ADVANCE SHEET – May 27, 2022

President's Letter*

In this issue we present a product of the fourth generation of the Adams family. The first three generations included the two Adams Presidents and Charles Francis Adams, the very successful American Minister at the Court of St. James during the Civil War. The fourth, and last influential generation consisted of three brothers, Henry, Brooks and Charles Francis Jr. all of whom partook of the disillusionment with American political life after the Civil War. Charles Francis was a railroad President and a contributor to Chapters of Erie, a denunciation of postwar corruption. Henry was the composer of fair-minded histories of the Jefferson and Madison administrations as well as of what may be the most famous American autobiography. Brooks Adams wrote several somber historical works. Although there were later Adamses, including Coolidge's Secretary of the Navy and a president of Raytheon Corporation, none left a great mark after the fourth generation.

The document we present here is Brooks Adams' essay on The Legacy of Henry Adams, part of a collection of Henry's writings published as *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma*. The essay is more about John Quincy Adams than about Henry; it portrays him as the last of the Federalists and the first of the Whigs, who tried to industrialize the Upper South and thus forestall the slavery controversy. It says little about his abolitionism, portraying him as a martyr to the cause of science as well as a skeptic about the early manifestations of feminism. Its appearance here is justified by the unfamiliarity of Brooks Adams' views.

George W. Liebmann

* (This issue of the *Advance Sheet* contains the final two chapters of the essay. If you have not had the opportunity to read the first two chapters you may do so by going to the Library's Web Page at **www.barlib.org** and hovering over the Information button on the left. A number of options will appear, including Newsletter which you should then click. The final step is to click on the May 13 issue which contains chapters one and two. – J.B.)

Can You Go Home Again?

A friend of mine had such a happy childhood that he would frequently find a reason to be in the neighborhood where he grew up as well as to go down the street where he had lived. Although he is a very bright fellow, one who has undoubtedly heard of Thomas Wolfe, and most likely read at least some of his works, he believes that even if you can't go home again, you can at least drive by it.

A few years back my son graduated from college and while many of his classmates were at the ceremony, he was on a plane headed to Europe to take in the sites. The very next year his sister would attend her ceremony, but a few days afterward would be on a plane headed for Oklahoma to enjoy the delights of basic training at Fort Sill. Several months later, when we attended her graduation from basic training in Oklahoma, I would experience my own "you can't go home again" moment when I found out that Grand Funk Railroad would be playing down the street from our hotel at a casino. They had been a really big deal when I was in high school in the seventies and the opening of their mega-hit "American Band" is right up there with Deep Purple's "Smoke on the Water." Am I starting to sound as though I am back in high school again? Anyway, my wife finally convinced me that memories, good ones, are best left where they were.

Now, there are a few places where you can go home again to. One of them is in fact the Baltimore Bar Library. It was grand when Grand Funk was in its prime, and, it still is. The elegance that is the Main Reading Room, with the help of a face lift here and there, as well as a nip and tuck on a few occasions, remains all that it was. In fact, under the direction of Board President George Liebmann, many rooms have been renovated, imbuing them with a look of style and sophistication. No lie.

I invite you "home" to the Library not just to take in the sights but to utilize the

collections and databases that are substantial and the very essence of what the Library is. You might not be able to go home again but at the Library you are going to come as close as you are likely to ever find.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Joe Bennett

The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma

BY HENRY ADAMS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
BROOKS ADAMS

CAPRICORN BOOKS
NEW YORK

CHAPTER III

The Heritage of Henry Adams

IN July, 1843, he happened to take a vacation journey to Niagara with Mr. Brooks and my mother. Hardly had he entered the state of New York when this journey was transformed into a triumphal progress by a spontaneous popular ovation. In the midst of the outburst, on July 24, while at Niagara, Professor Mitchel arrived from Cincinnati, bringing an invitation from an astronomical society organized there, to deliver an oration at the laying of the corner-stone of the observatory they were about to build. Mr. Adams immediately became much excited. "I asked Mr. Mitchel for a short interval of time to make up my mind upon a proposal so strange to me; and so flattering that I scarcely dare to think of it with composure." The next day he accepted. Probably he never thought seriously of declining, and yet he knew the risks he ran, and the remote possibility of advantage to himself. Perhaps of English and American statesmen, situated as he was then situated, Bacon and Franklin alone might have taken the view he took and chosen as he chose. Hardly could he justify himself in his own eye. "I have accepted the invitation, and promised to perform the

duty, if in my power, on some day in the month of November next. . . . This is a rash promise, and, in faithfully analyzing my motives for making it, I wish I could find them pure from all alloy of vanity and self-glorification. It is an arduous, hazardous, and expensive undertaking, the successful performance of which is more than problematical, and of the event of which it is impossible for me to foresee anything but disappointment. Yet, there is a motive pure and elevated, and a purpose benevolent and generous, at least, mingling with the impulses which in this case I obey."[1]

On July 25, 1843, when John Quincy Adams wrote these words, he had entered upon his seventy-seventh year. The ceremony was to take place the following November. He had then held almost every office in the gift of the people or of the government. In his old age, after a life of turmoil and of alternations of fortunes, he had reached the pinnacle of dignity and of honor. His constitution though relatively vigorous had been strained by his labors; he suffered from a bad catarrhal cough aggravated by excessive public speaking; he could not fill a tithe of the calls upon him made imperative by his position as a political leader. He stood in much need of repose before the next session of Congress would begin.

[1] XI, 394, 5.

If he accepted the invitation, he must prepare an oration which should be worthy of the occasion and of himself, he must face a journey of great hardship, in an inclement season, and he must undergo the fatigue of a prolonged public ovation, an ordeal which always filled him with dismay. So far as he could then see, he could gain nothing personally, save the slight satisfaction of linking his name with the foundation of the first American observatory, a fact which would be soon forgotten. On the other hand, he might use his fleeting popularity to promote science. This consideration prevailed. He determined to make the effort, and run the risk. The risk proved to be greater than even he supposed. From the fatigue and exposure of that journey he never fully recovered, and as the point whence Mr. Adams began rapidly to fail, the Cincinnati celebration has a pathetic interest. The strain told almost immediately. Mr. Adams had never known popularity, and his journey through New York wrought upon him. His nerves had lost their elasticity, and excitement made him sleepless. Worst of all, although oppressed with work, he found he could no longer labor as had been his wont.

