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SERMON

FROM

SHAKSPEARE'S TEXT:

*"Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."*

DELIVERED IN MUSIC HALL, BOSTON, MASS.,

BY

WILLIAM DENTON.



WELLESLEY, MASS. :
DENTON PUBLISHING COMPANY.
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A SERMON FROM SHAKSPEARE'S TEXT,

"Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

My text will be found in the play of "As You
Like it," Act II., Scene 1:—

"And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

Shakspeare was a mental Argus, whose hundred eyes nothing could escape. Men see by their brains still more than they do by their eyes; and his were brains so developed that they enabled his eyes to see what mortal had never beheld before. He was a walking polyglot, with as many tongues as eyes; what his eyes beheld, his tongues had the ability to speak,—ability how rare! He peered through the palace walls and beheld the secret deeds of kings; and there was no dungeon so dark but his eye beheld the prisoner. He saw, too, the thought of each; he heard their uttered fancies; he beheld their aspirations, and embodied them in glowing language that speaks to every heart. In him

the silent trees found utterance, the babbling brooks discoursed in rational speech, and the very stones cried out with eloquent tongue.

Nature, the ready-helper of genius, bowed to him, and opened wide the door of her domain for his observance and appropriation. She whispered her choicest secrets into his ear, and found him a worthy listener, — a true man, who proclaimed them aloud for the benefit of the world.

I can fancy William Shakspeare, after rambling by the banks of the flowing Avon, and watching the pellucid stream flow over its pebbly bottom, and the trees bending lovingly over it, returning to write, “And this our life, exempt from public haunt, finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in every thing.” Let us, this afternoon, hear these tongued trees, read the books that are in the running brooks, listen to the sermons that the stones dispense, and find and appropriate the good that dwells in every thing.

It is autumn. We lie upon the velvet sward, and watch the squirrels skip. Grand old trees, lordly possessors of the soil, how I love you! You lift your myriad hands to heaven, and wave your tinted banners in your joy, as if a wintry wind could never blow. Generations of leaves have flourished, dropped, and decayed around you; but there you stand, renewing your beauty from year to year. You have put down your radiating roots deep into the soil, have sucked up by a million mouths the nourishment needed for your growth, and transformed the gross, dark mould into

the regal garments you wear ; and, though the storm has swept many a time around you, you have only knit your hearts the firmer, and soared daily nearer and nearer to heaven. Beautiful ! trees, eloquent trees ! we listen to your tongues, and we learn your lessons. So stands the true man : rooted in the earth, watered by its springs, fed by its soil, but using these only as a means to climb into the spiritual realm above him ; shedding old opinions, false notions, barbarous creeds, as a tree sheds its leaves ; but his firm heart grows but the firmer in the right, his aims the purer, new and true opinions take the place of the old, and he climbs year by year nearer and nearer to perfect manhood.

Down drop the acorns around us. What magical globes are these ! The Chinese carve, with admirable skill, half-a-dozen ivory globes one within the other ; but what are they to this forest-containing acorn ? Folded within this shell is that life which makes the future tree, its leaves, its blossoms, its fruit, and the untold millions of its descendants ; an artist lies sleeping here that may beautify a thousand worlds that are yet to be. So the truth, spoken or written, is a seed endowed with perpetual life, and the power to educe new truths and bless the world forever. Error is a stake driven into the ground. Every drop that falls tends to rot it, every wind to blow it down. All nature conspires against it ; and its destruction is certain.

How these trees struggle upward for the light ! How they " shoulder each other for the sun's smile ! " Why are these crowded trees so tall, so straight, and

their trunks so small? Every thing is sacrificed for light. The last words of the dying Goethe are their motto, — "Light, more light!" Listen to that tongue, my brother, and learn. Let thy motto be, "Up to the sunlight!" What are riches, broad lands, magnificent house, honor, fame, when they go with an ignorant, undeveloped soul? Men squat and spread like toadstools under the dripping trees in the twilight, instead of soaring like pines to live in the sun's continual smile.

