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National Example.

D. C. Hoag

There seems to be in mankind a disposition to imitate that which they observe in others, whether Ancestors or Contemporaries. The wild Son of the forest, arrays himself in all the tawdry ornaments, and flashy Shows which his imagination can invent, or his art afford, because he has seen the same in his father or older Brothers. An old rusty volume containing truths of invaluable importance to the race, he would cast aside to mingle its decaying leaves with those of the wither'd Shallow tree; while on the other hand, the child of civilization who has learned from those around the proper estimate of things, looks upon the gay feathers and shining toy, as the insignificant playthings of childhood; and at the same time treasures the precious pages of the book, and turns each worn leaf with a holy caution.

A nation being made up of individuals, some general mode of life, habits, and characteristics will distinguish it throughout, and exert an aggregate influence upon surrounding nations. Antipathies and jealousies may, and will arise, and a resort to arms may be the only means of consideration; but in the very heat of their antipathy, and the rough intercourse which war compels, they will imitate from each other that, which through imperceptible at first, may perhaps show itself in the germ of a new era in society when the smoke and dust of battle has been scattered by the

Sunlight of peace and the tongue of war is silent as the dead.

As in the accomplishment of all great and distinguished works, whether of Skill in Sciences or ^{Physically} ~~Mental~~ Power, there are those who figure largely and tower above the rest more nobly conspicuous; So in the influence of National Example we are struck with the instances which are here and there presented, of Nations which have wonderfully stamped their Seal and foot-prints on the world which they have left.

The Children of Abraham so often and aptly styled the "peculiar people" present on every hand a lesson of instruction on almost every subject. We look upon them as an unapproachable Mystery when the mind may launch her bark, grasp her dark way, explore, and only return freighted with disappointment, or parchments of legendary invention. Still more mysterious. And again we look upon them as the medium of revelation, the grand chain which connects the present with the things that were, the constant beam which through Subject to numerous refractions leads our diverging footsteps through the dark animes which the night of centuries has enshrouded in gloom, points to the foundations of all things, opens to our view eternity past, and loses itself in the glorious source of all light and all knowledge.

But the influence of this people as a people on those Nations which were contiguous or extemporary is worthy of examination in a moral point. For some allwise purpose they were the only depositories of the divine intent

as far as revealed. The natural waywardness of man might often find a channel for its development and a scene for its exhibition but like the fledgling which flies indifferently away from its nest in the bower, returns on drooping wing when seized with the pang of hunger so the person spent, mourning and lost, seeks to return to its home and the bosom of its parent.

To them the world might always turn to find the "Gone with Spirit". The heathen in the pride of his heart and the foolishness of his will had shaped for himself a course in error, but it was only the imitation of that which he pretended to hate, and the acknowledgment of that which he attempted to counterfeit. The rising altar, the expiring victim, the pompous priest, the towering temple, the mystic organ, the secret-telling oracle, were but the borrowed and perverted representations of the of the atonement for transgression, the priest of the most High, the house of God, and his appointed prophets. And though obstinacy forbade the confession of the heart, and smoothed long its gearings to throw off the yoke of error, yet a voice was heard occasionally rending the dense and misty obstructions which submerged its accents yet a voice was heard occasionally "The King of the Patriarchs, and of Daniel, & Elijah, as the only God and steadfast forever, and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, & his dominion unto the end."

The philosophers had approximated in the depth of their reasoning to the truths which the most simple minded had been taught and had comprehended for centuries, but they only come to think at all, or search for those truths because the traditionary accounts had so far strayed from the original, as only to satisfy the mass of mind that sees by sight alone.

Thus the whole system which so overspread the earth, of gods & goddesses arrayed in all the romance which the suggested improvement of time could furnish, accompanied with its heroes, its demerians, its omnes, its groves, its lakes, its fountains, its graces, its nymphs, its rivers, was but the image in which the faint glimmering of the truth originating in the example of a nation which long before Perus & Cyrus had appeared, was hidden and buried.

The progress of literature has also owed much to the example of a few nations. That one which for a time made the earth to tremble at the tread of her armies, and countries far and near to pronounce her name with reverence; whose eagle many of its seat upon the Caucasus rock had taken its flight to lands so far removed that it returned from them no more; was not more extensively known or feared than the influence of her literature respected & extended. She stood in the minds of the golden age resplendent & dazzling, & the light which she was diffusing to every country & coast & island where her power was felt, broke through the abyss of futurity, here & there dropping a scintillation

of its essence and has come down to shine in the
diamond age now beaming upon the world.

