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Our Rebellion - and Epoch in History.

From the most ancient
period of which we have any
authentic record, down to
the present moment, there
has been one continual
revolution in the elements
of barbarous and of civilized
society. The spirit of revolution,
which has been one of the
chief characteristics of the

human race, ever since its social organizations, has been the predominant element of sectional society.

It has been handed down from generation to generation until it has found a heritage in every clime upon the face of the earth.

The history of the world naturally divides itself into four distinct epochs - "Antiquity," "The Middle Ages," "The Modern Epoch," and "The Latest Period." In the eras of these respective epochs there is embodied the whole of past events embracing the most distant ages which legend, and

tradition and chronicle, as well as the most civilized times which authentic history can record. In order then that we may more clearly understand the connection between the past and present, it may be well to notice the relation of these different periods to each other, and their combined influence upon the world at the present day. Of that dark and distant period of "Antiquity," but little is known, save that obtained from visual history and the oral traditions of Herodotus. But, however remote, may have

been that period, it is beyond doubt that there was the cradle of the human race, and there were enacted the first scenes of man's trials, and temptations. Now, even at that remote period, had become cognizant of the great responsibilities with which he was entrusted. He found it necessary in order to accomplish the great end for which he was destined to spread abroad over different parts of the earth, and to civilize those who were left in a rude and barbarous state. This was accordingly done in the great migration of

nations over northern, central
and southern Europe, from
which period dates the era
of the "Middle Ages"

This long and
dark era was characterized
by systems of chivalry and
corruption of church and
state, culminating in a
revolution which changed
the destinies of all Europe.
The tide of war had rolled
incessantly over Europe and
Asia for more than five
hundred years. The Caucasus
and Saracens, upon the
plain of Persia and Arabia,
were fighting the great
battle between Paganism

and Christianity, while the
Franks and Latins, in western
Europe, were struggling for
national supremacy. The
line of battle, during this great
revolution, had rumbled along
the rugged mountains of
Austria and Prussia, and
sweeping southward over
the fertile plains of Hungary
and Poland, at last found
echo in the vine-clad hills
of Italy. But these long and
bloody wars had changed
the church of the foul pollution
of skepticism and infidelity, and
opening the broad path of
Christianity, awakened a
desire for discovery in all



parts of Europe. The result of all these was the great moral reformation in Europe, and the discovery of the new world, from which period date the era of the "Modern Epoch"

This era dawned upon the world with brighter prospects than any of the preceding periods. The rude and primitive elements of life, that had gained but a foothold in former ages, became matured and strengthened in this. The dark cloud of war, that shrouded all the East in deep gloom, had rolled back, and, in the interim of peace that followed, Columbus

set sail in his mission to
the western world. After the
downfall and expulsion of
the Montezumas from the green
valleys of Mexico, our country
became the ^aprey to the ambitious
despots of Europe. But every
bark of emigrants that
landed on our shore, was
freighted with the seeds of
Liberty; and scarcely had
the Atlantic coast been settled,
ere the war of our revolution
declared this country free
and independent. Almost
simultaneously with this
declaration occurred the
terrible revolution of France,
striking terror to the heart

of every despotic government on
the continent of Europe. From
these events date the era
of the "Latest Period"

During the period
our country was hurried into
the mow of life regardless of
latent evils. For nearly eighty
years all seemed prosperous.
The colonies had united together
to form states, and the states
to form a Republic. Under our
Republic everything seemed to be
conducive to the welfare and happiness
of the people. Our manufactures had
attained a degree of perfection hitherto
unknown. Our commercial
intercourse with foreign nations
was vast and extensive - bearing

our products into the remotest parts of the earth, and bringing in return the commodities of every clime. The arts and sciences flourished, and improvements of every kind were being made; while our systems of common schools, and higher institutions of learning were being established all over the land. But, there were latent evils, deep down into the bosom of this nation, which were incompatible with the safety of our union. But a few years ago, over four millions of people in our country, were held, in the most abject servitude. The elements of secession, which had been rooted and grounded in the southern section of our union, had culminated in a great and gigantic war.

Our system of government, having
 been weakened by internal dissensions,
 was looked upon with doubt from
 abroad. But the tides of war, with all
 its dire calamities, came rolling on.
 It swept like a maddened torrent
 over the sunny south, desolating her
 fertile plains, and carried terror
 and dismay to every hearthstone.
 Nor did it end here, but swept
 incessantly onward, until the causes
 which brought on this rebellion, together
 with its advocates, had been buried
 in our common grave. And from
 this period dates the new era

Years now
 entering into the halcyon days of our
 new mission. The dark cloud of
 war has passed away. The road of

cannon and the din of battle
no longer strike terror to our
hearts. The brave soldier has come
back from the bloody battle-
fields of the south, and gone
to his home of quietude and
rest. The gallant sailors
have come ⁱⁿ from the high
seas and anchored their
ships in the harbor of peace.
The cries and lamentations of
the widow and orphan are
no longer heard save for
those who sleep their last
sleep in the foul dungeons
of the south or have fallen
on the bloody field of battle.
But while we mourn for
those who have fallen

in defence of their country,
let us be thankful for the
inheritance which they left us.
Let us remember, that, in
their death, this nation is
strengthened and regenerated.
They have purified our
government, at home, and
commanded its respect abroad.
They have marked the
epoch in the era of which
the whole world is to be
regenerated - the vile de-
spotism of the east to be
obliterated, and the petty
monarchy of Maximilian
to sink down to the depth
of unfathomable infamy.
And when this shall have

been done our country will
go down to perdition—

"Whoso, amid the roar of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds".

