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Title: "Our Destiny," by Christian P. Z. Humrich

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Our Destiny.

No American need blush from a survey of the past. From the humblest of beginnings we have advanced gradually (though unperceptibly fast) to a conspicuous position among the nations of the earth. In attaining that eminence, we also have contributed and that in no stinted measure to man's advancement. The history of other nations is examined in vain for the secret of our success. Possessed of a beautiful soil - favourable climate and fostering government, united with energy and industry - the elements of all success - our progress could hardly have been less rapid. The past - present and particularly the future are ominous with the indications of a high destiny. ~~Although~~ in our speculations we may fall short of the reality, and err greatly in our conclusions - yet this should not debar us from the pleasing task. The eyes of the world are upon us, the hopes of servant millions are based upon the permanence and penetrating influence of our institutions - the weak seek our protection, and the strong fear our justice and power.

Behold that tide of emigration now setting towards our shores. Not ~~as~~ ~~formerly~~ bent on conquest or plunder as formerly, but with a

heart panting after freedom the emigrants come
with a desire to settle and enjoy the blessings of
liberty, From this source are gathered the persecuted
and the oppressed - those choice sons of my land
The spirit of the age is almost prepared to extend
to these seekers after a home a fraternal welcome
Something new, as well as significant in man's ad-
vancement has laid hold of our people and it must be
enacted. That measure is now before our National
Council and proposes to restore to Man God's gifts - viz
"the right to cultivate the soil and enjoy the fruits
thereof". Too long have men been withheld from their
birthrights - too long have Kings priests and govern-
ments apportioned the earth for their aggrandizement
- it was given to man and he shall yet receive it
as his heritage. As we increase in wealth and
power to render us greater in patriotism we must
instill into the hearts of our citizens an inherent
love of home. This cannot be done better than by
securing to all an independent irremovable
hearth upon our own soil. Here the fruits of honest
toil may be enjoyed in security, and the noblest
impulses of man's nature developed to perfection.
One has well said "that in the obscurity of the cottage
far removed from the seductive influences of rank
and affluence, is nourished the virtues that counter-
act the decay of human institutions - the courage
that defends the national independence, and the

industry that supports all classes of the State.

Our Commerce brings us in contact with "the rest of mankind". Through this channel the enterprise which was confined to a territory island or Continent is admitted to the world's arena. A nation without an outlet is like a stagnant pool - passing, inert, wanting every indication of life - with an outlet its waters are sweet, pure and fresh - its ripple the symbol of life, motion and beauty. The Commercial Nations of every age have controlled the destinies of ~~every~~ ^{the world} ~~eyes~~, into their laps has flown its wealth and in their markets were to be found the comforts and luxuries of life. As in all other things a revolution is being effected in the Commerce of the world. For years the project of uniting by rail way the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts has been discussed. The undertaking will be a vast one and to some it may even seem as the child of a ~~man~~ Dreamer. We must remember however that achievements which formerly required the labor of a century the industry of a people and the protection of a government, are now entrusted to individuals with the assurance if possible they be accomplished. The peopling of our western Coast has placed this matter beyond all doubt.

The efficiency of steam is not confined to the land ^{upon the water} - it has shot ahead of rail and its course must be direct. Even now upon our shores

an acting throne, whose mission it to make fast
"the last link" in what has appropriately been call-
the "girdle of the world". But should it fail? fail?
History bears witness that with the Americans "I'll
try" is synonymous with "I'll succeed". The proposition
has been presented to unite the Pacific Coast with
China. This will complete the circle of steam
communication, and we shall control its central
pathway. Commerce formerly dependent on the
breeze of heaven, which ^(for wide purposes) has been wandering around
the capes, will betake itself to this central as well
as direct route. The trade of the east will flow
through American Channels and thus will the
rich prize of the Indies be snatched from England
All who wish to participate in the commerce of
the world, will have to knock at our gates. We
shall appear upon the world's stage as the
arbiters of nations. "With an extent of surface
in comparison with ^{which} the possessions of "other
kingdoms are but as a patch upon the earth's
surface" - with an enlightened free and happy
people - Controlling the commerce of the world
who shall dispute our sway? That authority
based upon the principles of justice and equality
shall become universal law.

