

MANHOOD AND STATEHOOD

ADDRESS AT THE QUARTER-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF STATE-
HOOD IN COLORADO, AT COLORADO SPRINGS, AUGUST 2, 1901

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THIS anniversary, which marks the completion by Colorado of her first quarter-century of Statehood, is of interest not only to her sisters, the States of the Rocky Mountain region, but to our whole country. With the exception of the admission to Statehood of California, no other event emphasized in such dramatic fashion the full meaning of the growth of our country as did the incoming of Colorado.

It is a law of our intellectual development that the greatest and most important truths, when once we have become thoroughly familiar with them, often because of that very familiarity grow dim in our minds. The westward spread of our people across this continent has been so rapid, and so great has been their success in taming the rugged wilderness, turning the gray desert into green fertility, and filling the waste and lonely places with the eager, thronging, crowded life of our industrial civilization, that we have begun to accept it all as part

of the order of nature. Moreover, it now seems to us equally a matter of course that when a sufficient number of the citizens of our common country have thus entered into and taken possession of some great tract of empty wilderness, they should be permitted to enter the Union as a State on an absolute equality with the older States, having the same right both to manage their own local affairs as they deem best, and to exercise their full share of control over all the affairs of whatever kind or sort in which the nation is interested as a whole. The youngest and the oldest States stand on an exact level in one indissoluble and perpetual Union.

To us nowadays these processes seem so natural that it is only by a mental wrench that we conceive of any other as possible. Yet they are really wholly modern and of purely American development. When, a century before Colorado became a State, the original thirteen States began the great experiment of a free and independent republic on this continent, the processes which we now accept in such matter-of-course fashion were looked upon as abnormal and revolutionary. It is our own success here in America that has brought about the complete alteration in feeling. The chief factor in producing the Revolution, and later in producing the War of 1812, was the inability of the mother-

country to understand that the freemen who went forth to conquer a continent should be encouraged in that work, and could not and ought not to be expected to toil only for the profit or glory of others. When the first Continental Congress assembled, the British government, like every other government of Europe at that time, simply did not know how to look upon the general question of the progress of the colonies save from the standpoint of the people who had stayed at home. The spread of the hardy, venturesome backwoodsmen was to most of the statesmen of London a matter of anxiety rather than of pride, and the famous Quebec Act of 1774 was in part designed with the purpose of keeping the English-speaking settlements permanently east of the Alleghanies, and preserving the mighty and beautiful valley of the Ohio as a hunting-ground for savages, a preserve for the great fur-trading companies; and as late as 1812 this project was partially revived.

More extraordinary still, even after independence was achieved, and a firm Union accomplished under that wonderful document, the Constitution adopted in 1789, we still see traces of the same feeling lingering here and there in our own country. There were plenty of men in the seaboard States who looked with what seems to us

ludicrous apprehension at the steady westward growth of our people. Grave senators and representatives expressed dire foreboding as to the ruin which would result from admitting the communities growing up along the Ohio to a full equality with the older States; and when Louisiana was given Statehood, they insisted that that very fact dissolved the Union. When our people had begun to settle in the Mississippi valley, Jefferson himself accepted with equanimity the view that probably it would not be possible to keep regions so infinitely remote as the Mississippi and the Atlantic coast in the same Union. Later even such a stanch Union man and firm believer in Western growth as fearless old Tom Benton of Missouri thought that it would be folly to try to extend the national limits westward of the Rocky Mountains. In 1830 our then best-known man of letters and historian, Washington Irving, prophesied that for ages to come the country upon which we now stand would be inhabited simply by roving tribes of nomads.

The mental attitude of all these good people need not surprise anybody. There was nothing in the past by which to judge either the task before this country, or the way in which that task was to be done. As Lowell finely said, on this continent we have made new States as Old World men pitch tents.

Even the most far-seeing statesmen, those most gifted with the imagination needed by really great statesmen, could not at first grasp what the process really meant. Slowly and with incredible labor the backwoodsmen of the old colonies hewed their way through the dense forests from the tide-water region to the crests of the Alleghanies. But by the time the Alleghanies were reached, about at the moment when our national life began, the movement had gained wonderful momentum. Thenceforward it advanced by leaps and bounds, and the frontier pushed westward across the continent with ever-increasing rapidity until the day came when it vanished entirely. Our greatest statesmen have always been those who *believed in the nation*—who had faith in the power of our people to spread until they should become the mightiest among the peoples of the world.

