THESIS,
TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY,
FOR THE DEGREE OF
IN THE SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES
BY
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"The voice of the Almighty crieth onward and upward forever."

We cannot stay amid the ruins.

There has ever been in the world's history a class of writers who have claimed that humanity was making no progress. In the present age we hear now and then, a cry for the "good old times". They say that the world is degenerating, and point to Egypt, Greece, and Rome as superior to the nations of today. Is it true that we have made no progress, that our Nineteenth-Century Civilization is but an idle boast? Is it true that it is merely superficial, and that beneath the surface lie evils and wrongs greater than past ages knew? Civilization many times seemingly destroyed has always risen Phoenix-like from its ashes to move ever onward and upward. Today stands in the foreground, with outline clear and sharp, every defect plainly showing. Yesterday lies in the background, shadowy, half-defined. We see only the most prominent figures and those enveloped in a mist of romance.

But we are not without proofs that society has advanced both intellectually and morally, and I shall attempt to give a few of the points in which the present age is in advance of
the past. Only by looking back at the landmarks we have passed can we estimate our progress.

The idea of the importance of man as man, of the sanctity of human life, has made its way into the world and already is beginning to bear fruit. In the eastern civilizations, the life of a man was of little more value than that of a brute. No great advance in morals can be made, unless man feels a responsibility resting upon him, unless he feels that his life and that of his fellow-man is of some value. Unless he feels this, he will not be roused to mental activity. The Pyramids and Karnac stand, mighty and enduring monuments of the insignificance of human life, and human efforts in Egypt. The mass of the people were in darkness so great that never a glimmer of light could reach them. In Greece with its high civilization, more than one-half the people were in a condition so low that the law took no notice of their existence. In Rome the killing of a plebian was hardly considered a crime. Civilization has always been for the few, but now the people have risen and are claiming their rights. The brotherhood of men is a modern idea, clearly enough seen it is true, yet day by day it grows plainer as we approach nearer to this, our ideal of a perfect society.

Let us look first at the advance that has been made in the field of intellect. In the infancy of society, physical strength ruled, now intellect holds the sceptre. Each age is hier
The knowledge of previous ages. A work of centuries has been done for us, we have only to go on, adding the results of our efforts to the fund of knowledge.

The greatest intellectual advance has been made in the field of science. Under the clear skies of Chaldæa, astronomy, the earliest science took its rise. The Chaldæans believed that the stars possessed divine power and had an influence upon human affairs. They studied them to foretell the future. Their close observation gave them real astronomical knowledge, mingled however, with a host of superstitions. They were able to compute eclipses accurately. The day was divided by them into twelve hours. The Egyptians were compelled to gain some knowledge of Geometry and Astronomy in order to check the inundations of the Nile. Beyond this knowledge, which was confined to the priestly caste, they made little advance.

The active intellect of the Greek turned instinctively to science. The theory that the earth is a sphere revolving around a central ball of fire was held by the Greeks. Alexander, in his wars in the East, made collections of plants and animals for Aristotle who classified them. The Greeks searched for facts to support their theories, thus their advance in knowledge was rapid. In the practical sciences, they made no advance. After Greece was conquered, science remained almost stationary for centuries. The Romans made no advance in it. In the fifteenth century, the minds of men began to rouse from their torpor.
Galileo invented the telescope, bringing new worlds to the vision of man, leading to new discoveries and the setting aside of old theories. A period of great mental activity followed. Copernicus, Kepler, Tycho Brahe are among the great men of this era. The Church feared for his safety and sought to repress the minds of men. But it was in vain; persecution only roused them to new efforts. The principle that theories should be made to explain facts led to more accurate knowledge. The inductive method, propounded by Bacon in the seventeenth century, opened new fields to science. The alchemist seeking to produce gold gained a knowledge of the materials with which he worked and modern chemistry is the result. In this century, the advance of science has been rapid. The force, electricity, has been discovered and put to use. Geology and Paleontology have sprung up. Literature once beyond the reach of all but a few on account of the great value of parchment and the great labor of copying is now opened to all through the invention of the printing-press and the discovery of the art of making paper.