As the weeks passed he found himself less and less able to cope with his accumulating tasks. He could not escape meeting his constituents before leaving home for

the winter, and by September 7, he complained that arrears of correspondence and his address oppressed him "to distraction." On September 20, he was persuaded to consent to lecture at Springfield on his way to the west, and the excitement and worry of these "manifold engagements" produced serious insomnia. "A state of existence bordering I fear upon insanity, and which I contemplate with alarm." [1]

Meanwhile he toiled on his oration, which he hoped to make a history of astronomy so alluring that it would kindle lasting enthusiasm. Every library, public and private, within reach was put under contribution, and his friends journeyed to Quincy laden with books. He dwelt much in secret on what he hoped to accomplish; he recognized that this was the last opportunity he should ever have to realize his aspiration of stimulating his generation to intellectual activity. "My task is to turn this transient gust of enthusiasm for the science of astronomy at Cincinnati into a permanent and persevering national pursuit, which may extend the bounds of human knowledge, and make my country instrumental in elevating the character and improving the condition of man upon earth. The hand of God himself has furnished me this opportunity to do good. But Oh! how much will

[1] MSS. Sept. 21, 1843.

depend upon my manner of performing that task! And with what agony of soul must I implore the aid of Almighty Wisdom for powers of conception, energy of exertion, and unconquerable will to accomplish my design." [1] I think he never wrote with such intensity of feeling of any political event.

On October 20, at eleven o'clock at night, perforce he brought his oration "to a sudden and abrupt termination." There was no time for revision. It was only possible with haste to have a single copy made. He admitted to himself that he "shivered at the thought." His departure was then only three days distant, and one of those days had to be devoted to the meeting at Dedham. As his departure approached, his friends were appalled at the thought of the journey and of the fatigue. In his journal he has related how Mr. Thayer called upon him "and was quite discomposed at the prospect of my expedition — and foresees from it nothing but disaster to myself." Then as always Mr. Adams admitted that he might have been rash, but that it was too late to reconsider, — "I must go happen what may."

Tuesday, October 24, was his last day at home. Having worked till one o'clock in the morning on his speech to his constituents, he rose at half past four to go to Dedham.

[1] Memoirs, 19 Sept., 1843.

The whole country side thronged to hear him. A cavalcade met him. The church was packed. He spoke two hours and a half. "A miserable fragment," as he thought, "of what it should have been." The next morning after snatching something to eat at quarter past five, he drove to the station in Boston, and took the train for Springfield, where he was to lecture. On reaching Springfield, "I was so worn down with weariness, three almost sleepless nights and anxiety, that my faculties seemed benumbed, and I felt as if falling into a lethargy."

At Springfield the weather turned cold. In crossing the river at Albany "I felt as if I were incrusted in a bed of snow." In the morning he was awakened by the hail. The train was frozen to the rails, and could not be broken free for an hour. At Buffalo his accommodation was wretched, and on Lake Erie he met a fierce snow storm, and was wind-bound for a day and a half, "as cold as Nova Zembla." At Cleveland a choice had to be made between travelling night and day by stage coach over two hundred and thirty miles of bad and dangerous roads to Columbus, or four days by canal boat, on the Ohio Canal. Those in charge of his journey chose the boat, but before departing he had been recognized in a barber shop, and had to undergo a reception.

In the afternoon he went on board the canal boat very

unwell with catarrh, sore throat, and fever. The boat was eighty feet long, and fifteen feet wide, and besides his own party was packed with the crew, four horses, and twenty other passengers. "So much humanity crowded into such a compass was a trial such as I had never before experienced, and my heart sunk within me when, squeezing into this pillory, I reflected that I am to pass three nights and four days in it." — "We were obliged to keep the windows of the cabins closed against the driving snow, and the stoves heated with billets of wood, made the rooms uncomfortably warm." "About eleven o'clock I took to my settee bed, with a head-ache, feverish chills, hoarseness, and a sore throat, and my 'tussis senilis' in full force." He lay in a compartment "with an iron stove in the centre, and side settees, on which four of us slept, feet to feet," next to "a bulging stable" for the horses.

Moving at about two miles and a half an hour, bumping into all the innumerable locks, until the boat "staggers along like a stumbling nag," Mr. Adams sometimes tried to write amidst babel, and sometimes played euchre, of which he had never heard before. At each town where they stopped there was a reception, handshaking, and speeches. On November 4, the party reached Columbus, where a committee of the Astronomical Society were in

waiting, but his cough increased in severity, and the throng of visitors was overwhelming. At Jefferson and Springfield the same scenes were repeated, and he entered Dayton "in triumphal procession," and found "a vast multitude of the people assembled" before the hotel. Mr. Adams had to speak from a barouche. "I was beset the whole evening by a succession of visitors in squads, to be introduced and shake hands, to every one of whom I was a total stranger, and the name of not one of whom I can remember. My friends Grinnell and W. C. Johnson give me every possible encouragement in getting along; but the strangeness of these proceedings increases like a ball of snow. I cannot realize that these demonstrations are made for me; and the only comfort I have is that they are intended to manifest respect, and not hatred."[1] Far from home, in the middle of winter, the old man realized that he was breaking down.

At Lebanon the famous Thomas Corwin welcomed him before an enormous audience in "an address of splendid eloquence." Mr. Adams was covered with confusion.

"These premeditated addresses by men of the most consummate ability, and which I am required to answer off hand, without an instant for reflection, are distressing beyond measure and humiliating to agony."[2] He "re-

[1] XI, 423. [2] XI, 424.

tired worn out with fatigue." The tact of his friends, who probably perceived his condition, somewhat alleviated his misery, "but my catarrh and excessive kindness drive me to despair."[1] At Cincinnati, there were more processions, more crowds, and another open-air address delivered from the balcony of the hotel, in response to the welcome of the mayor. "My answer was flat, stale, and unprofitable, without a spark of eloquence or a flash of oratory, confused, incoherent, muddy, and yet received with new shouts of welcome." At Cincinnati also he heard from the committee on arrangements that he was to deliver an address on the spot where the stone was laid, as well as the oration. This address was unexpected and of course unprepared. He had to write it at night.

