

ARTICLE IV.

THE CIVIL CLASH OF SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL
IDEALS.

BY THE REVEREND BURNETT THEO. STAFFORD,
JORDAN, NEW YORK.

THERE are two ideals of the social and the industrial life. One had a definite beginning and statement in the Mosaic legislation. This is the way it reads: "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thou hast to do." There were no limitations to its application; against it bills of exceptions have been filed in abundance, and all have been argued down and out by experience. Every member of the social body is commanded to be a producer of wealth, so as to secure the end of the common enrichment. The intelligent workers have been always the civilizers and builders. "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings," both to suggest and direct.

The Hebrews accepted this constructive principle, and by it were transformed from a disorganized desert tribe into a nation of workers, skilled in agriculture and the industrial arts. In the higher reaches of thought and emotion, the steady work of cultivation produced a wealth of spiritual power, which has steadily enlarged its circle of influence by fertilizing the root ideas of all moral endeavor. The Hebrew youth was taught a trade, so that he could earn his bread and butter. He was taught that it was honorable, that by filling a productive and constructive place in the social body, he became a capitalist,

and therefore the possessor of power. His mental growth and physical nourishment were not neglected. One time the college at Jerusalem needed an instructor in one of the higher studies: he was called from his charcoal burning. A noted graduate of Tarsus University and the great theological school of his people made tents for a living, when planting in Roman society the great principles of the religious faith of his fathers. Two everyday needs were made prominent in Hebrew education: (1) one should earn his own living; (2) some contribution should be made to the general good.

The other industrial ideal was that held and lived by the pagan world, generally. It is conspicuous in the social traditions and literatures of Athens and Rome, because at these points it concentrated and found fullest expression. The normal condition of the individual was held to be that of industrial idleness, but with large consumption, the latter especially, because the standard of successful living was to eat, drink, and be merry. The average Athenian would gabble all day long in the market place, seated on a wine cask or a grape box from Palestine. Some new thing he would both discuss, and curse by his gods; the doing of a day's work of honest production was beneath him. He held strenuously to his ideal that rags and starvation were more honorable than productive toil. A Roman knight, or his lady, might paint with skill and power, but it had to be for pleasure. The moment it was placed on the market, its producer was ranked with other laborers, and lost social status.

The pagan world despised labor, and looked with inexpressible contempt on the sons of toil. The fortunes of war might reduce the haughty loafer to slavery; if so, he submitted, but held fast to his ideal. The Roman patrician could receive a no more cutting insult, after the early days of the

republic, than the suggestion that he should become a productive member of the community. He had neither use nor tolerance for the industrial and social dogma that by the sweat of the brow one may eat bread. He always wanted bread, and plenty of it; but according to his notion it had to come by the sweat of another brow. It came to be very fashionable to own a large plantation, but its owner never hoed a hill of beans; that was done by the slave. One of his affectations was to be clothed in the fabrics of Babylon and decked with the stones of India; but he insisted that, after another had produced them, it was his prerogative to appropriate them for his personal use. The dark fact stands out in strong and repelling ruggedness, that slavery was the basis of the social and industrial systems of the ancient pagan world. Accordingly, the system of slave labor was extended and perfected in every possible way. It came about then, as it always has and will, that a false ideal at the base of character, both in the individual and a nation, shatters and overthrows. The slave system of labor was one of the virulent social poisons which dissipated the once mighty energy of Rome, and made her the easy prey of her many enemies.

These two ideals came into sharp and decisive clash in the ancient world. Through all his racial ups and downs, the Hebrew worked; when free he worked no less than when a slave. It became a racial characteristic to be always doing something, and so accumulating. And so it came about, that, in all of his generations and conditions, he developed the power to appreciate and preserve that which he had produced. When industrial ills came along, he worked his way out, and so overcame them. The pagan sought escape from the game by a more vigorous enforcement of his slave ideal. Industrially and financially, he was all the time flopping out of the

frying pan into the fire. The equestrian millionaires and money-lenders of the Capitol City were experts in fleecing their fellow citizens. With the annexation of Syria as a Roman province, there appeared at Rome money merchants from Judea. Because of the acquired ability to drive a good bargain and impress the other man, that he should be thankful, the noble Roman financier was exasperated; it resulted in a howl against and persecution of the Jews. There is no mystery at all to the fact, that this once desert people has moved to a position of power and influence. It has been loyal to the sound doctrine of its economic tradition, and has been rejected by those accepting the pagan philosophy, that idleness, eating and drinking constitute the greatest good of life.

