are those of the murmurous little river. They are starred with purple wild asters and yellow primrose. They are fringed with soft willows, which lean toward each other, and year unto year whisper peace.

Between these the sparkling river dances on its way to sink in the desert, scattering life in its course, and in its death making a great marsh, where the waterfowl find a castle of strength, and the blackbirds cling to the spears of the giant tule and whistle blithely to the sunrise and the sunset, careless who is elected President and who lives or dies.

The bare mountains which guard the "desert" and send into it the waters of life, are beautifully scarred with silent canyons, where there is no sound but the rustle of the aspens clustered about a spring and the sighing of the stone pines and junipers rooted sure among the rocks. In the shade of these lie the red deer and the antelope, and there is none to oppress them or make them afraid. The morning and the evening come robed

in flame and purple, and the skies are as wide as the whole world by day and as the limitless universe by night. They spread their banners of cloud by day and their starry jewelry by night, and you shall be under them and listen to the great silence.

Around you for hundreds of miles will lie an empire into which you may drop the wheat regions of the Palouse and the Walla Walla and they will be lost. There, veiled in the sagebrush, and trodden only by the coyote and the wild steer, is an empire ready to support millions; but there you may watch the hawks and the magpies against the glittering sky and be secure, Mr. Hill, that you will never, never hear the shriek of the locomotives or the rumble of the iron wheels upon the rail. It is Mr. Harriman's territory. Mr. Cotton says he has been there, and in 40 miles saw only two lonely sheep herders. And he will see no more until the Harriman system realizes more truly its duty to this State. I have seen 50 bushels of wheat raised there without irrigation, and 80 bushels of barley to the acre. But the railroad is the highway of today, and until it comes, land which will raise wheat, oats, barley, apples, onions and sugar beets, must of necessity be left to the steer and the lonely sheep herder.

What is to redeem this land from the cowboy and the shepherd, but the modern highway, the railroad? And those who take from a territory to build elsewhere and leave it undeveloped, may be highwaymen but not railroad men, as I view the question. I have listened here tonight to Mr. Cotton's impression of central Oregon. I have hunted Indians there, and in the Palouse country and the Wenatchee, and I say the difference between eastern Oregon and eastern Washington is only one of transportation facilities.

I have seen both regions as the sagebrush wilderness. I see Oregon the same today. Why? I have been told by a Harriman official that the country was only fit to raise things with hoofs to walk out on; that the Union Pacific had it bottled up and would develop it when it got ready, and not while it was fighting for competitive territory—that is, fighting Jim Hill. That is not my idea of the duty of the public highway to the society from which it draws enormous revenue. Oregon is bounded on the north by the Harriman system, on the east by the Harriman system, and on the west by the Pacific ocean. It will thus be seen that it is between the devil and the deep sea.

The highway is the artery of social life and the avenue of social progress, and the railroad is the highway of today. Without highways any country, any section, is rude, primitive, backward and undeveloped, for it is cut off from all that interchange of thought and commerce which make society and which mark progress. You do not need me to tell you that if one community lives on one side of an impassable mountain range, and an-