"Worn down with fatigue, anxiety and shame, as I was, and with the oppression of a catarrhal load upon my lungs, I sat up till one in the morning, writing the address, which, from utter exhaustion, I left unfinished, and retired to a sleepless bed. I fear I am not duly grateful to Divine Providence for the blessing of these demonstrations of kindness and honor from my countrymen." The next day it rained in torrents. It rained so hard that it wet through the manuscript from which Mr. Adams read

[1] XI, 425.

when the stone was laid, and the oration had to be deferred. He finally delivered it on November 10, in the largest church in the city, crowded to suffocation. Mr. Adams then spoke for about two hours, as he observed with satisfaction, without a "symptom of impatience or inattention" among the audience. There was good reason for attention. An intelligent audience could hardly have been inattentive, for the oration is a gem. It can still be read with delight, although it bears the marks of the pressure under which it was written. Its arrangement is defective and its termination abrupt, but notwithstanding these defects it probably remains the most compact, suggestive, and imaginative essay upon astronomy, in the language. Had the author enjoyed the strength and leisure to revise it, it would have taken its place as a classic beside the "Weights and Measures."

Receptions awaited him as he ascended the Ohio, the last of which, at Pittsburg, he found "inexpressibly irksome." "These mass meetings, at which I find myself held up as a show, where the most fulsome adulation is addressed to me face to face in the presence of thousands, — all this is so adverse to my nature that . . . I am like one coming out of a trance or fainting fit, unconscious of what has been passing around me." [1]

[1] XI, 438.

From Pittsburg he travelled by stage coach to Cumberland, the weather was excessively cold, and on leaving Pittsburg on November 21, he admitted to himself that he was dangerously ill. "The stamina of my constitution are sinking under the hardships and exposures of travelling at this season and at my time of life. . . . My racking cough all last night left me scarce an hour of sleep, and no repose. I was up at three and again at four, and wrote on the arrears of this diary from that time till seven."

At Union-town "I passed a night of torture, with a hacking and racking cough, and feverish headache. I went to bed at 9, and was up with fits of coughing at 11, at 1, at 3, and at 5 this morning, and finally lay till near 6 utterly dispirited." Sixty-two miles of hard stage riding over the national road lay between him and Cumberland. "My expedient to husband my strength till I can get home is abstinence . . . I ate nothing the whole day." [1]

What impression John Quincy Adams made upon the philosophical and educational tendencies of his generation cannot be determined, but probably he acted powerfully upon his age. Astronomy, for example, which in 1825 was the laughing stock of Congress, became before his death the pampered pet of the nation. Certainly no

[1] MS. 22 Nov., 1843.

American statesman, save Franklin, has done more for science.

Nevertheless men seldom attain precisely that for which they strive by the means they use; ordinarily the result of their efforts differs from their anticipation. It may have been so with Mr. Adams touching this Cincinnati journey. He risked his life to stimulate science. Perhaps in this direction he may have accomplished less than he had hoped, but the political effect of his astounding progress through Ohio was prodigious. He left Congress a radical whom the conservatives had narrowly failed to expel. He returned a broken old man, but one before whom the South quailed. He had no illusions. He frankly admitted to himself that, in substance, he had committed suicide for the sake of science. He wrote on the day on which he passed his own door, November 24, 1843: "I have performed my task, I have executed my undertaking, and am returned safe to my family and my home. It is not much in itself. It is nothing in the estimation of the world. In my motives and my hopes, it is considerable. The people of this country do not sufficiently estimate the importance of patronizing and promoting science as a principle of political action; and the slave oligarchy systematically struggle to suppress all public patronage or countenance to the progress of the

mind. Astronomy has been especially neglected and scornfully treated. This invitation had a gloss of showy representation about it that wrought more on the public mind than many volumes of dissertation or argument. I hoped to draw a lively and active attention to it among the people, and to put in motion a propelling power of intellect which will no longer stagnate into rottenness. I indulge dreams of future improvement to result from this proclamation of popular homage to the advancement of science . . . But I return to my home with the symptoms of speedy dissolution upon me. I had no conception of the extent to which I have been weakened by this tussis senilis, . . . or old man's cough. My strength is prostrated beyond anything that I ever experienced before, even to total impotence. I have little life left in me." To this sentence my father has appended this note. "There can be little doubt that this statement is substantially true. Mr. Adams had much overtaxed his physical powers in this trip." My grandmother was aghast when she saw him. On the 25th, one day later, she wrote to my father, "Your father, my dear Charles, has returned in a state of debility and exhaustion beyond description." She called in the family physician who, she reported, thought his symptoms "very dangerous," and she begged my father to visit her friend, Dr. Jacob

Bigelow, and ask him to send immediately "a few lines intimating the necessity of prudence," or her husband's impatience of control might be fatal. But it was of no avail. John Quincy Adams perfectly appreciated his predicament and what he had deliberately done. He was unrepentant. Had the opportunity been open to him to roll time backward like Hezekiah on the dial of Ahaz, and to re-live his visit to Niagara, knowing all that had happened, his choice would still have been the same. The only reply he made to his wife when she pleaded with him was: "It would be a glorious moment for me to die, so let it come." And it did come.

On August 15, 1846, he returned to Quincy from Washington. The next morning was Sunday, and on waking he wrote the following species of supplication or prayer which is, in effect, his farewell to life.

"Quincy, Sunday, August 16th, 1846.—Blessing, praise, and supplication to God on first rising from bed on returning to my earthly home, after an absence of nine months in the public service of my country. Some discouragement of soul follows the reflection that my aspirations to live in the memory of after-ages as a benefactor of my country and of mankind have not received the sanction of my Maker; that the longing of my soul through a long life to be numbered among the

blessings bestowed by the Creator on the race of man is rejected; and after being trammelled and counteracted and disabled at every step of my progress, my faculties are now declining from day to day into mere helpless impotence. Yet at the will of my heavenly Father why should I repine?"