See on these trees the effect of surrounding conditions. Mark the one that has had light on every side: how symmetrical, how beautiful is that tree! It is, as the poet says, "a thing of beauty and a joy forever." But mark that tree shaded on every side but one, — uneven, warped, lopsided: toward the light it grew, toward the shade it refused to grow; and it would rather grow crooked than not at all. Far from it is the beauty and grace that go with the proper conditions for development. Here is an eloquent tongue. Tupper says, "Scratch the rind of the sapling, and the knotted oak will tell of it for centuries to come." There is a distorted ash, whose ugliness makes the raven croak, as it flies over it. The hoof of a flying deer trampled it into the earth when it was a tender sapling, and it will bear the brand of it while life lasts. That criminal you clutch by the throat, policeman, and strike with your billy, — he, too, was trampled upon in his infancy; nor is the hoof of society off him yet. Lift him up, give him a chance: room for him! air for him! sunshine for him! So much is assured: in the

great hereafter, he shall have the chance for development that he never had here. This crabbed old woman, gnarled as a knotty oak, slanderer, liar, thief, — she, too, came to be so by causes. Once she was a smiling, prattling baby, the joy of her mother's heart, dearer to her than a cherub from paradise. She grew, she was tempted, fell, was trampled under the feet of the scrambling crowd of onrushing humanity. Charity for her! light for her! heaven for her, too, where all wrongs are at last to be righted, and the crooked made straight!

There is another tongue in these trees that discourages patience. The slower the growth, the firmer the tree, and the more enduring the wood. "See me grow," said the squash to the oak; "I shall cover a rod while your feeble head is rising a single inch." So it was: the squash covered the ground for many a yard, while the oak seemed an idler; but there stood the oak in its majesty when hundreds of generations of the squash had perished. The tree grows by steady, persistent effort: so can you. Do not hurry, do not idle; but steadily mount, and success, the highest success, is yours. Go into the woods now: how silent they are! Put your ear to the trunks of the trees; can you hear any thing? Not a whisper: they are still as death; yet engines are pumping, and sap is rushing through a million pipes to accomplish a most important work. The mandate has gone forth: every tree must be clad in velvet-green to greet the dawning spring; and there is but a month in which to do it. All the trees of the forest are busy preparing their new dresses

in honor of the coming queen. Suppose a thousand young ladies were to be furnished with new dresses within the next month: what an excitement would there be! what a snipping of scissors, tearing of cloth, running of sewing machines, — yes, and of talking machines too, — before all were provided! And yet here are all the trees of the forest making their new dresses without contention, without noise, without the intervention of a French *artiste*, in the good, old-fashioned style which can never be improved.

The storm goes howling by. What a noise! It rouses the world! “Here am I: listen to me; see what I can do!” But when it is over, there lie a few rotten trunks prostrated by its power. Without bluster, or even sound, the million-columned woods arise, and God’s first and best temples are reared. It is not the most noisy that accomplish the most. The armies march, the music sounds, the cannons thunder. “These are they that do the world’s work,” says the crowd. Some thinker in his silent study does more than they all. Bonaparte bestrides Europe like a colossus: his voice makes every throne tremble; all eyes are turned to him, and all ears are dinned with his name; but James Watt, obscurely laboring to perfect the steam-engine, has done infinitely more to change the face of the world, to revolutionize society, and, above all, to bless the human race.

Cut a tree down, and examine the rings of its growth, and you will find an eloquent tongue that gives the lie to many other tongues. The whole history of the tree, and of the times in which it flourished,