The influence of national example
on the growth of patriotism is too obvious to need any
exposition. When since the days of the Ancients has
humanity felt an insult, freedom a blow or justice
a stab, that the memory of that matchless sacrifice
upon the altar of the blood-drenched shafts has not
come up before the startled eye of the injured & spurring
the fainting spirits into fearful strength? When has it
been in later times that the memory of old Scotland,
every hill bleaching the bones of the brave, and her
stubbom firm heart and drooping with gore; or the
memory of Poland, the land of the Koszciusks,
and the noise of their arms as it beat the ground,
has not sent a thrill to the bosom of the patriot
that was answered by the firm response of "Death
or victory."

And if such be the influence
which one nation may exert upon another by mere
example, with what jealous care should America,
the first of all upon the earth, and among the great,
the greatest, guard the fair emblems which she
has thus far preserved and hold it as the prize
medal of all future imitation? She has set an
example. Antiquity may sing its brave deeds & stifling
the dark passages rehearse its golden history, and

Modern times may then take up the theme with
loud psalms; but Antiquity itself cast its grey arms
about her youthful feet, and modern era silence their
dull notes amid the loftier symphonies that speak
her praise.

That she has set an example in
Duties, let the consecrated spirits that shoot their
gilded ^{points} ~~spires~~ to meet the first blushes of sunrise.
Let the millions of freemen who course their solemn
way nobly and daily to the house of God in all
liberty of conscience; let the songs of praise that
greet the ears of heaven from choirs of sweetest melody
make answer.

That she has set an example in learning
~~is shown~~ by the greatness of her studies, and her
eager pressing on to higher attainments. Through
out the foremost in the race, she was last to enter the
lists, and still comes panting at the heels of her illus-
trious forerunners.

That she has set an example in patriotism
and independence, let not the simple story of the
revolution take its place unvarnished & ornamented
upon the page of history. Let a monumental pile or
a lone son, descendant of our fathers be stationed upon
the ^{solely battle grounds} ~~solely battle grounds~~ to show them to posterity, & centuries
hence as now the strained look from the whole earth,
and the outstretched hands of the oppressed down-trodden
and persecuted of every clime will testify she has.

D. O. Lloyd. Only 1st 1847-

Commencement Oration of DeWitt C. Lloyd, Class of 1847
Transcribed by Sarah-Hazel Jennings, June 2008
Edited by Chris Altieri, June 2008

National Example

There seems to be in mankind a disposition to imitate that which they observe in others, whether ancestors or cotemporaries. The wild son of the forest arrays himself in all the tawdry ornaments, and flashy colors which his imagination can invent, or his art afford, because he has seen the same in his fathers or older brothers. An old rusty volume containing truths of invaluable importance to the race, he would cast aside to mingle its decaying leaves with those of the winter shaken tree; while on the other hand, the child of civilization who has learned from those around the proper estimate of things, looks upon the gay feather and shining toy, as the insignificant playthings of childhood; and at the same time treasures the precious pages of the book, and turns each ruffled leaf with a holy caution.

A nation being made up of individuals, some general mode of life, habits and characteristics will distinguish it throughout, and exert an aggregate influence upon surrounding nations. Antipathies and jealousies may, and will rise, and a resort to arms may be the only means of conciliation, but in the very heat of their antipathy, and the rough intercourse which war compels, they will imbibe from each other that, which though imperceptible at first, may perhaps show itself in the germ of a new era in society when the [one word illegible] and dust of battle has been scattered by the

sunlight of peace and the tongue of war is silent as the dead.

As in the accomplishment of all great and distinguished works, whether of skill in prowess or ~~military~~ physical power, there are those who figure largely and tower above the rest more nobly conspicuous; so in the influence of national example we are struck with the instances which are here and there presented of nations which have wonderfully stamped their seal and footprints on the world which they have left.

The children of Abraham so often and aptly styled "the peculiar people" present on every hand a lesson of instruction on almost every subject. We look upon them as an unfathomable mystery where the mind may launch her bark, grope her dark way, explore, and only return freighted with disappointment, or parchments of legendary invention still more mysteries. And again we look upon them as the medium of revelation, the grand chain which connects the present with the "things that were," the constant beam which though subject to numerous refractions leads our diverging footsteps through the dark avenues which the night of centuries has enshrouded in gloom, points to the foundations of all things, opens to our view eternity past, and loses itself in the glorious source of all light and all knowledge.

