THESIS

The Development of the Individual in Democracy.

For Degree of B. L.

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"God said, I am tired of kings;
I suffer them no more;
Up to my ear the morning rings;
The outrage of the poor.

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"I will have men as noble;
No lineage counted great;
Fisher and choppers and ploughmen
Shall constitute a State."

— Emerson.

Which is the most befitting to man, self-government or absolutism? Which produces the best and most lasting results upon the whole and in the long run? Which effects the greatest development of the individual? To these questions we answer

— Self-government — Absolutism is no school of strength or character; the monarch manages the affairs of a mentally passive
people. This passivity is implied in the very idea of absolute power. The nation as a whole, and every individual composing it, are without any potential voice in their own destiny. They exercise no will in respect to their collective interests. All is decided for them by a will not their own, which it is legally a crime for them to disobey. What sort of human beings can be found under such a government? What development can either their thinking or their active faculties attain under it? In practical affairs they are at best only suffered to suggest and then they dare not hope that their suggestions will be regarded by those who hold power. Will says, "A person must have a very unusual taste for intellectual exercise in and for itself, who will put himself to the trouble of thought, when it is to have no outward effect, or qualify himself for functions which he has no chance of being allowed to exercise." There may be a few who cultivate science with a view to its physical needs, or for the pleasure derived therefrom, but the only sufficient incentive
be mental exertion to the public at large is the prospect of some practical use to be made of its results and they will remain without information and without interest on all the greater matters of practice; or if they have any knowledge it is like that which those people have of the mechanical arts who have never handled a tool. But they suffer not alone in their intelligence. Their moral capacities are equally stunted. Wherever the sphere of action of human beings is artificially circumscribed, their sentiments are narrowed and dwarfed in the same proportion. But give to a people freedom—the breath of social life—and it gives vitality and strength to the citizen, and stimulates the education and enlightenment of the individual. Where freedom of speech is allowed, there will you find more arguing with their fellow-men. Working side by side in the workshop and in the field, they will discuss science, religion, politics—all the topics of interest, and an all-pervading mental activity will be aroused; eagerly will they listen to visitors
and teachers, eagerly will their mind search after the truth, and
they will strive to rise above the mere pursuits of ordinary life.

We the people of today look backward upon democratic
Athens in wonder and admiration,—in wonder, at the govern-
ment which grew and flourished in such an age,—in ad-
miration at her signal achievements in nature, literature and
the arts. It is to Athens alone that Greece owes her extraordi-
nary reputation. In the works of Athens we have learned to
admire the genius of the Greeks. She stands as the intellet-
ual centre of Greece, and of ancient Europe, and her history
presents an example of the fullest development of Greek De-
mocracy. There we find an equality of the citizen; and in
war, politics and judiciary, the people were supreme. In them
lay the only source of power. All offices were open to them,
the distribution of which, by lot, placed high and low upon a
level; and the payment given for public services raised the
poor to an equality with the rich; even the public amusements
new fire to all alike. It is the first example of a government in which the popular power has been exercised directly, without any intermediate governing authority. With their freedom came a national enlightenment, and during the period in which Athens was governed by a democracy, are recorded her greatest material prosperity, her most brilliant achievements in war, her ascendancy among the states of Greece, her ablest statesmen and generals, her most famous leaders, philosophers and historians, the highest development of her literature and arts, and the most extended cultivation of her people. Within this period are comprised the proudest memories and monuments of Athenian history. The memory of past misrule and oppression led the Athenian people to value every extension of their privileges and when every citizen found himself a member of the body politic, he was filled with self-respect, and fired with sentiments of national renown, prowess and glory. They went forth armed to fight their country's battles, with all the me-
ergy of a single will, and with that vigour in war which dis-