And when our mission
shall be ended, and the
nations of the earth shall be
gathered together for the
last time, our country will
be found on the side of
right, truth, justice, humanity,
and of God.

1865 Junior Prize Contest Oration of Vincent Bierbower, Class of 1866

Transcribed by Krista Gray, September 2008

Edited by Meg MacAvoy, September 2008

Our Rebellion – an Epoch in History

From the most ancient period of which we have any authentic record, down to the present moment, there has been our continual revolution in the elements of our barbarous and of civilized society. The spirit of revolution, which has been one of the chief characteristics of the

human race, ever since its social organizations, has been the predominant element of sectional society.

It has been handed down from generation to generation until it has found a heritage in every chance upon the face of the earth.

The history of the world naturally divides itself into four distinct epochs – “Antiquity” “The Middle Ages,” “The Modern Epoch,” and “The Latest Period.” In the eras of these respective epochs there is embodied the whole of past events – embracing the most distant ages which legend, and

tradition can chronicle, as well as the most civilized times which authentic history can record. In order then that we may more clearly understand the connection between the past and present, it may be well to notice the relation of these different periods to each other, and their combined influence upon the world at the present day. Of that dark and distinct period of “Antiquity,” but little is known, save that obtained from visual history and the oral tradition of Herodotus. But, however remote may have

been that period, it is beyond doubt that there was the cradle of the human race, and there were enacted the first scenes of man’s trials and temptations. Man, even at that – remote – period, had become cognizant of the great responsibilities with which he was entrusted. He found it necessary, in order to accomplish the Great end for which he was destined, to spread abroad over different parts of the earth, and to civilize those who were yet in a rude and barbarous state. This was accordingly done in the great migration of

nations over northern, central and southern Europe, from which period dates the era of the “Middle Ages”

This long and dark era was characterized by systems of chivalry and corruption of church and state, culminating in a revolution which changed the destinies of all Europe. The tide of war had rolled incessantly over Europe and Asia for more than five hundred years. The Crusaders and Saracens, upon the plains of Persia and Arabia, were fighting the great battle between Paganism

and Christianity, while the Franks and Danes, in western Europe, were struggling for national supremacy. The din of battle, during this great revolution, had rumbled along the rugged mountains of Austria and Prussia, and sweeping southward over the fertile plains of Hungary and Poland, at last found echo in the vine clad hills of Italy. But these long and bloody wars had cleansed the church of the foul pollutions of skepticism and infidelity, and, opening the broad path of Christianity, awakened a desire for discovery in all

parts of Europe. The results of all these was the great moral reformation in Europe and the discovery of the new world, from which period dates the era of the "Modern Epoch"

This era dawned upon the world with brighter prospects than any of the preceeding periods. The rude and primitive elements of life, that had gained but a foothold in former ages, became matured and strengthened in this. The dark cloud of war, that shrouded all the East in deep gloom, had rolled back, and, in the interim of peace that followed, Columbus

set sail in his mission to the western world. After the downfall and expulsion of the Montezumas from the green valleys of Mexico, our country became ~~the~~ a prey to the ambitious despots of Europe. But - every lark of emigrants that landed on our shore, was freighted with the seeds of Liberty; and scarcely had the Atlantic coast been settled, ere the war of our revolution declared this country free and independent. Almost simultaneously with this declaration occurred the terrible revolution of France, striking terror to the heart

of every despotic government on the continent of Europe. From these events dates the era of the "Latest Period."

During this period our country was heralded into the morn of life regardless of latent evils. For nearly eighty years all seemed prosperous. The colonies had united together to form states, and the states to form a Republic. Under our Republic every thing seemed to be conducive to the welfare and happiness of the people. Our manufactures had attained a degree of perfiction hitherto unknown. Our commercial intercourse with foreign nations was vast and extensive - bearing

our products into the remotest parts of the earth, and bringing in return the commodities of every clime. The arts and sciences flourished; and improvements of every kind were being made; while our systems of common schools and higher institutions of learning were being established all over the land. But, there were latent evils, deep down into the bosom of this nation which were incompatible with the safety of our union. But a few years ago, over four millions of people in our country, were held in the most abject servitude. The elements of Secession, which had been rooted and grown in the southern section of our union, had culminated in a great and gigantic war.

Our system of government, having been weakened by internal dissention, was looked upon with doubt from abroad. But the tide of war, with all its dire calamities, came rolling on. It swept like

a maddened torrent over the sunny south, desolating her fertile plains, and carried terror and dismay to every hearthstone. Nor did it end here, but swept incessantly onward until the causes which brought on this rebellion, together with its advocates, had been buried in one common grave. And from this period dates the New Era.

We are now entering into the [halcyon?] days of our new mission. The dark cloud of war has passed away. The war of

cannon and the din of battle no longer strike terror to our hearts. The brave soldier has come back from the bloody battlefields of the south and gone to his home of quietude and rest. The gallant sailors have come in from the high seas and anchored their ships in the harbor of peace. The cries and lamentations of the widow and orphan are no longer heard save for those who sleep in the foul dungeons of the south or have fallen on the bloody field of battle. But while we mourn for those who have fallen

in defence of their country, let us be thankful for the inheritance which they left us. Let us remember, that, in their deaths, this nation is strengthened and regenerated. They have purified our government at home and completed its respect abroad. They have marked the epoch in the era of which the whole world is to be regenerated – the vile despotism of the east to be obliterated, and the petty monarchy of Maximilian to sink down to the depth of unfathomable infamy. And when this shall have

been done our country will go down to posterity – “Unhurt, amid the war of elements, The wreck of matter, and the hush of worlds”.

And when our mission shall be ended, and the nations of the earth shall be gathered together for the last time, our country will be found on the side of right, truth, justice, humanity, and of God.