Like Moses, and a host of other idealists and reformers, John Quincy Adams had dreamed that, by his interpretation of the divine thought, as manifested in nature, he could covenant with God, and thus regenerate mankind. He knew that he had kept his part of this covenant, even too well. In return, when it came to the test, God had abandoned him and had made Jackson triumph, and to Adams, Jackson was the materialization of the principle of evil. Jackson was, to use Mr. Adams' own words when he was asked to attend at Harvard when the University made Jackson a Doctor of Laws, "a barbarian who could not write a sentence of grammar and hardly could spell his own name." And more than this, Jackson embodied the principle of public plunder, which Adams believed to be fatal to the hopes of posterity as well as to those of his own generation. As we can perceive now Mr. Adams had utterly mistaken the probable sequence of cause and effect. He had labored all his life to bring the democratic principle of equality into such a relation with science and

education that it would yield itself into becoming, or being formed into, an efficient instrument for collective administration. But this was striving after a contradiction in human nature. Education stimulated the desire for wealth, and the desire for wealth reacted on applied science, thus making, in the language of my brother Henry, after 1830, "when the great development of physical energies began, all school teaching," that is to say all the education which Mr. Adams strove to stimulate, learn "to take for granted that man's progress in mental energy is measured by his capture of physical forces, amounting to some fifty million steam horse power from coal. . . . He cares little what becomes of all this new power, he is satisfied to know . . . that his mind has learned to control them." In short, Mr. Adams in fact stimulated an education of waste, and what he sought for was an education of conservation. But an education of conservation was contrary to the instinct of greed which dominated the democratic mind, and impelled it to insist on the pillage of the public by the private man.

And it was precisely here that Mr. Adams fell a victim to that fallacy which underlies the whole theory of modern democracy — that it is possible by education to stimulate the selfish instinct of competition, which demands that

each man should strive to better himself at the cost of his neighbor, so as to coincide with the moral principle that all should labor for the common good. The one, as Mr. Adams found, meant Jackson and war, the other meant, or possibly under another order of society might be made to mean, Jesus Christ's kingdom and peace. But Mr. Adams found by sad experience that the statesman and moralist cannot combine the two.

To me this supplication of my ancestor, which was to be his requiem, is unutterably sad. The old man knew that he was dying and that he left the work, which he had hoped to do, undone. Was it through his own fault, or because God had betrayed him, — or was there no God? This much, at least he knew, on that Sunday morning: Instead of leaving his country a land of peace and freedom, as he had trusted that he might, he left her facing disunion and war. To me his words are an epitome of the lamentation of mankind through all the ages, at the fate of their efforts to ameliorate their lot on earth.

On Mr. Adams the irrevocable blow had fallen in the election of 1828, and this is how he viewed that social revolution, and how it affected him, and how it still affects us, and how it may well affect the world forevermore.

Since long before the birth of history mankind has

recognized, consciously or unconsciously, that for them the principle of evil has been embodied in the instincts of greed and avarice which are the essence of competition, and which are, perhaps, the strongest of human passions. This lust for wealth or wealth's equivalent, the primitive man personified in some malignant demon who fostered wars and pests, and who, if left to work without hindrance, would make the world a waste. Hence the origin of municipal law. For law is nothing but a series of regulations imposed on the strong for the protection of the weak, else would the weak be speedily annihilated by the sword, or enslaved by conquest.

But no code of human origin has been satisfactory because it has been the work of the strong and has consciously, for the most part, favored their interests, at the cost of the weak. Therefore none have worked justice. And consequently man has always yearned for a moral law which should reflect the thought of a supreme, benevolent being, by whose means even-handed justice should be done. Such was the vision which Mr. Adams harbored and which he explained in the letter to Mr. Edwards of Andover which I have quoted. But this was not all of the puritan's dream. Mr. Adams knew as a practical man that nothing breeds war as does want or temptation. Thus were the barbarian incursions on the

Roman Empire stimulated, and thus was projected the attack of England on Spain, in the West Indies. But these peoples were under pressure; never since the world was made, had any community been so favored as was the American by the gift by Providence of what was practically, for them, an unlimited store of wealth, which, for many generations, would raise them above the pressure of any competition which would be likely to engender war. The only serious problem for them to solve, therefore, was how to develop this gift on a collective, and not on a competitive or selfish basis.

Dominant private interests as a motor would be fatal. Mr. Adams believed when he entered the presidency that this task might be done by an honest executive, relatively easily, were he supported by an intelligent and educated civil service, who should hold their places permanently, who should be true public servants, and who should be able to devote their whole time, energy, and thought to the work. Were a single capitalistic or speculative class to get control, the interest of the whole must be sacrificed to the few and ancient injustice must prevail.

For the type of government which Mr. Adams contemlated had necessarily to be one capable of conducting a complex organism on scientific principles. The rule therefore must be rigid that public office should be a trust

to be won and held by merit alone. It so chanced that John McLean of Ohio had been appointed Postmaster General in 1821, a place which controlled more patronage and had more political influence than any other office under government, and McLean, being an able man and a good administrator, had raised his department to a level of efficiency never attained before. But McLean was an unscrupulous politician and an adherent of Jackson and Calhoun, and therefore bitterly hostile to Henry Clay and to the whole administration, of which Clay was recognized as being the creator. Clay, though a good practical political manager, was an honest and a loyal man, besides being a gentleman, and Clay understood the situation and remonstrated, pointing out that however improper it might be for a president to use the civil service for selfish purposes, it was worse for him to permit his adversary so to abuse it. But although Mr. Adams admitted the soundness of this reasoning in theory, he was totally incapable of reducing it to practice. He could not divest himself of the notion that in dismissing an official, he was judging his own cause, and if there were a doubt, he must decide against himself. Therefore, though finally convinced of McLean's treachery, he let him remain in office until General Jackson rewarded him by first offering him a seat in his cabinet and then making

him a justice of the Supreme Court. At length Mr. Adams conceded "that the conduct of McLean has been of deep and treacherous duplicity." Yet still he allowed him to remain. And he did so because he could not bring himself to fight his enemy with his own weapons. To have done so would have been in his eyes to violate his covenant with God. Moreover, as a man, he could not have competed with Jackson for the "spoils." Therefore the tide closed over him with hardly a ripple.

In the election of 1828 Adams was defeated by a majority of more than two to one in the electoral college, and he retired from office with what constancy he might, though he well knew that he had in vain sacrificed himself and his friends to his reliance on Providence, in spite of the entreaties of all who wished him well, especially of Mr. Clay. Even at that early moment he saw in glaring distinctness what had happened, and what must be the result of the abandonment by God of the American people. On the last day of the year Clay and he had a sombre interview. "Mr. Clay spoke to me with great concern of the prospects of the country — the threats of disunion from the South, and the grasping after all the public lands, which are disclosing themselves in the Western States."