is indelibly written in the grain of the trunk. Twenty years ago there was a cool, short, and dry summer: here is the narrow ring that answers to that summer. See that expanded circle: fifty years ago there was a warm, moist season; and you see the result. Not a day passed over this tree that has not left its record around its heart, never to be forgotten, never to be erased. I tell you, my brother, my sister, so is it with you. Thus we build up the inward man day by day. There is not an hour in your history that is not inwoven, ingrown into the very constitution of your soul, that does not exercise an influence on your destiny; and there is nothing that can make it be as though it had never been. I know how common it is for men to believe and teach that Jesus can wipe out, at one stroke, and in a moment, the consequences of their misdeeds,—that five minutes of prayer can remove the dark stains of fifty years of crime; but nothing can be more false. Nature tells us this in the grand eloquence of these trees. Do you think that any amount of waving on the part of the green leaves, this coming summer, can remove the effect of the dry seasons long gone by, and expand those contracted rings of growth to full dimensions? When conditions are unfavorable for their proper development, where are the Christs for the trees,—to remove the scars, straighten the bended trunk, and fill out the lean circumference? These very tree-tongues give the lie to this orthodox fable, that man can do wrong, thus hindering his spiritual growth and cramping his soul, and then escape the legitimate consequences of that wrong-doing.

Mark, too, the tendency in all trees to symmetry and beauty, each of its own kind. Take that young tree and hew off its limbs, — reduce it, if you please, to a naked, crooked stick. What does it do? It commences instantly to repair damages. The unsightly cuts are salved with new bark; to the right grows a branch, to the left a corresponding branch. A spirit of beauty presides over it, and employs her agents to adorn it; blossoms expand in their loveliness, fruit is developed, and the tree stands at last as perfect as its more favored neighbors. There is inherent in all nature this tendency to symmetry and beauty. The clay-stone no less than the crystal show it in the mineral kingdom; the vegetable kingdom displays it from the fucoid of the sea-bottom to the pine of the mountain-top; and is man destitute of it? He is and is to be its most glorious manifestation. Man, though king-curst and priest-curst and God-curst, —

“Though sin and the devil hath bound him,” —

has yet within him that divine spirit which, in spite of unfavorable conditions, shall push him onward to excellence, toward perfection.

Were I to tell all that the trees have to teach, how long would my sermon last? By what possibility could it ever have an end? It seems to me, as I go into the woods and listen to their tongues, that all other words are needless. They are the most eloquent of preachers; and, listening to them, we can well afford to let all others be silent. Multitudes who throng the piles

of superstition on Sundays would be more blessed by attending the green temples of Nature, and entering into the spirit that breathes from every leaf.

I watch these trees, and see how they grow, day by day, year by year, becoming larger, fairer, as the seasons pass. But I am told that, when the tree arrives at its perfection, — which all may attain in a few centuries, like the stars when they culminate, — it begins to sink, and nothing can arrest its decay and death. It is resolved into its original components: it is gone as a tree, — entered into the dust from which it can never more emerge. And yet, out of the very dust of that tree up springs a new one, fairer and brighter for the richness of the soil gained from the ashes of its predecessor. Nor is that all. Extravagant as it may seem, I have learned that there is a future life even for trees. There is room enough in an infinite universe for all the trees that ever blossomed: somewhere they are blossoming still. How much more shall there be room for the men. They are all living still. A brighter sky than we ever saw bends over them; a more glorious sun sheds his rays on their heads; the winds of beneficent conditions play around them. Development in the grand future is their inalienable destiny.

But Shakspeare says there are “books in the running brooks;” and we must not listen too long to these trees, or we shall lose the lessons that are contained in those running brooks. Strange places to find books! No less strange, and quite as interesting, are the books themselves that we find in this alcove of Nature’s library, free for all. There is a book on chronology, and a

wonderful book it is: our longest chronological lists are invisible when compared with this. At Niagara, — one of our brooks, — you see an ocean of water pouring over the solid limestone into the foaming abyss beneath. At Queenstown, seven miles below, the cataract once was; and the deep channel between the two shows what the water has accomplished, fretting the solid rock through the ages. Though fifty thousand years were probably spent in the work, yet that is but a day in the geologic calendar. But what is this, compared with the record of other brooks? The Colorado has worn a *cañon* three hundred miles long, and in places more than a mile deep, and for a thousand feet through solid granite. Thousands of centuries must have been employed in the work. These grand brooks are older than Britain and the Druids, Greece and Etruria; older than the mummies; ay, older than Egypt itself, for it is made of the mud that one of these brooks laid down; older than the old serpent and the Christians that made him; older than Noah and his wonderful box; older, indeed, than the Jews and Jehovah, — “the Ancient of days,” — their handiwork, or, rather, their headwork. These brooks have been rolling for ages where they now are, doing the work of the world, as they have prepared it for the habitation of mankind.