tinguished others in her best days, there grew a passionate

spirit of patriotism in civil affairs. Every man accounted the

interests and honor of his country as his own. And this pa-

triotic zeal was accompanied by an extraordinary activity in

public affairs. Every citizen was at once a politician and a

jusserman and his voice was to be heard everywhere. Dow-

dering the affairs of war and peace; now judging the causes

of his fellow citizens. Nowhere could be found such opportunities

and incentives to political education. The public discussion

of affairs of state trained all the citizens in political thought

and action. It formed public opinion and spread knowledge, and

it united with that knowledge and the capacity of forming

a judgment, the interest and responsibility of voting, and the sto-

culus of action. The patriotism of the citizen in such a

state reached the highest pitch, and their country, this city,

and their home were identified.
With the growing influence of democracy, oratory became a popular study, and was taught by professional orators and sophists. Disputation became the business and pleasure of the aspiring citizens, and nowhere in the world's history do we find a higher general standard of oratory. Without the aid of printing, with little assistance even from writing, they acquired, by free converse among themselves, by the teaching of philosophers, by the contemplation of works of art, by the theater, by the public games and festivals, and above all, by the active duties of free citizens, a rare and general cultivation, and the intellectual power and activity of the Athenians attained an extraordinary development. J. S. Mill says: "The practice of the dramatic and ecclesia raised the intellectual standard of an average Athenian citizen far beyond anything of which there is yet an example in any other mass of men, ancient or modern." And Freeman believes that "Thus has never been another political society in the world, in which the average of the individual citizen stood so high as
it did under the Athenian democracy in the days of its great

Let us turn for a moment to Sparta, the rival of Athens
and see if she, with her rule of the few over the many, can
show the same individual development. By summative law
the citizens were restrained in the enjoyment of the arts and re-
find tastes of civilized society. Their homes were plain and devoid
of ornament; they cultivated none of the fine arts at home, nor
did they import the works of foreign artists; their dress was plain,
and their person dirty; they avoided all intercourse with foreign na-
tions, and repelled commerce; they laid no claim to learning but
prided themselves upon that "Laconic" beauty which became proverbial.
Family life was roughly discouraged by the public tables, by pub-
ic tables, by public education for the children and the training
of the men for war. Such customs forbade the refinement of
cultivated society. The Spartans were trained for the endurance of
hardships and dangers: war was the end and aim of their
live. A narrow and arbitrary discipline took the place of the gen-
rous national life of a free State. Society was immovable and the
citizens spent their lives without progress or variety.

In any, contrasting Athens with Sparta says, "Freedom was
the ruling principle of the one; restraint the scheme of the other.
In the one, individuality and genius were encouraged; in the
other, all men were straightened to a common type: in the one,
the government was open, free, public, popular: in the other, close,
secret and reserved: in the one, life was intellectual, expansive, sym-
pathetic; gay: in the other, it was dull, selfish, narrow and monoto-
nous: in the one man was developed to his highest ideal: in
the other he was an elaborate social mechanism: in the one,
restrictive converse with foreigner was encouraged: in the other,
it was repelled with barbarous exclusiveness."

There is a responsibility resting upon each individual in
a democracy which makes him feel as if he has a burden
to support and a personal share of things go wrong around him.
and he is personally interested in enforcing obedience of the whole community to the law. There is also a ceaseless agitation which democratic government has introduced into the political world, which influences all social intercourse. It is impossible that the lower orders should take a part in public business, without extending the circle of their ideas, and without quitting the ordinary routine of their mental acquirements.

Look at the Italian cities,—see what an all pervading and restless activity, and what force and energy they displayed under democratic government,—how broadened and enlarged were the ideas of the individual resident therein. The citizen of the Italian cities has left monuments of their greatness and public spirit fit to be compared with the immortal memorials of ancient Athens. By association they acquired both freedom and power. Their minds were enlarged by commerce and the arts, and invigorated by warlike enterprises. When the Italian cities obtained their freedom after the long repressions of the feudal sys-
time; there grew with their minds what is a creative intellectual force.