Nothing in later human experience could fit more

exactly into Henry's theory of the degradation of energy than this picture of the fall of the Adams administration of 1828, because we have so exact a standard of comparison by which to measure it. When the constitution had been adopted and the first administration organized, General Washington's personality had been so commanding that he had raised, as it were, the whole nation to his own level, by a sort of miracle of inherent strength; but after General Washington died, the democratic system of averages began its work, and the old inequality sank to a common level. By 1828, a level of degradation had been reached, and it was the level of Jackson. Therefore the fall in intelligence and intellectual energy of the democratic community, in twenty-five years, had exactly corresponded to the interval which separated George Washington intellectually, from Andrew Jackson. In short, it had been terrifying, and so Mr. Adams, who perfectly appreciated the catastrophe, felt it.

Mr. Adams, in 1832, sadly admitted to himself how he had imagined "this federative Union was to last for ages. I now disbelieve its duration for twenty years, and doubt its continuance for five." Mr. Adams' estimate of time was close, almost as close as Henry's has been in "Phase."

Alike, from Mr. Adams' point of view or from ours, the

test had been crucial. Democracy had failed to justify itself. Man alone, unaided by a supernatural power, could not resist the pressure of self-interest and of greed. He must yield to the temptation of competition. As Saint Paul said in the Epistle to the Romans, "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

And so it has always been. Competition is the law of the flesh, and in a contest between the flesh and the spirit, in the end the flesh must prevail.

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Above this level of servitude to "the flesh," or competition, democracy could not rise. On the contrary democracy then deified competition, preaching it as the highest destiny and true duty of man. And Mr. Adams himself found to his horror that he, who had worshipped education and science, had unwittingly ministered to the demon. In that case, however innocently, he must have been guilty. He had furthered science with all his might. He did so still, even to the death. Was he to blame? On the other hand there was the alternative of admitting that there was no God, no conscious ruler of the universe,

no unity, and no immortality. Better than to face this alternative were infinite and eternal self abasement.

All this Mr. Adams had endured, and he insisted in his Diary that had he been endowed with the genius to adequately relate what he had seen and suffered during his life, he would have converted the most recalcitrant to the "law." In fact, he would have influenced no one, more than did Saint Paul. Men are not swayed by words but by impinging forces, and by suffering. Christ taught that we should love our enemies. To compete successfully the flesh decrees that we must kill them. And the flesh prevails.

CHAPTER IV

The Heritage of Henry Adams

UNLESS my memory fails me it must have been in 1884 that Mr. Scudder, who was at that time editing for Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin and Company, asked me to prepare for him a volume on Massachusetts, for the Commonwealth Series, which should be ready in two years. I told Mr. Scudder that I would do what I could, if he wished it, but that I had faint hopes of success, for I found it impossible to write to order. If I tried so to write, I always found myself to be only an amanuensis,—a clerk who held a pen, it is true, but one who wrote down the thoughts of a being over whom he had no control, and who often thought thoughts which astonished, not to say alarmed me.

Mr. Scudder declined to take me seriously, but laughingly rejoined that he would assume that risk if I would go ahead. I said no more, but went ahead for two years, and at the end of that time I brought Mr. Scudder my copy, saying to him: "My worst apprehensions have been realized. It won't do for you. I knew it would not when I began." Mr. Scudder civilly took my manuscript,

read it and gave it me back, saying: "You were right. It won't do, but I shall recommend the firm to publish it all the same." And so he did, and thus I became the author of the "Emancipation of Massachusetts," which greatly scandalized all the reputable historians of Massachusetts and elsewhere, but none, I fear, more than my own brother Charles.

This, however, was only the beginning of my experience with Massachusetts theology, which the orthodox assured me I did not comprehend. For in writing that book, I had raised within me a devouring curiosity to understand, if I could, sundry problems which I have since dealt with in the preface to a subsequent volume called "The Law of Civilization and Decay," which intimately concerns Henry, for had it not been for him, that book would never have seen the light. After printing the "Emancipation," as soon as I could command the time, I began my work on my new venture and read theology backward to the schoolmen and the crusades, and then I went to Europe to try to find something on the spot. I looked at countless churches and castles and battlefields, and at last I made up my mind that I must go to Palestine. That same summer I came home and married, explaining to the woman who consented to share my fortunes, which were likely to be none of the most brilliant, as I had

explained to Mr. Scudder, that I was eccentric almost to madness, and that, if she married me, she must do so on her own responsibility and at her own risk. Like Mr. Scudder, she seemed to regard this as a kind of poor joke, but, in the end, she found it serious enough. And, like Mr. Scudder, she bore the consequences of her bargain with patience, and wandered with me uncomplaining over half the earth, going in succession to England, to France, to Germany, to Algeria, to Italy, to Egypt, to Syria, to Turkey, to India, to Russia, to the West Indies, and to Mexico.

And as I wandered, and looked at the remains of the past and considered the topography of the lands I had visited, ideas came to me as wide as the poles from what I had previously supposed such ideas could be. I can see myself now as I stood one day amidst the ruins of Baalbek, and I can still feel the shock of surprise I then felt, when the conviction dawned upon me, which I have since heard denounced as a monstrous free silver invention, that the fall of Rome came about by a competition between slave and free labor and an inferiority in Roman industry. The two combined caused a contraction of the currency, and a consequent fall in prices by reason of a drain of silver to the East, and in this way brought on the panic described by Tacitus as occurring under Tiberius, which

was followed by the adulteration of the denarius under Nero.

When I had thus gathered, as I thought, enough material for my immediate wants, we came home, and I established myself in my father's old house in Quincy, and I set myself to digest the chaos in my mind, but I soon found that to be a far more arduous undertaking than I had looked for, and it was more than two years before I had brought my theory into anything like a concrete form.

In the midst of my labors the panic of 1893 broke out and I found my private affairs, with those of my brothers John and Charles, seriously involved. Not knowing what else to do, I telegraphed to my brother Henry, who was spending the summer in Switzerland with Senator and Mrs. Cameron, to come to me at Quincy, as no one knew what might happen and I feared the worst, and this although Henry himself was not in the least affected by our indiscretions. And Henry, like the good fellow and the good brother he was, answered my telegram and letter in person, and stayed with me in Quincy, to my huge delight. I can see him now as I look out of my window, as he used to stroll in the garden toward sunset.

But I had something else beside my pecuniary embarrassment to talk about. I had my incomplete manuscript and Henry in my house, and I had no mind

to lose what was to me such an invaluable opportunity. So one day, when we were relatively at leisure, I produced my potential book and said to Henry: "Please read this manuscript for me and tell me whether it is worth printing or whether it is quite mad. Probably there is nothing of value in it. But I want to know the fact, and you are far saner than I. All the family know it and frankly say so." And Henry, like the angel he was, took the half legible sheets and read them carefully, and then he said to me one day, "Brooks, your book is good and worth printing, but I must warn you, it will cost you dear. I know not if you have any political or other ambitions, but this will be their death blow. The gold-bugs will never forgive you. You are monkeying with a dynamo."