There is a volume on perseverance in the brooks that many might read with benefit. There was a time when the Gulf of Mexico extended to where Cairo in Illinois now is; and the Mississippi, by patient perseverance, has filled up the Gulf to New Orleans; and it

is destined to annex Cuba to the United States, whether Spain favors the annexation or opposes it. They have carried to their graves in the ocean-depths mountains innumerable, and are now engaged in ferrying down all that remain. Not a day but they lay down part of Mont Blanc and Mount Washington, Cotopaxi and Chimborazo; and ere long, by their aid, the ocean shall roll over the heads of the loftiest peaks. They have made seven miles of fossiliferous rock, and formed the grand continents, on whose surface we dwell; and yet the process by which all this is accomplished is so gradual, that but few are aware of what is going on around them. There is a book on perseverance that it will do you good to read, young man, young woman. Never despair of accomplishing your soul's earnest wish. The very desire to be and to do indicates the power to be and to do what you desire: a day may do but little, but you have an eternity to operate in. A drop a day would drain the ocean in time; and you need never be discouraged.

I saw a silvery rill descending from the mountain; clear as crystal were its waters, as it leaped down with tinkling feet on its mission of usefulness and love. "I will stop its babbling," said the Frost, as he laid his cold hand upon it, icy as death; and it staggered and grew still. "I will bury it from sight," said the Snow; and down dropped its fleecy mantle and hid the rill from my gaze. "Alas!" said I, "for the beautiful stream, the envy of the Frost and Snow has destroyed it forever." But while I mourned, the south wind blew with genial breath, the sun looked through the

craggy clouds, the bonds of the rill were broken, snow and ice did but increase its waters, and away danced its waters more merrily than before. On it sped ; and wherever it went the trees arrayed themselves in their greenest dresses, they lifted up their heads and waved their banners in its praise ; the birds sang to it in their leafy bowers, and the flowers kissed it with their sweet lips as it ran. But the hills saw it, and they were offended. " Why should we allow this vagrant to roam at large," said they, — " this leveller, this underminer and destroyer of all things old and sacred ? Why should we allow it to chafe our sides, and set at defiance the limits set in the days gone by ? Let us unite, and crush it forever." So saying, they encircled the brook in their close embrace, and presented a seemingly impassable barrier to its further passage ; and again it was lost to my sight. But, though unseen, it was busy as ever, searching every crevice, flowing into every cranny, to find a passage through the frowning hills. " If I cannot get through, I must go over," said the brook. " Ah, ha !" laughed the hills ; and they clapped their hands, and said, " Listen to the little fellow. We have stopped his mad career ; no more shall he roam among the trees, and disport himself with the flowers ; no more shall he remove the moss-grown rocks, invade our sacred retreats, and undermine the foundations of ages : his work is done, his life is ended." But, inch by inch, and foot by foot, the water rose above the woody sides of the hills ; and, reaching a valley between two peaks, the hills saw, to their astonishment, the despised brook, now swollen to a river, gc

thundering down upon the plain with tenfold power. On it flowed, daily broader, deeper, receiving accessions from a thousand flowing streams, blessing thirsty lands, and administering to man's welfare, till it poured at last its majestic torrent into the all-embracing sea. There is a lesson for thee, my toiling brother. Starting from the mountains of truth-loving endeavor and manly resolve, what though the world's cold scorn falls on thee, and the bitter winds of persecution blow around thee, toil on, live to thy soul's ideal. There are noble hearts beating for thee, glorious rewards awaiting thee. There are no obstacles too high for thee to surmount; the greatest success of which thy soul ever dreamed is guaranteed thee.