Upon this highway penetrating "even unto

B. B. Sumner
July 22 1853

Commencement Oration of Christian P. Z. Humrich, Class of 1852
Transcribed by Michael M. Geduldig, November 14, 2006
Edited by Don Sailer, November 2009

Our Destiny

No American need blush from a survey of the past. From the humblest of beginnings we have advanced gradually (though unprecedentedly fast) to a conspicuous position among the nations of the earth. In attaining that eminence, we also have contributed and that in no [illegible] measure to mans advancement. The history of other nations is examined in vain for the secret of our success. Possessed of a bountiful soil - favorable climate and [illegible] government, united with energy and industry - the elements of all success - our prosperity could hardly have been less rapid. The past - present and particularly the future are ominous with the indications of a high destiny. Although in our speculations we may fall short of the reality, and err greatly in our conclusions - yet this should not debar us from the pleasing task. The eyes of the world are upon us, the hopes of servng millions are based upon the permanence and penetrating influence of our institutions - the weak seek our protection, and the strong fear our justice and power.

Behold that tide of immigration now setting towards our shores. Not ~~as formerly~~ bent on conquest or plunder as formerly, but with a

heart panting after freedom the immigrant comes with a desire to settle and enjoy the blessings of liberty. From this source are gathered the persecuted and the oppressed - those choice sons of every land. The spirit of the age is almost prepared to extend to these seekers after a home a fraternal welcome. Something new, as well as significant, in mans advancement has laid hold of our people and it must be enacted. That measure is now before our national council and proposes to restore to man Gods [gift?] of "the right to cultivate the soil and enjoy the fruits thereof." Too long have men been withheld from their birthright - too long have king's priests and governments apportioned the earth for their aggrandizement - it was given to man and he shall yet receive it as his heritage. As we increase in wealth and power to render us greater in patriotism, we must instil into the breasts of our citizens an inherent love of home. This cannot be done better than by securing to all an independent unalienable hearth upon our own soil. Here the fruits of honest toil may be enjoyed in security, and the noblest impulses of mans nature developed to perfection. One has well said "that in the obscurity of the cottage far removed from the seductive influences of rank and affluence, is nourished the virtues that counteract the decay of human institutions - the courage that defends the national independence, and the

industry that supports all classes of the state.

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motion and beauty. The commercial nations of every age have controlled the destinies of the world every age, into their lap has flown its wealth and in their marts were to be found the comforts and luxuries of life. As in all other things a revolution is being effected in the Commerce of the world. For years the project of uniting by sail way the Atlantic and Pacific coasts have been discussed. The undertaking will be a vast one and to some it may even seem as the child of a Dreamer. We must remember however that achievements which formerly required the labor of a century, the industry of a people, and the protection of a government, are now entrusted to individuals with the assurance, if possible, they be accomplished. The [illegible] of our western coast has placed this matter beyond all doubt.

The efficiency of steam is not confined to the land upon the water. It has shot ahead of sail and its course must be direct. Even some upon our shores

are waiting there, whose suspicion is to make fast "the last link" in what has appropriately been called the "girdle of the world." But should it fail? fail? History bears witness that with the Americans "I'll try" is synonymous with I'll succeed. The proposition has been presented to unite the Pacific Coast with China. This will complete the circle of steam communication, and we shall control its central pathway. Commerce formerly dependent on the breeze of heaven, which for our purposes has been wandering around the capes, will betake itself to this central as well as direct route. The trade of the east will flow through American Channels and thus will the sweet prize of the Indies be snatched from England. All who wish to participate in the commerce of the world, will have to knock at our gates. We shall appear upon the worlds stage as the arbiter of nations. "With an extent of surface in comparison with which the possessions of "other kingdoms are but as a patch upon the earths surface" -with an enlightened free and happy people - controlling the commerce of the world who shall dispute our sway? That anything based upon the principles of justice and equality shall become universal law.

Upon this highway penetrating "even unto

the uttermost parts of the earth" shall flow out American influence, manners and habits of thought. The genius of our institutions will leave its impress wheresoever it comes in contact with the soil. This will act as a leaven until the whole lump is leavened. It may require ages to complete the cycle of man's redemption but he shall eventually assume his original title as "lord of creation." Liberty and independence shall be the birthright of all - knowledge and nature shall unite in the constitution of law - happiness and prosperity shall be dispensed throughout the earth and all men shall be united as one kindred and people. It is for Columbias sons to include all nations, governments and peoples within the motto "E. pluribus unum" upon our escutcheon.