But the influence of this people as a people on those nations which were contiguous or contemporary is worthy of examination in a moral point. For some allwise purpose they were the only depositories of the divine intent

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away from its nest in the bower, returns on drooping wing when seized with the pangs of hunger so the poor spent, mourning and lost, seeks to return to its home and the bosom of its parent.

To them the world might always turn to find the "poor in Spirit," The heathen in the pride of his heart and the foolishness of his will had shaped for himself a course in error, but it was only the imitation of that which he pretended to hate, and the acknowledgement of that which he attempted to counterfeit. The reeking altar, the expiring victim, the pompous priest, and towering temple, the mystic augur, the secret-telling oracle, were but the borrowed and perverted representations of the of the atonement for transgression, the priest of the most High, the house of God, and his appointed prophets. And though obstinacy forbade the confession of the heart, and smothered long its yearnings to throw off the yoke of error, yet a voice was heard occasionally rending the dense and misty obstructions which submerged its accents ~~yet a voice was heard occasionally~~ "The King of the Patriarchs, and of Daniel & Elijah, is the only God and steadfast forever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, & his dominion unto the end."

The philosophers had approximated in the depth of their reasoning to the truths which the most simple minded had been taught and comprehended for centuries, but they only come to think at all, or search for those truths because the traditionary accounts had so far stayed from the original, as only to satisfy the mass of mind that [illegible word] by sight alone.

Thus the whole system which so [overspread?] the Earth, of Gods and Goddesses arrayed in all the romance which suggested improvement of time could furnish, accompanied with its heroes, its [one word illegible], its muses, its groves, its [bulls?], its fountains, its graces, its nymphs, its sirens, was but the maze in which the faint glimmering of the truth originating in the example of a nation which long before Darius and Cyrus had approved, was hidden and buried.

The progress of literature has also owed much to the example of a few nations. That one which for a time made the earth to tremble at the tread of her armies, and countries far and near to pronounce her name with reverence; whose eagle weary of its seat upon the Tarpeian rock had taken its flight to lands so far removed that it returned from them no more forever, was not more extensively known [two illegible words] the influence of her literature respected & extended. She stood in the midst of the golden age resplendent & dazzling, & the light which [shot?] diverging to every country & [coast?] & island where her power was felt, broke through the abyss of futurity, here & there dropping a scintillation

of its essence and has come down to mingle in the diamond age now breaking upon the world.

The influence of national example on the growth of patriotism is too obvious to need any exposition. When since the days of the Ancients has humanity felt an insult, freedom a blow, or justice a stab, that the memory of that matchless sacrifice upon the altar of the blood-deluged Straits has not come up before the startled eye of the injured & sprung the fainting [illegible word] into fearful strength? When has it been in later times that the memory of old Scotland, every hill bleaching the bones of the brave, and her

stubborn briar bent and dropping with gore; or the memory of Poland, the land of the [Koszinkos?] and the noise of their armor as it beat the ground, has not sent a thrill to the bosom of the patriot that was answered by the firm response of "death or victory."

And if such be the influence which one nation may exert upon another by mere example with what jealous care should America, the first of all upon the earth, and among the great, the greatest, guard the fair escutcheon which she has thus far preserved and hold it as the prize-medal of all future emulation? She has set an example. Antiquity may sing its [illegible word] deeds & stifling the dark passages rehearse its golden history, and

modern times may then take up the theme with louder paeans; but Antiquity itself casts its grey [illegible word] about her youthful feet and modern eras silence their dull notes amid the loftier symphonies that speak her praise.

That she has set an example in morals, let the consecrated spires that shoot their gilded ~~spires~~ points to meet the first blushes of morning: let the millions of freemen who course their solemn way weekly and daily to the house of God in all liberty of conscience: let the songs of praise that greet the ears of heaven from choirs of sweetest melody make answer.

That she has let an example in learning is shown by the greatness of her strides and her eager pressing on to high attainments. Though not the foremost in the race, she was last to enter the lists, and still comes panting at the heels of her illustrious forerunners.

That she has set an example in patriotism and independence, let but the simple story of the revolution takes its place unvarnished and ornamented upon the page of history. Let a [illegible word] pile or a lone son, descendant of our fathers be stationed upon the ~~whole earth~~ holy battle grounds to show them to posterity, & centuries hence as now the strained look from the whole earth, and the outstretched hands of the oppressed down-trodden and persecuted of every clime will testify she has.

D.C Lloyd. July 1st 1847.