But Shakspeare says there are "sermons in stones;" and, while there is time, we must look at some of these. You would never forgive me if I did not give you some of these sermons. These "hard-heads," as the bowlders have been called, are old heads and wise heads, and no less eloquent. They preach the longest, the truest, the wisest of sermons. These ministers of Nature are expounding continually, —

With magical eloquence, day and night,
Denouncing the wrong, upholding the right, —

by the road-side, in the swamp, in the foaming stream, and the ploughed field. They preached to the Indian, as he stealthily stole by to shoot the deer at the lick, as they had done to the dumb savages, his ancestors, who had not learned to form the rudest of implements for the chase. These preachers never stammer nor

cough; they never rave nor rant; they never lie to please a congregation, or for the glory of God, as I'm afraid some of our gospel preachers do; they never get drunk nor blush for their record: they invariably tell the truth, and that is just what we need; and their bold, outspoken utterances have spoiled a thousand barrels of orthodox sermons in Massachusetts alone. Would that we were more awake to their glowing utterances!

When Shakspeare was living, geology was unknown. What wondrous sermons have been preached by the stones since his time, that have set the world a-thinking! Werner, Hutton, Bakewell, Buckland, Lyell, Mantell, Miller, and hosts of others listened to them, took notes of their discourses; and their rough notes, far from verbatim reports, have re-created the world, and bid fair to re-create the next. How silly the Genesical fable of creation appears in the light which their utterances reveal,—the six days of fatiguing labor of the Almighty Mechanic, dust-made grandfather Adam, and bone-made grandmother Eve, the chatting snake, and the cursing God! In these sermons that the stones preach, there is no God complacently congratulating himself on the success of his week's work, and, in a few days, cursing like a demon because his plans have been frustrated. What a story is that to be rehearsed in the nineteenth century, with the words of these stones ringing in our ears! There rolls the ruddy planet, as it came from the glowing furnace of the sun, a spirit within its concentrated fire-mist presiding over it, and able to produce, when conditions permit, plant and bird, beast and man. We see the solid rock, as the

world cools, bare, black, and flinty ; and below, the boiling, turbid waters : from the deep, where the first rude forms of life appear, island after island emerges, lichens cling to the rocks upon them, moss-like plants carpet them, ferns fringe them, beetles hum over them, and fishes go flashing along their shores, or feed upon the sea-weeds that spread over the waters their long gelatinous arms. Tree-ferns unroll their fronds, club-mosses upraise their columns out of the dense swamps, lepidodendrons rear their scaly trunks, frogs hop along the margins of the lakes or vigorously swim in their waters, while above them dragon-flies flit on gauzy wings. Birds appear, rude, gross, stalking along the shores, fishing in the waters ; reptiles swimming, diving, crawling, basking on the rocks, roaming through the woods, soaring in the air ; mammals, huge and whale-like, follow them, living in the waters ; thick-skinned monsters wading in the rivers, crashing through the reeds ; horses roam over the virgin prairies ; deer feed on the newly-developed grasses ; monkeys, the fore-runners of men, feed on the luscious figs. Then comes savage man, low-browed, brutal, but human : within him the science, the art of the nineteenth century, and of a million centuries yet to be born ; and, at last, here are we, the freest congregation in the freest city, in spite of its fogysm, that our planet has yet seen, each one swearing that he will not rest till he has made this old world better than he found it.

This is one of the sermons the stones are preaching ; and where it is heard, most other sermons are preached in vain. Man has been advancing from the start, as

the world had been for so many ages before him ; then man never fell, and Jesus was never sent to raise what the devil was never permitted to knock down. Good and evil flow from humanity by virtue of its nature ; the Devil is no longer needed, and his bottomless pit is filled to the brim. Jesus descends from the throne of his glory and takes his place on the platform occupied by his brothers ; and we can say of a thousand living men and women, a better than Jesus is here.