"Very good," said I. "That is what I want to know. I am not asking whether my book will lead to fortune, but whether it is sound history and philosophy or whether it is the dream of a maniac." "Your book is not the dream of a maniac," said he. "It is an attempt at the philosophy of history, and I am inclined to think it sound. But, I repeat, you had better not publish. You must expect no open support from me. I have no vocation for martyrdom. And you will be attacked far worse than you were attacked for the 'Emancipation.'"

"So be it," said I. "I have no ambition to compete with Daniel Webster as the jackal of the vested interests. And, as for me, I am of no earthly importance. I had rather starve and rot and keep the privilege of speaking the truth as I see it, than of holding all the offices that capital has to give from the presidency downward. What troubles me is this. I should like to have some credit for what I have done, for I have worked hard. Supposing I publish, as the world is now, no matter how I may protest or what I may say, or what evidence I may give, I shall be charged with having written a free silver squib. These gold-bugs are not historians nor do they care for truth. What they want is success no matter how it comes. They could not comprehend if they would, nor would they if they could, nor would any of the endowed universities admit, that no man could bring together such a mass of complicated evidence in the time allowed by the pressure of a political campaign. And moreover," I continued, "you must admit that history gives me no loophole for escape, supposing I tell the truth. The course of events from the crusades, and long before, leads in direct sequence to the present crisis, and I cannot avoid it or alter it. It is there. What can I do?"

"Of that, you must be the judge," said he. "I have given you fair warning. The wisest thing you can do

for your own interests now or hereafter, is to hold your tongue. I shall hold mine, for I do not intend to mix in any political scrape of yours. Don't think it."

To this I rejoined: "Don't you see, Henry, how illogical you are? Here have I, for years, been preparing a book to show how strong hereditary personal characteristics are, while the world changes fast, and that a type must rise or fall according as it is adjusted to its environment. It is seldom that a single family can stay adjusted through three generations. That is a demonstrable fact. It is now full four generations since John Adams wrote the constitution of Massachusetts. It is time that we perished. The world is tired of us. We have only survived because our ancestors lived in times of revolution. Both our grandfather and our great grandfather were obnoxious to the gold-bugs of their time. I should hardly be true bred, were I loved by those of mine. You remember what John Quincy Adams wrote to his father when he remonstrated with him, as you remonstrate with me. 'I have heard of a highway robber who, upon going to the scaffold was asked, why he had not been deterred from leading such a life, by fear of the halter.' He answered: 'It is only one disease that we are more subject to than others.' Elsewhere he added philosophically, 'Man can only be what God and nature made him.'

And so John Quincy Adams went on to meet his fate. You know you think that fate tragic. And so I must take my chances. They won't be brilliant, of that be sure." "If that is your view," said he, "go on and take your fate, and God be with you, only I have no taste that way. My connections lie elsewhere. But my advice to you is that if you are resolved to publish, as I think you are justified in doing, choose rather a publisher in London than here. In London there is a possibility that they may take you seriously. Here certainly they will not. Passions are running too strong, and the gold-bugs have too much at stake."

If I live forever, I shall never forget that summer. Henry and I sat in the hot August evenings and talked endlessly of the panic and of our hopes and fears, and of my historical and economic theories, and so the season wore away amidst an excitement verging on revolution. Henry, of course, was much less keenly personally interested than I, but as he very frankly says in his "Education," his instincts led toward silver. My historical studies led the same way, as well as my private situation, as one of the debtor class.

A long series of investigations comprising many, many centuries, had forced me to the conclusion that humanity competes in various ways, by war, for example, in which

case slavery is apt to follow defeat, and by usury, which takes the form of a struggle between debtor and creditor, when slavery may also be the fate of the vanquished. All of which I have stated at length in the preface to "Civilization and Decay," and which I only allude to here, because it serves to illuminate the working of Henry's mind, and shows how he came to "Phase." And, practically, my inference was this in 1893: Mostly men work unconsciously, and perform an act, before they can explain why; often centuries before. Throughout the ages it had been the favorite device of the creditor class first to work a contraction of the currency, which bankrupted the debtors, and then to cause an inflation which created a rise when they sold the property which they had impounded. The question with me was, how fully was I justified in applying these admitted facts of history to the crisis of 1893. Beginning with the panic at Rome under Tiberius, I had a long list of precedents stretching through the crusades to the present time. And the common way for many centuries, in which an advance after a depression had been secured, was by an adulteration or debasement of the currency, and at a later day by an issue of paper. But the men who had usually conducted such vast movements had to be supremely adapted to the business.

We then here called them "gold-bugs." The question between Henry and me, as I then stated it, was, assuming the general law of the past to hold, whether our family could keep solvent until relief came, or whether we should go under like the Roman peasants or like the British yeomen. Henry thought, or was inclined to think, that we should be crushed. I thought that, with good luck, courage, economy, and patience, we should be able to hold on until relief in some form came, and crawl in with the bankers on the rise. Which, in fact, we subsequently did, but the process stimulated thought. And it was then, as Henry has pointed out in his "Education," that his great effort at thought began.

The immediate effect of this stimulant to Henry, of which I presently became aware, was in the following winter when he wrote as a "communication" to the "American Historical Association" of which he was then president, the first of the following documents, which is also the first of his contributions to scientific history, and I think one of the ablest. Afterward he explained to me that he had written it as a sort of preface or introduction to my proposed book, which I was then making ready to print during the following spring. "For," said he, "without something of the sort, one of two things will happen to you. Either you will be altogether ignored

by the old expedient of the 'conspiracy of silence,' or you will be attacked with fury." "For," he continued, "the teaching profession is, like the church and the bankers, a vested interest. And the historians will fall on any one who threatens their stock in trade quite as virulently as do the bankers on the silver men. So you may judge. Certainly, if you succeed, history can no longer be taught in the old way." No one before or since has stated the ruthlessness of scientific history more pungently and at the same time delicately than has Henry in this paper. He has shown how scientific history can support no party and no interest. It must be a summary of a complex of conflicting forces. But my opinion is that this essay went over the heads of his audience by about a generation. It would have more chance of being appreciated now. Then it was set down as an eccentricity without practical application. And so it was forgotten.