A new ideal, Mutual Service, has come into the world and great advance has taken place as a result. Old evils are passing away, very, very slowly, it is true, but humanity moves onward toward the goal of a perfect society in which Virtue, Justice, Equality, Liberty shall exist.
The highest evidence of our progress is the position of woman today. Emerson defines civilization as "the power of good women," and it is true that no nation has reached a high state of civilization in which woman held a degraded position. In barbarian nations she is always the slave and drudge. In the eastern civilizations and in the nations of the East at the present time polygamy exists rendering the home impossible and making woman the toy and slave of man. Thus she has always been considered incapable of high intellectual and moral development. In Egypt she was held in higher respect but was still in low condition. In Greece education was denied her. High intellectual qualities were considered incompatible with virtue. She was under guardianship all her life. In Rome the institution of tutelage prevailed. She could never be independent, and had no control over her property; as a wife, her husband held power of life and death over her; as a mother, she had no control over her children. This state of bondage was followed by one of great license. It was the social vice of Rome that weakened the great empire and left it an easy prey to the barbarians. With them came in a new respect for woman. She was a prophetess; there was something divine in her. Yet among them she was bought and sold as property. Chivalry gave her new respect, more freedom, the right to hold property. All knights were bound by oath to aid any woman.
they found in distress. Steadily has woman advanced until today the slave and toy stands
the equal of man. Though her influence manners have been refined, literature purified.
She it is who wages bitterest war against the evils of today; to her tenderness many of
the charitable institutions owe their existence. The movement against intemperance
is her work. In literature and art she has excelled as well as men.

No one institution has caused so much misery, such great degradation, so many crimes
as slavery. It is directly opposed to the principle upon which morality rests. It de
prices man of the feeling of responsibility, represses his intellect, corrupts his
moral nature, kills his affections, takes everything from him which would
tend to elevate him. No institution has had such a long existence. In the Eastern
monarchies it existed in the worst form. The slave was nothing, the master
might inflict any punishment, or torture upon him. The slaves, many of them
were prisoners of war, men of an equal race. The massive sculptures and great
buildings are their work. In Greece over one-half the people were slaves. In
Athens, slavery was not so oppressive, but in Sparta the helots, or slaves, were
treated with great cruelty. If they gained any education they were killed. When
their numbers became too large bands of the youth hunted them down and
slaved them. Rome grew by conquest and every victory brought in new slaves. Their
numbers became so large that a motion was made by the Senate to distinguish
them by their dress, but it was dropped for fear that a knowledge of their
large numbers would lead to a revolt. They were treated with great cruelty.
Plinius is said to have put a slave to death to afford a spectacle to a
guest who had never seen a man die. The master had absolute power. Under the
laws of Rome, the slave could not appear in court, his testimony was illegal
only with torture, he could not contract a lawful marriage. Slavery existed
among the barbarians and throughout the Middle Ages, but not to such
a great extent as before. It seemed gradually dying out when the New
World was discovered. The African slave trade sprang up and took root in
the new land where it flourished long after it had been eradicated in
the Old World. In 1807 the slave trade was abolished in the British Empire,
but it still existed in the colonies. In 1833 it was abolished throughout her
possessions. Her example was followed by the other European nations. In
its last stronghold, the United States, it made a bitter struggle and the
world was freed from its fetters only after a four years war which threatened to
send the nation in twain.