Here, too, is a sermon on progress. From fluid fire to solid rock, from shapeless stone to symmetrical crystal, from crystal to polyp, from this sluggish stomach at the sea-bottom to the active fish, thence to the ground-treading reptile, first tenant of the soil ; then life soars in the bird, advances toward man in the brute, and reaches him only to urge him on to higher and nobler positions. We are here with this infinite past beneath us, and an illimitable future above us, and ability within us to climb the heights apparently forever. All this to drop at death back to the dust from which life has ascended only by slow steps for millions of years ? We are that we may be. All the past was that we might be in the present ; and the present is that the future may be superior to it. Progress is not dead, nor God asleep. The ages have not sown that death or the Devil might reap : neither hell nor the grave is the granary of humanity. The everlasting arms are around us : over the stream of death they shall bear us, and land us in a sunnier clime.

But I must not preach too long from such sermons as these, important as they are. Few geologists have

dared to tell the truth, — reveal to the world all that their science has taught them. Scientists, like theologians, are sad cowards. A great effort is made by many of them to make these old preachers talk orthodoxically ; but the effort is a dead failure. Though many geologists seek with oblique vision to look upon old dogmas and new revelations at the same time, yet others are gaining courage to declare the whole counsel of Nature.

The stones are preaching their sermons in the streets of Boston to-day. Fort Hill is being cut down, and interested people gather to see the gradual disappearance of one of the interesting relics of historic times. Go and see the old “hard heads,” as they are scooped from the soil by the steam excavator, or lie exposed once more to the light of day along the lessening crest. They are covered with marks and scratches. Not a stone to which they were introduced but left its mark : they tell us of the grinding ice-fields of the glacial period, when a Greenland winter locked the sea and buried the land ; and you may learn from them that we have only fairly started to explore the past of our planet on which our present stands, and eternity will be needed to read what the eternity of the past has done.

But Shakspeare says there is “good in every thing.” What an extravagant statement is this ! Right, William, right : you, too, were wiser than you knew. Good in earthquakes, ground-shaking, rock-cleaving, city-swallowing, life-destroying earthquakes ? Certainly. By earthquake throes the continents have been up-

lifted, the mountains reared, and the world adorned. We should never have been here in the glory of this day, if our planet had not been swept by fiery storms and shaken millions of times by the earthquake's jar. Their curses are inseparable from their blessings.

Is there good in volcanoes, those fearful hells that spout out glowing torrents that scathe and destroy, and with their clouds of ashes envelop cities in ruin? Yes: these are the safety-valves of the globe. Weight them down, as engineers sometimes do the safety-valve of the steam-engine, and but a short time would suffice to blow the crust of the globe to atoms.

Good in pain, that racks the nerves, that clouds the mind, — pain, the companion of sorrow, and herald of death? Assuredly there is. If we never felt pain, long before we reached maturity our bodies would be wrecks: a boy's hands would be burned to cinders before he was ten years old. The stomach would be injured beyond recovery by our excesses, before we were aware of our departure from correct living. Pain is a guardian forever attending us: for the child it is better than a hundred nurses. The mother's eye may wander from her charge; but pain never sleeps at its post. The child, attracted by the glare, puts its finger in the flame. Ha! it starts back with a sudden cry. It has learned a lesson that can never be forgotten. In a world without pain, not one human being in a hundred could ever arrive at maturity. Pain, often considered man's enemy, is but an angel in disguise.

But there is certainly nothing good in pestilences, that decimate cities and are the dread of nations? If

no other good arose from them, they widen the streets of our cities, cause arrangements to be made for sewerage, and cleanse and beautify the close and otherwise filthy alleys. The general comfort arising from all these may be traced in considerable measure to the dread produced by those scourges of the human race.