In the realm of politics and social progress, these two ideals have clashed many times. One has worked for preserving and gracing the fundamental desire of men for a larger expression in freedom; the others for its repression and limitation in servitude. Because of ignorance, this upward reaching of men for a fuller expression, sometimes has acted inconsiderately, and always at the cost of its peace and profit. It has protested with a fixed resolve and a steady courage against others living off its labor without compensation. It has been suppressed by physical force, and has waited. When the opportunity has come for gaining a larger liberty, the sacrifice has been ready and freely given.

These two opposed ideals came, with much other ill-assorted baggage, with the first settlers of this country. As the result of the persistent and long-continued effort of the Anglican clergy, slavery had been abolished in the mother country. It repeatedly called for the full exercise of the spiritual authority of the Church to fix the sentiment of the freedom of the

individual man. The immortal decision of Lord Mansfield that the air of England was too free for a slave to live in, was the successful conclusion of centuries of intense debate but steady social gains. Somehow, a hard-and-fast distinction was made between the homeland and the colonies where slavery flourished. The notion that the colonists of Virginia and New England were separated by the great superiority of the latter in social and industrial notions is the product of vain imaginations, and has no historical support. Both were permitted to have slaves, and both did have them. Both were Englishmen, and both possessed the glorious traditions and the serious faults of Anglo-Saxon civilization. Says John Fiske: "The settlers of Virginia and New England were opposed to each other in politics and religion, but they belonged to the same stratum of society, and in their personal characteristics were of the same excellent quality." Nor is it according to the abundant records to suppose that the agitation against slavery was the inevitable outgrowth of the Puritan theology and sense of social right. South Carolina and Georgia were settled by Puritans. The one by the most substantial French Puritans, the Huguenots; the other by the most extreme people of the class, the Scotch Covenanters. They prohibited the sale of intoxicants and slavery by constitutional provision, but after a while were willing to be slaveholders; and it is certain that the average Georgian, in all of his generations, has been a good judge of about every kind of "liquid stimulation."

All the colonists were profoundly influenced by their physical environments, and both did what they thought right and most advisable under the conditions. When character is aroused and remains active long enough, it rises above environment and changes it in many ways. Indeed, all ma-

terial comforts are evidences of man's having risen superior to his physical environment. At the same time, it is true that climate, soil, and industries have a molding influence upon men and institutions. Both in the South were molded and hardened by slavery, and it in turn was profoundly influenced by the successful growing of the cotton plant. In more recent days it is beyond dispute that large combinations of capital have influenced, directly or indirectly, our forms of business projects and methods of reform, social standards and religious activities. Man can use and modify his environment, —he can never escape it. Slave labor was too costly in the North; it was a fine investment in the South, and sufficiently intelligent to grow tobacco and cotton. But there was great profit in building fast ships for "the African trade"; and so shipbuilding in New England thrived amazingly. There was big money in supplying the plantation demand for coarse and tough fabrics, and so began her textile manufacturing growth. The days of earnest discussion of social-economical questions from the moral base of the Sermon on the Mount had not arrived; and so the old notion that one man might live off the labor of another without compensation revived and flourished wonderfully where cotton came to be king.

The social conscience rests easily when its methods of expression are religiously sanctioned and defended. Lacking this confirmation, they wobble and fall down. And so it came about that a great mass of the theological opinion was exegeted from the Bible in support of the proposition that slavery was a divine institution. This theology was preached all over the Union. In the South, as a matter of course, and in the North as well. John Fiske says that he heard in the later 50's, from an orthodox pulpit in Connecticut, the statement that, since the negro was a cross between man and the

monkey, and therefore not human, it was according to the divine mercy to keep him in slavery. At the famous Tabernacle meeting in New York in May, 1860, one speaker maintained that "blacks were not men, but belonged to the monkey tribe."