Under any governmental system which was known to Europe, the problem offered by the westward thrust, across a continent, of so masterful and liberty-loving a race as ours would have been insoluble. The great civilized and colonizing races of antiquity, the Greeks and the Romans, had been utterly unable to devise a scheme under which when their race spread it might be possible to preserve both national unity and local and

individual freedom. When a Hellenic or Latin city sent off a colony, one of two things happened. Either the colony was kept in political subjection to the city or state of which it was an offshoot, or else it became a wholly independent and alien, and often a hostile, nation. Both systems were fraught with disaster. With the Greeks race unity was sacrificed to local independence, and as a result the Greek world became the easy prey of foreign conquerors. The Romans kept national unity, but only by means of a crushing centralized despotism.

When the modern world entered upon the marvelous era of expansion which began with the discoveries of Columbus, the nations were able to devise no new plan. All the great colonizing powers, England, France, Spain, Portugal, Holland, and Russia, managed their colonies primarily in the interest of the home country. Some did better than others,—England probably best and Spain worst,—but in no case were the colonists treated as citizens of equal rights in a common country. Our ancestors, who were at once the strongest and the most liberty-loving among all the peoples who had been thrust out into new continents, were the first to revolt against this system; and the lesson taught by their success has been thoroughly learned.

In applying the new principles to our conditions we have found the Federal Constitution a nearly perfect instrument. The system of a closely knit and indestructible union of free commonwealths has enabled us to do what neither Greek nor Roman in their greatest days could do. We have preserved the complete unity of an expanding race without impairing in the slightest degree the liberty of the individual. When in a given locality the settlers became sufficiently numerous, they were admitted to Statehood, and thenceforward shared all the rights and all the duties of the citizens of the older States. As with Columbus and the egg, the expedient seems obvious enough nowadays; but then it was so novel that a couple of generations had to pass before we ourselves thoroughly grasped all its features. At last we grew to accept as axiomatic the two facts of national union and local and personal freedom. As whatever is axiomatic seems commonplace, we now tend to accept what has been accomplished as a mere matter-of-course incident, of no great moment. The very completeness with which the vitally important task has been done almost blinds us to the extraordinary nature of the achievement.

You, the men of Colorado, and, above all, the older among those whom I am now ad-

dressing, have been engaged in doing the great typical work of our people. Save only the preservation of the Union itself, no other task has been so important as the conquest and settlement of the West. This conquest and settlement has been the stupendous feat of our race for the century that has just closed. It stands supreme among all such feats. The same kind of thing has been in Australia and Canada, but upon a less important scale, while the Russian advance in Siberia has been incomparably slower. In all the history of mankind there is nothing that quite parallels the way in which our people have filled a vacant continent with self-governing commonwealths, knit into one nation. And of all this marvelous history perhaps the most wonderful portion is that which deals with the way in which the Pacific coast and the Rocky Mountains were settled.

The men who founded these communities showed practically by their life-work that it is indeed the spirit of adventure which is the maker of commonwealths. Their traits of daring and hardihood and iron endurance are not merely indispensable traits for pioneers; they are also traits which must go to the make-up of every mighty and successful people. You and your fathers who built up the West did more even than

you thought; for you shaped thereby the destiny of the whole republic, and as a necessary corollary profoundly influenced the course of events throughout the world. More and more as the years go by this republic will find its guidance in the thought and action of the West, because the conditions of development in the West have steadily tended to accentuate the peculiarly American characteristics of its people.

There was scant room for the coward and the weakling in the ranks of the adventurous frontiersmen—the pioneer settlers who first broke up the wild prairie soil, who first hewed their way into the primeval forest, who guided their white-topped wagons across the endless leagues of Indian-haunted desolation, and explored every remote mountain-chain in the restless quest for metal wealth. Behind them came the men who completed the work they had roughly begun: who drove the great railroad systems over plain and desert and mountain pass; who stocked the teeming ranches, and under irrigation saw the bright green of the alfalfa and the yellow of the golden stubble supplant the gray of the sage-brush desert; who have built great populous cities—cities in which every art and science of civilization are carried to the highest point—on tracts which, when the nineteenth century had

passed its meridian, were still known only to the grim trappers and hunters and the red lords of the wilderness with whom they waged eternal war.

Such is the record of which we are so proud. It is a record of men who greatly dared and greatly did; a record of wanderings wider and more dangerous than those of the Vikings; a record of endless feats of arms, of victory after victory in the ceaseless strife waged against wild man and wild nature. The winning of the West was the great epic feat in the history of our race.

We have then a right to meet to-day in a spirit of just pride in the past. But when we pay homage to the hardy, grim, resolute men who, with incredible toil and risk, laid deep the foundations of the civilization that we inherit, let us steadily remember that the only homage that counts is the homage of deeds—not merely of words. It is well to gather here to show that we remember what has been done in the past by the Western pioneers of our people, and that we glory in the greatness for which they prepared the way. But lip-loyalty by itself avails very little, whether it is expressed concerning a nation or an ideal. It would be a sad and evil thing for this country if ever the day came when we considered the great deeds of our forefathers as an excuse for

our resting slothfully satisfied with what has been already done. On the contrary, they should be an inspiration and appeal, summoning us to show that we too have courage and strength; that we too are ready to dare greatly if the need arises; and, above all, that we are firmly bent upon that steady performance of every-day duty which, in the long run, is of such incredible worth in the formation of national character.