The darkest features of some systems are often really the best portions of them, when properly understood. Ask a Protestant to name the darkest features of Catholicism, and he would probably say that portion of it which binds its members to life-long celibacy. Monk, nun, and priest must never marry; or, if they do, they receive the church's ban. "What a horrible system is this!" says the Protestant. Not so horrible as it looks. These monks, nuns, and priests are the most superstitious members of the Roman church. And how fortunate it is that their superstition dies with them, if true to their vows; and the most superstitious are the most likely to be. Thus, when superstition culminates in the Roman Catholic church, it is cut off forever. If the heretics could pass a law, and make it binding, that the most superstitious people should never marry, lest their superstition should be inherited by their children, what an outrage it would be deemed! Yet, thanks to the blindness of the most intolerant of all Christian sects, this is just what the church itself does; and there is good here, where we had least reason to expect it. When a man becomes as fanatical as a Shaker, he ought not to transmit his fanaticism to posterity. How carefully the Shaker, by virtue of his faith, guards against the possibility of it!

But is there any good in war ? There must be, if Shakspeare is right ; and I certainly think he is. Where did we stand but ten years ago ? The North, a great hunting-ground for slaves, and every man by law a kidnapper ; forty thousand preachers, and eighty thousand merchants, on their knees, licking the dust at the foot of the slave-power ; the priests quoting scripture in favor of and apologizing for the vilest of all crimes ; and the merchants defending the practices, that they might obtain the custom of the women-whippers and baby-stealers. Where are they now ? The red whirlwind of war has swept the whole brutal system from the face of the land it insulted so long. Where now are those godly Boston ministers who with pious faces read their Bible-texts from the pulpit in favor of this stupendous crime ? You can scarcely find a man from Maine to Mexico who dares lift up his voice in defence of chattel slavery ; and the ministers are now hastening to prove that they were always in favor of freedom, and that Christianity has conquered and gained the victory alone ! That war converted more than Christianity has done for a thousand years, and at the same time converted the Bible.

The villains that applied the torch of rebellion to the temple of our liberty expected to burn the fabric to the ground ; but, instead of that, away went rags and scraps, hay and stubble, that blind priests and crafty politicians had been gathering and piling for years around it. And, when the smoke rolled away, there stood the temple in its grandeur, and the golden statue of Liberty above all, unharmed by the transient fire, and unblackened by the

smoke; and now, within that temple, stands a redeemed people. This land has at length become in truth what it was only in name, —

“The land of the free and the home of the brave.”

This grand stumbling-block out of our way, we take, and shall henceforth keep, the foremost place in all the world. When I find war assisting so materially to bring about such a condition of things, I cannot but agree with Shakspeare, that there is “good in every thing.”

“But the Devil, you know, is all bad,” says my orthodox brother. Bring him here and we will dissect him, and I will show you that he has an angelic kernel in his heart. A king who has ruled so long over the largest population that was ever governed by any one potentate, must have some redeeming traits. It is only imaginary beings that are destitute of good. A soul of good seems to be essential to a thing’s existence, destitute of which it must die, or rather, it never could have lived. If there is a devil, there must be good in him; but since, as the orthodox inform us, there is no good in the Devil, it is evident that he does not exist.

Good in death, — the terrible curse pronounced by Jehovah on all? Certainly, and the greatest of good. Death, the sick man’s solace, the old man’s hope, the good man’s friend, the slave’s release, the great uniter, the twin of sleep, and the door of heaven. We, as spiritualists, see the good there is in death as no other people ever did. We have come from the land of

shadows, the gloomy wilderness, peopled by devils and lit by the fire of lurid hells. Up we have come to the "delectable mountains," fairer than those of which Bunyan dreamed ; and we revel in the rays of a sun that never, never sets. The prospect is so clear that we can see beyond the swift-flowing stream the loved ones who have gone before ; nay, we can hear their cheerful voices, and know that it is well with them, and must be well with us. In the light of this new morning we can take death by the hand and say : Thou art our benefactor, our unchanging friend. Sent by a higher life on the most beneficent of all missions, when our work is done on earth we will greet thee with joy, and look into thine eyes with a smile ; for thou shalt usher us into the company of the immortal.

Is there good, then, in all that happens to man ? I doubt not that we shall rise in the hereafter to where, looking over all the chequered scene of earth's universal history, we shall exclaim, from the fullest assurance of its truth, All is well ! all is well !