Servile, a condition of servitude, less degrading and oppressive than slavery, made its appearance at the fall of the Roman Empire. During the chaos that followed, the lower classes were unable to protect themselves and there was no central authority to defend their rights, so they attached themselves to the estates of the powerful nobles. The serf could not be sold away from the land, could hold property and contract legal marriage, but he was subject to the will of his master. Under the feudal system it became very oppressive. The serfs often suffered great cruelty. In England servitude existed under the name of villeinage. One writer says of it: "The villein knew not in the evening what he was to do in the morning, but he was bound to do whatever he was commanded. The lord might inflict any chastisement he saw fit on his villein; but he was punishable if he killed him. The law was favorable to emancipation and in the 17th century we find that villeinage has entirely disappeared from England. In France it remained much longer. Russia was the last to abolish it. There it existed until 1861.

Dueling, another relic of the dark age, existed until a few years ago in this country and has not entirely disappeared from France and Germany. It came
into existence at a time when there was no law to protect the individual. It was fostered by the nobility as a privilege of their rank. The new spirit of humanity was opposed to it and duels became less and less frequent until now they are a thing of the past.

One of the greatest evils of the Middle Ages, the right of private warfare no longer exists. In the anarchy that followed the death of Charlemagne, every man’s hand was raised against his neighbor. The more powerful oppressed the less powerful, every man’s house was a fortification. There was no central authority, each had to obtain justice for himself. The centralization of power ended this continual warfare.

Progress is shown by the code of modern warfare and the purposes for which war is undertaken. In ancient times war was for military glory, now they are for the defense of some right. In the ancient monarchies the prisoners were either put to death, often with torture, or were made slaves. Among the Greeks ambassadors were sometimes killed, or treated with great cruelty. The Romans heaped upon their prisoners every indignity. In later times they were less cruel but claimed and exercised the right of enslaving prisoners. In the wars of the Middle Ages, prisoners were put to death with torture too horrible to name.
Not until the Peace of Westphalia did it become customary to release without ransom all
prisoners at the end of a war. Grothus began the reform in modern international law.
In 1856, an international code was adopted for abolishing privateering. It was
signed by the great powers of Europe and many of the smaller states. The United
States alone refused to sign it. By this code, private maritime property is protected,
the putting to death, wounding, torturing or enslaving prisoners is forbidden.
Wounded enemies are to be cared for; the putting to death of an armed enemy
uselessly is forbidden. The spirit of humanity shrinks from war with its blood
shed and cruelty and seeks some peaceful means of settling disputes between
nations. Attempts have been made to introduce a system of arbitration. This has
been successful in several cases. War, though not ended, are becoming more infrequent.
Religious persecution has ceased. A higher, purer religion which acknowledges
all men as brothers has come into the world. No more will the Inquisition apply
sack and thumbscrew to force unhappy beings to renounce their faith. The
Jew no longer lives in fear for life and property.
In the civilized nations of today justice is for all. Torture has been abolished
The disappearance of the judicial duel which existed in England until this
The century marks the close of the era of superstition in law. Among the nations of antiquity, there was a belief that divine power would intercede for the innocent. Upon this belief the duel and the trial by ordeal rested.

The numerous charitable organizations show the humane spirit of today. In all ages and countries, the insane have been subjected to great cruelties. They were kept in prisons with criminals. During the present century the deepest feeling was aroused by their sufferings, and asylums were organized for them, in which they could receive proper treatment. Great reforms have been made in the prisons. Everywhere the spirit of humanity seeks out the oppressed and suffering, seeks to raise humanity to a higher level.

Intemperance, the greatest evil of today, is beginning to shrink from the frown of Public Opinion. But a few years ago, there was scarcely a family in which the evil was not felt, now it is the exception, not the rule. The reform has not reached the lower classes yet, but it is constantly gaining ground.

"Humanity sweeps onward to a higher, purer civilization. Every century marks a step outgrown. Looking back through the ages, we have seen the people slow
by rising, the wide chasm between rulers and ruled narrowing, despotism where today we have the rule of the people. All seemed confusion. But out of the chaos is rising a fair and beautiful structure—a perfect civilization.

'The archangel Hope looks to the azure cope
Waits through dark ages for the morrow,
Defeated day by day, but rises to victory born.'