The next summer I passed at Quincy in putting "Civilization and Decay" through the press, a process which Henry watched with interest. Before it appeared here in America, I had sailed for India and I saw Henry no more for a year. But while waiting in Rome for the Bombay ship, I received from him the following letter, which even then seemed to me a criticism of surpassing

interest, and which, in the light of the past, seems to me now to excel anything which was produced at anywhere near that time.

DEAR BROOKS:

I write you a line merely to say that I hope to go south next week, and you may not hear from me again while you are in India. As far as I can see, the scrimmage is over. The nations, after a display of dreadful bad manners, are settling down, afraid to fight. The gold-bugs have resumed their sway, with their nerves a good deal shaken, but their tempers or their sense unimproved.

Cleveland and Olney have relapsed into their normal hog-like attitudes of indifference, and Congress is disorganized, stupid and childlike as ever. Once more we are under the whip of the bankers. Even on Cuba, where popular feeling was far stronger than on Venezuela, we are beaten and hopeless. . . .

My turn will come next, and I am all ready and glad to get through it. The last six weeks have given me much to think about. Were we on the edge of a new and last great centralization, or of a first great movement of disintegration? There are facts on both sides; but my conclusion rather is — and this is what satiates my instinct for life — that our so-called civilization has shown its movement, even at the centre, arrested. It has failed to concentrate further. Its next effort may succeed, but it is more likely to be one of disintegration, with Russia for the eccentric on one side and America on the other. . . .

In either case, the next great conclusive movement is likely to take at least one full generation. If, as I

think, we move much faster than the Romans, we have more ground to cover, and fewer outside enemies to fear. As I read the elder Pliny, I am struck by the astonishing parity between him and you. He came about a hundred years after the military age ended, and the police age began. You write just eighty years after the same epoch. Pliny died in the year 79. Three hundred years afterwards Ammianus Marcellinus closed his history with the death of Valens and the practical overthrow of Roman civilization, in 378. Allowing for our more rapid movement we ought still to have more than two hundred years of futile and stupid stagnation. I find twenty too much for me.

The process of turning a machine like ours round a corner will be dangerous in proportion to its sharpness, but neither its dangers, nor its successes, nor its failures seem to me now to be worth living to see. Nothing can come of it that is worth living for; nothing so interesting as we have already seen; and nothing better to say. I understand that your book has been exhausted in New York for some time, and that Macmillan is waiting for more copies. The longer we can keep it working under ground the better. If it once gets notorious, as it well may, under the blessed pressure of the gold standard which turns even defeats into victories for us, I want you to print it in a cheap form for popular reading. It is, as I have always told you, the Bible of Anarchy. God knows what side in our politics it would help, for it cuts all equally, but it might help man to know himself and hark back to God. For after all man knows mighty little, and may some day learn enough of his own ignorance to fall down again and pray. Not that I care. Only, if such is God's will, and Fate and Evolution — let there be God!

Anyway I have been correcting and annotating a copy in case you want my suggestions for your next edition. . . . But just now the gold-bugs have got their loans and foreign policy, and the next presidency safe, as far as I can see, and I shall go fishing.

I go with the easier temper because I see that what I want is really their right game, and what they get is merely a prolongation of the anarchy now prevailing. Not one question has been settled. All the old, and several new ones, are as active as ever, and more virulent. Our revolt has been a slave insurrection, but we have given our masters a mauvais quart d'heure, and cost them a very pretty sum of hard money. And above all, I have had my fun.

Ever yours,

Henry was as good as his word. He did annotate a copy of the London edition which I now have before me, and which served to help me in the preparation of the Macmillan edition which appeared the next year, but he did more than this. He conceived the idea that I should publish a French translation, and for that purpose he annotated a copy of the Macmillan edition, elaborately, and never rested until I went to Paris and, near him, superintended the translation and publication of an edition in 1899, which I tried to make as exhaustive and as exact as possible. But even this did not satisfy him. He complained to me that my preface was imperfect and that it should be more scientific. "Don't you see,

Brooks," he would say to me again and again, as he sat in my house in Paris, "that you, with your lawyer's method, only state sequences of fact, and explain no causes? Granting that your sequences are correct, and I believe they are, and that your law is sound, which I am willing to suppose, you do not tell us why man has been a failure, and could be nothing but a failure. You only show that he has failed.

"To leave human development where you do is hardly satisfactory nor is it surely scientific history. If there be a God and a consequent unity, man should confess him. Then indeed he may have a chance of steady advancement toward perfection. But, if there be no unity and on the contrary only multiplicity, he can only develop into that chaos of which he forms a part. Therefore," he would say, "you should write a scientific summary."

But such a task was beyond me. Therefore, I declined Henry's suggestion to join him in Paris and work at the scheme which he proposed, and went back to my old life in America. From that time Henry lost interest in my further publications, though he continued faithfully to read them, but always with the same complaint, "that I got nowhere." On the other hand he took up "scientific history" himself, and soon became immersed in it. Nor could it have been otherwise with a man of his energy of

mind. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries are the most fascinating portions of the life of the modern world and Henry luxuriated in them. The result may be read in "Mont St. Michel and Chartres," and while I have permitted myself to criticise some aspects of that book, I conceive it to be, on the whole, by far the greatest attempt at a historical generalization that exists in any language.

Meanwhile he was reading pure science with all the avidity of John Quincy Adams when he prepared his "Weights and Measures," and when I visited Washington, as I did each winter, I went straight to Henry's house and we plunged into a talk which was apt to last till near morning. That was in the beginning, but as time elapsed I noticed a change come over him, which troubled me. His nerves seemed to lose their firmness. He complained that "he could not be agitated," and that if we talked late, he could not sleep. And so he came rather to shun me, seeming to prefer women's society, in which he could be amused and tranquillized. Notwithstanding this slight estrangement, I well knew that his scientific studies went on, and I awaited with anxiety the result. For a scientific theory is worthless unless applied to facts, and although I was delighted with "Mont St. Michel and Chartres," I felt it to be but one third of his task were he to be understood. Another volume ought to take him to

the Reformation, and a third to our own day, I hoped to our grandfather, on whom we had labored together and on whom I had failed, because probably, I did not understand the scientific side of my subject. If any one could succeed with him, it would be Henry.