Then were bold and confident in their own strength: they formed lofty ideals of the great and beautiful: they struck out new paths for genuine; and they were encouraged in their soaring aspirations by the passionate sympathies of their fellow-countrymen. They were free to venture upon the widest fields of thought and activity. The cultivation of the arts raised the mind of the Italian citizen above their industrial pursuits, and the cares of material life: it refined the manners of the middle classes; and it stimulated the invention and taste of a commercial and manufacturing people. As monuments of the wealth, skill and artistic genius of the age, beautiful palaces and public buildings and noble bridges still remain. Sculpture, painting and poetry were revived, and philosophy and history awakened from their long slumber. An intellectual light burst over Italy while the rest of Europe was in darkness. Elsewhere, theology alone, as the only study worthy of man-kind, was pursued, but in Italy, the intellect was directed to studies
which promoted the great aims of society—its defence in war, its well-being and enjoyment in peace. The civil and canon law, political science and medicine were cultivated. And to the Italians of the fourteenth century we owe the recovery and collective of the ancient writings and the taste for Greek and Latin literature which has governed the studies of succeeding generations. In all the arts conducing to the welfare and enjoyment of mankind, the Italians were far in advance of other countries, this only rivals being the free cities of Flanders and Germany. “So skilful,” says Gray, “was the agriculture of Lombardy and Tuscany, that, after a lapse of five centuries, the lands formerly comprised in the territories of those republics can be distinguished from those which continued under the sway of the feudal lords—the former being improved by embankments, irrigation and the application of science and capital, the latter displaying the usual results of ignorance and neglect.” In commerce and manufacture, this superiority was no less remarkable. The
Italian merchants supplied Europe with the products of the East, and workmen from other countries received instruction in the manufacture of silk, iron, bronze, silk, etc., from Italian artisans. The liberties of the Italian republics increased greatly the public virtues. With them as with other free states, association, for the common good, encouraged patriotism and self-sacrifice, a noble emulation, courage and constancy. It was by virtues and honored public service that men appealed to the confidence of their fellow-citizens. All were neighbors, friends, rivals; all had common interests and sympathies; all felt the honor and welfare of the State as their own and all shared its sufferings and reverses. All that is great in the intellect and arts of Italy, is associated with the history of her freedom. Her intellectual supremacy in Europe began to display itself at the same period as her political liberties, and, for a time, survived them; but, at length, declined under the baneful pressure of despotism. The picture of these republics drawn by historians, attests the
value of liberty to the moral, intellectual and material interests of mankind.

But coming down to our own time and looking at democratic America, one sees even a greater intellectual development in the mass of the people. She has provided a system of free schools for the education of her children, so that when they come to take part in their country’s government, they will be enabled to judge wisely all questions referred to them—so that they will make better citizens. By means of a free press she spread knowledge broadcast. It is by argument and discussion that truth is discovered, and public opinion expressed, and what more potent instrument for the carrying on of these discussions than the periodic press? Under the influence of a democratic government America has produced a race, surpassing in the development of its individual members all other nations of the world. Carly said years ago, “We have a few great engineers and mechanics, and a large body
of slow growth; but the Americans seem likely to become a whole nation of such people. — A whole nation of Franklin, Phippenous and Walke in prospect, is something wonderful for other nations to contemplate. In contrast with the comparative swiftness and ignorance of the bulk of the people of Europe, whatever may be the superiority of a few well instructed and gifted persons, the great intelligence of the whole people of America is the circumstance most worthy of public attention."

"Among the foremost benefits of a free government," says Hill, "is that education of the intelligence and of the sentiments, which is carried down to the very lowest ranks of the people when they are called on to take a part in acts which directly affect the great interests of their country. — There is a potent instrument of mental improvement in the exercise of political power by manual laborers, and unless substantial, mental cultivation in the mass of mankind is to be a mere vision, this is the road by which it must come. Almost all trave
here are struck by the fact that every American is in some sense both a patriot, and a person of cultivated intelligence. As such wide diffusion of the ideas, tastes, and sentiments of educated minds, has ever been seen elsewhere, none conceived as attainable."

"Look where you will; over the annals of the past, or upon the existing institutions; is this conclusion you will be led, - that the individual is developed to his highest ideal, in a government of the people, for the people and by the people."