The difference between the two sections was this: In the North the right of free speech was asserted and maintained; in the South the discussion was all on one side. At the beginning of the agitation, a few brave and heroic Southern men were outspoken on "the peculiar institution." But as time went on, their number diminished, and finally ceased to be. The *Dissenting* religious bodies of the two sections entered the contention, separated, and the division remains to the present day. Again, New England Congregationalists were deeply grieved by the clear and strong stand taken by their coreligionists in the West, particularly on the Western Reserve. Oberlin College was founded and admitted negroes, which was unspeakably shocking and reprehensible. That great man, President Finney, accepted the statement of St. Paul that all men are made of one blood for to dwell upon the face of the whole earth, and received a rich portion of denunciation. At a public meeting in Cleveland (Ohio), at about this time, to "consider the religious condition of the country," (that section,) a preacher of the Westminster Confession arose and said: "As for this thing called Oberlin, I despise it; I spit upon it; and I crush it with my heel."

With the acceptance of the teaching that slavery was a divine institution, it was considered necessary and beneficent, and flourished accordingly. Naturally, it fostered the character to make it work well. Accordingly, the necessities of the system made the slave owner imperious and intolerant of discussion. This spirit generally knows what it wants, and

does not hesitate to smash its way to success. Education was all right when kept within proper boundaries, since his caste had to be maintained. His children, therefore, could not study in the same schoolhouse with the poor whites, because that was destruction of class distinctions. Accordingly, the attempt of Thomas Jefferson to establish common schools in Virginia failed, as did like attempts of other great Southerners in other States. Another personal factor must be considered, to understand this condition. One does not give open attack to the fundamental positions of thought and everyday life. Discussion of the right to hold another man as a slave, necessarily impeached the system, and impressed upon the conscience the claims of justice to the other man. And so the Southland became a closed country to the free discussion of social and industrial subjects.

While all this was going on in the South, the ideal of free labor was strengthening in the North. First of all, her people were possessed with an intelligent enthusiasm for education. "The little red schoolhouse" dotted every section, and colleges sprang up with remarkable frequency. The latter have been criticized a good deal of late, but the motive which produced them was sound, though sometimes made to express itself in the lanes of some religious ism. The labor and sacrifice which set them agoing came out of the conviction that an educated people is strong for self-preservation and for accomplishing satisfactorily the tasks of life. It was also the time when the spirit of "the debating society" was strong and vigorous. Nearly every school district had such an organization. The winters were anything but long and tedious, since at "the debate" all the burning questions of the day were threshed out. Chiefly among these was the rights of man in a general way, and, in particular, the right of one man

to live off the labor of another without compensation. This was the theme young Clarkson illuminated in his graduating essay at Cambridge University, and started the movement which set all England ablaze with intense agitation. Religious bodies had great public discussions of their claims and doctrines. Men had beliefs and convictions in those days, and they had also the courage to stand up and defend them. Intellectual vigor and moral earnestness grew apace; when the testing time came there was need of the full store of both. It was, also, the period of the glorious lecture platform. Such men as Beecher, Phillips, Gough, and Parker compelled the public mind by their mental force and moral eloquence, to give heed to thought on social and political subjects. It is quite beside the mark to say that some of the positions of those men were socially unsound and religiously unwholesome. The point is that they set people thinking. The period was not the one of abundant good literature at small cost, so that the winter courses of lectures were far-reaching and beneficent. These elevating and amalgamating agencies operated in just the nick of time, for the large number of Europeans then making settlement here needed to be Americanized, and those agencies helped splendidly to do the work. These peoples had suffered all sorts of hardship, for which originally the slave ideal was responsible; in their new home they stood devotedly for free labor and its rewards. They had managed to exist under political oppression and excessive taxation; under free conditions they prospered abundantly. Indeed, the decade from 1850 to 1860, relatively, is the most prosperous one in all our national history. The South grew, but nothing like the way the North did. And so, these two ideals were active at every arc in the circle of growth and prosperity. As always before, they were inharmonious and antagonistic. A

nation half free and half slave was made to appear as an impossibility. The victory of the one meant the defeat of the other. Mr. Lincoln stated accurately the issue in these words: "It is the eternal struggle between these two principles—*right and wrong*—throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time; and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says: 'You work and toil and earn bread, and I'll eat it.' No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and lives by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle." The acute and painful consciousness of this truth compelled the enactment of the Missouri Compromise, the Nebraska Bill, and the Dred Scott Decision. It is clear that the one point of assault and defense, during the long and impassioned debate, was against the unchanging ordinance of the eternal years, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The threat to leave the Union was the growing determination that this law of social safety and growth should be cast away and its cords broken.