The old iron days have gone, the days when the weakling died as the penalty of inability to hold his own in the rough warfare against his surroundings. We live in softer times. Let us see to it that, while we take advantage of every gentler and more humanizing tendency of the age, we yet preserve the iron quality which made our forefathers and predecessors fit to do the deeds they did. It will of necessity find a different expression now, but the quality itself remains just as necessary as ever. Surely you men of the West, you men who with stout heart, cool head, and ready hand have wrought out your own success and built up these great new commonwealths, surely you need no reminder of the fact that if either man or nation wishes to play a great part in the world there must be no dallying with the life of lazy ease. In the abounding energy and intensity of existence in our

mighty democratic republic there is small space indeed for the idler, for the luxury-loving man who prizes ease more than hard, triumph-crowned effort.

We hold work not as a curse but as a blessing, and we regard the idler with scornful pity. It would be in the highest degree undesirable that we should all work in the same way or at the same things, and for the sake of the real greatness of the nation we should in the fullest and most cordial way recognize the fact that some of the most needed work must, from its very nature, be unremunerative in a material sense. Each man must choose so far as the conditions allow him the path to which he is bidden by his own peculiar powers and inclinations. But if he is a man he must in some way or shape do a man's work. If, after making all the effort that his strength of body and of mind permits, he yet honorably fails, why, he is still entitled to a certain share of respect because he has made the effort. But if he does not make the effort, or if he makes it half-heartedly and recoils from the labor, the risk, or the irksome monotony of his task, why, he has forfeited all right to our respect, and has shown himself a mere cumberer of the earth. It is not given to us all to succeed, but it is given to us all to strive manfully to deserve success.

We need then the iron qualities that must go with true manhood. We need the positive virtues of resolution, of courage, of indomitable will, of power to do without shrinking the rough work that must always be done, and to persevere through the long days of slow progress or of seeming failure which always come before any final triumph, no matter how brilliant. But we need more than these qualities. This country cannot afford to have its sons less than men; but neither can it afford to have them other than good men. If courage and strength and intellect are unaccompanied by the moral purpose, the moral sense, they become merely forms of expression for unscrupulous force and unscrupulous cunning. If the strong man has not in him the lift toward lofty things his strength makes him only a curse to himself and to his neighbor. All this is true in private life, and it is no less true in public life. If Washington and Lincoln had not had in them the whipcord fiber of moral and mental strength, the soul that steels itself to endure disaster unshaken and with grim resolve to wrest victory from defeat, then the one could not have founded, nor the other preserved, our mighty federal Union. The least touch of flabbiness, of unhealthy softness, in either would have meant ruin for this nation, and

therefore the downfall of the proudest hope of mankind. But no less is it true that had either been influenced by self-seeking ambition, by callous disregard of others, by contempt for the moral law, he would have dashed us down into the black gulf of failure. Woe to all of us if ever as a people we grow to condone evil because it is successful. We can no more afford to lose social and civic decency and honesty than we can afford to lose the qualities of courage and strength. It is the merest truism to say that the nation rests upon the individual, upon the family—upon individual manliness and womanliness, using the words in their widest and fullest meaning.

To be a good husband or good wife, a good neighbor and friend, to be hard-working and upright in business and social relations, to bring up many healthy children—to be and to do all this is to lay the foundations of good citizenship as they must be laid. But we cannot stop even with this. Each of us has not only his duty to himself, his family, and his neighbors, but his duty to the State and to the nation. We are in honor bound each to strive according to his or her strength to bring ever nearer the day when justice and wisdom shall obtain in public life as in private life. We cannot retain the full measure of our self-

respect if we cannot retain pride in our citizenship. For the sake not only of ourselves but of our children and our children's children we must see that this nation stands for strength and honesty both at home and abroad. In our internal policy we cannot afford to rest satisfied until all that the government can do has been done to secure fair dealing and equal justice as between man and man. In the great part which hereafter, whether we will or not, we must play in the world at large, let us see to it that we neither do wrong nor shrink from doing right because the right is difficult; that on the one hand we inflict no injury, and that on the other we have a due regard for the honor and the interest of our mighty nation; and that we keep unsullied the renown of the flag which beyond all others of the present time or of the ages of the past stands for confident faith in the future welfare and greatness of mankind.

**THE
STRENUOUS LIFE**

**ESSAYS AND
ADDRESSES**

**BY
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**NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.
1905**