In every dispute, the main lines of character appear and lead the way. Education tends to reflection, and the subjection of natural impulses to the reign of law. Personal assertion of opinion and clash of action characterizes the people outside the reflective state, or who have resolved to be separated from the law of the brotherhood of man, when the method of compromise had played itself out and the two ideals were as far apart and opposed as ever. Then came the grapple of the physical forces on each side. General Winfield

Scott understood thoroughly the two types of character involved, and stated their separate lines of action and clash in these words: "The Southern soldiers have *élan*, but they will not submit to discipline. They will not take care of things or husband their resources. If it could be done with one wild dash, they would do it, but they cannot stand waiting. Men of the North, on the other hand, can wait; they can bear discipline, they can endure forever. Losses in battle are nothing to them. They will fight to the bitter end." Far and away the greatest soldier-statesman of all the Confederates was Albert Sidney Johnson. He clearly understood the conditions and the urgent needs. He said: "What we have to do we must do quickly. The longer we have to fight them, the more difficult will be their defeat." A Virginia Congressman said to his constituents: "You will find that Northern men are aroused but slowly; when fully in action, all hell is let loose."

The actual progress of the war demonstrated how truly conceived were these positions. The response on both sides for the defense and perpetuation of the involved ideals shows how both had come to be unconscious and therefore permanent compelling forces. A reflective people may see the need of resort to physical force for the settlement of differences; they do not readily respond to its expectations. And so, it took two full years to arouse and season the Federal armies. Then they became keenly alive to the stupendous issues at stake, and moved like the besom of destruction, that the freedom of the plain people and the dignity of labor should not perish from the earth.

Great physical scourges have never been confined to one spot, though making first appearance in one locality. Responsive conditions are found almost everywhere. And so, Gideon Welles speaks of the "lurking malevolence" which

existed for the Union cause among European nations and "that could not have been anticipated." These governments originally founded on, or transformed by, the accursed political traditions of Imperial Rome, had submitted, more or less, to the demands of free labor. But the great reforms in England of the 1832 period had never been cordially accepted and there were indications that effort would be made to wipe them out. The attempt of the German patriots in 1848 to republicanize that country had been crushed by the Prussian military caste, and in France Louis Napoleon was attempting to restore the old Bourbon despotism. The Federal soldier at first gave little heed to the success of the Old World monarchies; he was disposed to trust in his luck, and believed himself capable of "licking all creation." The steady support of the enemy by these persons soon convinced him that his fighting was well nigh against all creation, and he went at it with a steady nerve, an unalterable determination to win, and a heroism which looked only to the final result. He was made ten times strong by the firing in his blood of all the most noble traditions of his race. He developed an abundance of that prime soldiery quality called "initiative." "Who ordered those men to go up that mountain?" asked General Grant at the battle of Missionary Ridge. "No one, General; but they saw the enemy at the top, and went after him," replied a subordinate. It was one of the brilliant military charges of history; they got the enemy, or that part of him unable to get away. This power of initiative made every soldier in the ranks a general and army combined.

Some of the permanent gains of these two ideals in mortal combat are worth notice:—

1. The American volunteer soldier was just as great in peace as in war. For, after the cessation of hostilities, the

great armies of Americans disappeared in the social body as so many drops of rain in the ocean. The Northern man took up his old occupation, just as if he had not been taken from it by one of the greatest wars of history, The Southern man, in a wonderfully heroic way, began to build anew his home and industrial interests on a new and inexperienced foundation. His unapproached success shows the stuff he was made of.

2. Free labor has been established, and its inestimable privileges have been defined. The Hebrew ideal again conquered its ancient enemy. With the elevation of labor above the contempt of the pagan ideal, the effectiveness of the laborer has been increased to a wonderful degree. Since 1865 the yearly increase of cotton alone has been as much as the bumper crop of 1860. Under slave labor, not a melon or a crate of early vegetables, not one lone chicken or a dozen of eggs, went to the Northern markets. There are trainloads of them under free labor. The iron and coal deposits of the Alabama mountains were left untouched during slave times, because it was thought more economical to import hardware from England. To-day the pig iron output of Birmingham compels attention in all the metal markets of the world. It has cheapened every keg of nails and horseshoes consumed. Like causes always work like results. The slave power produced the "poor whites" of the Cumberland Plateau and the sand belt of the South; and the free and hardy workingmen of the North, by degrees, would have been degraded into the same condition of industrial inefficiency, ignorance, and superstition, had the result been different.

3. The common schools of all secular institutions are the most efficient means in transforming and building character fit for the privileges of the Republic. The necessities of the

slave system would have obliterated them. More still, the soil would have rapidly passed into the hands of a few landed proprietors, such as scourged Ireland for centuries.

The threatened disasters involved in the struggle of these two great ideals for mastery were effectually prevented by the work, sacrifice, and victory of the Federal arms. In all the chancelleries of Europe the representatives of each came into sharp clash. The Pope of Rome made all haste to recognize the Confederacy as an independent state. This was to shatter present-day political modernism, and reanimate the most obnoxious social traditions of the Romans. It is, therefore, the unadorned truth that the Union forces fought to a glorious finish the cause of the plain people in every land against their ancient enemy. The hearts of the aspiring millions were lifted and lightened by their success, and government by discussion was to be continued.

The money cost of the war has been discussed to the point of weariness. The emotional cost has received scant attention, though by far the most serious. The cost of the sacrifice involved can never be billboarded in the market of gilt-edged securities. When the call went forth to rally round and follow the flag, there were in many homes great searchings of heart. The father kissed his loved ones good-by, and started for the front, being assured by the brave wife that somehow the family would get on. All the magnificent heroism of the Civil War was not in the field. There was much with those who at home, both North and South, could only hope, and wait for news from the front. The man who went to the post office first every day was asked by his neighbors all the way home, "Heard anything from the front?" Lovers found their life plans deflected, said farewell, and the meanwhile wondered when and where the next meeting would

be. Woolen socks were sent for the winter use of those in the field; lint was picked to bind on the wounds of the maimed and dying. In many ways the glorious mothers and sisters were busy making things not otherwise to be had for the soldiers. In addition to the weekly letter, the local paper was forwarded, so as to keep alive home associations. Every now and then, at the station, a long and cumbersome box was put off the train. Somehow, it always seemed at such times that the whistle's blast took on a mournful tone. The family and neighbors followed the box to the family burial plot with moist eyes and aching hearts. The living sacrifice had come home dead, and the hardest part was that the length of the journey forbade the opening of the box. And there were many others who never came back. In the confusion and destruction of battle and in the following up the enemy to make the victory complete, their identity was lost. The Federal and Confederate cemeteries tell how numerous they were. And so,

“Let me sing a song for the hero
 Who fell unnamed, unknown—
 The common soldier, lying
 Beneath no costly stone;
 Who fought where the foe was strongest
 And, after the day was done,
 Was merely among the missing,
 ‘Nine hundred and sixty-one.’”

“Let me sing a song of the hero
 Who weary, wasted, wan,
 With disease and the world against him,
 Told hopefully, bravely on;
 Who, robbed of earth's choicest pleasures,
 Could smile as he wrought away,
 And lies with the unnamed millions
 Awaiting the Judgment Day.”

With every decisive movement in our history, the outcome

has been the lucid demonstration of the teaching that righteousness exalteth a nation. Because this has been seen and believed, industrial effectiveness and moral prestige have followed. These things should be kept in living remembrance, and told the children and the children's children, to the third and fourth generations.

The years stretch away into the unexplored future. With expanding thought and emotion, new and grave problems will come up for solution. It matters little what they may be, since the principles of solution have been worked out. The cost of any and all these future victories will be the ancient sacrifice, the devotion and service of loyal hearts.

"Land of our birth, our faith, our pride,
For whose dear sake our fathers died,
O Mother-land, we pledge to thee
Head, heart, and hand through the years to be."