But Henry, after "Mont St. Michel," drifted off into his "Education," in which, as I warned him to weariness, I feared that he had attempted too much. I told him that he had tried to mix science with society and that the public would never understand his scientific theory. He insisted that he could make his theory plain. And then, before he had time to go further, he had his illness, and, to my eternal regret, he will never now go on to fill the gap which he has left. And, for that reason, I am making this meagre effort.

Regarded philosophically, Henry's life is, in effect, a continuation of his grandfather's; he is part of a large intellectual movement and his life is, to a certain degree, mixed with my own. I try, as well as I can, to put them all together. My grandfather speaks for himself. My books, at best, are but a poor epitome of what would have been Henry's monumental exposition to sustain and prove his philosophy, but I have no better to offer.

I have now ended my review of the facts which, taken in the connection with those related in Henry's Auto-

biography, explain, as I hope, the nature of the environment which, at a given moment, produced the phenomenon of Henry's mind in a typical New England family like that of my father. But in order that this intellectual inheritance as a sequence may be incisive, I apprehend that I should at the close of my story present a summary, since, as I have elsewhere pointed out, generalizations of this description resemble the fragments of a mutilated inscription which cannot be read until the scattered stones have been set in a predetermined order. In this case the work is the easier because we are concerned with the rise and progress of American democracy, and the beginning of the movement as well as the form it took and the standard which must serve as the measure of its advance or recession in intellectual power, is to be computed according to the personality of George Washington, who, without doubt, stands at the apex of democratic civilization.

Thus, the model and the standard of John Quincy Adams was George Washington, and to him it was from the very outset clear that, if the democratic social system were capable of progression upward to a level at which it could hope to ameliorate the lot of men on earth, it must tend, at least, to produce an average which, if it did not attain to the eminent ability of the first President, might

at least be capable of understanding and appreciating his moral altitude.

In every civilization there are, as Saint Paul pointed out, two principles in conflict, — the law, or the moral principle, and the flesh, or the evil principle; and the flesh is, in a general way, incarnated in the principle of competition, which, rooted in the passions of greed, avarice, and cruelty, is apt to prevail to an unendurable degree unless restrained by law. And it is to regulate and restrain competition that human laws have been and are still devised. Washington had already formulated in his mind, even before he first assumed the presidency, an elaborate theory of how a diffused community might be built up into a consolidated and efficient unity; and, stated concisely, his theory amounted to this, comprising both material and intellectual concentration. The first requisite was to suppress competition among the parts, that is, to keep order; and, to keep order, there must be a centre of energy whose will must dominate. Governments, according to Washington, are not accidents, they are growths, and growths which may be consciously fostered and stimulated, or smothered, according as more or less intelligence is generated in the collective brain. The material energy is collected at the heart of the organism, which is the central market or seat of exchanges,

and which can only be successfully developed at the point of convergence of the main highways or arteries of commerce, which nourish the provinces. Washington judged that, in the example before him, the natural highways or paths of least resistance were the rivers, which, with their tributaries, drained the Mississippi Valley, and which, by a canal, might be connected with the Potomac and there, at a point where bulk had to be broken, at their junction with ocean navigation, might generate a capital of the first magnitude. The point he selected was the site of the present city of Washington, whose influence, incidentally, should convert Virginia because of her resources in iron and coal into an industrial community, and thus into a free state. But Washington's conception of national life and national progression did not stop here. He felt strongly that the national intelligence must keep pace with the national accumulation of wealth, and to this end a national system of education should be crowned by a national university, which should be the chief instrument for the stimulation of thought. Without such an instrument he doubted if the standard of democratic intelligence could be made to rise rather than to fall.

As I have already insisted, perhaps to satiety, this grandiose conception of Washington broke down for several reasons. In the first place, lacking the stimulus

of his mind, the community, as a whole, could not be brought to the point of building its own highways, but left their location and construction to private competition. Thus the line of the Ohio and the Potomac, instead of becoming the bond which should bind North and South together, became the line of cleavage; and the cotton gin, by causing the growth of slaves to become, for the moment, more profitable than the development of its iron and coal, turned Virginia into a slave stock-farm, thereby making the Civil War inevitable.

Mr. Adams sought to vitalize Washington's policy during his administration, and failed. Defeated in 1828, no sooner was the election a thing of the past than he fell to measuring, to satisfy his own mind, the space through which democracy had fallen during his own lifetime, and he found the degradation appalling. In 1832 Congress asked John A. Washington to permit the body of General Washington to be removed from Mount Vernon and entombed under the Capitol. Washington declined. Thereupon Mr. Adams made this comment: "I did wish that this resolution might have been carried into execution, but this wish was connected with an imagination that this federative Union was to last for ages. I now disbelieve its duration for twenty years, and doubt its continuance for five." In fact, the Union was dissolved by

secession in 1861, — precisely twenty-nine years, — which is a contraction of span representing a fall of potential, as Henry would call it, from infinity to zero. And the cause of this shrinkage is clear. The original union and the original administrative system of the government was, as far as so complex an organism might be, the product of Washington's single mind and of his commanding personality. Hardly had Washington gone to his grave when the levelling work of the system of averages, on which democracy rests, began. And it worked in all its parts with freedom and success. Domestic competition could hardly have been more thorough and consistent. And the result was war and disunion. Nor has peace on a democratic basis ever been established in the South since. Another generation passed and Mr. Adams' grandson, in 1870, sat in the gallery of Congress and listened to the announcement of Grant's cabinet. He has recorded his impressions. He blushed for himself because he had dreamed it to be possible that a democratic republic could develop the intellectual energy to raise itself to that advanced level of intelligence which had been accepted as a moral certainty by Washington, his own grandfather, and most of his grandfather's contemporaries in the eighteenth century, and whose dreams and ideas he had, as he describes, unconsciously inherited. He

understood at length, as his ancestor had learned, that mankind does not advance by his own unaided efforts, and competition, toward perfection. He does not automatically realize unity or even progress. On the contrary, he reflects the diversity of nature. It is the contrast between the ideal of the kingdom of heaven, peace and obedience; and the diversity of competition, or, in other words, of war. Democracy is an infinite mass of conflicting minds and of conflicting interests which, by the persistent action of such a solvent as the modern or competitive industrial system, becomes resolved into what is, in substance, a vapor, which loses in collective intellectual energy in proportion to the perfection of its expansion.

Another twenty-five years were to elapse, and the theory was advanced that the economic centre of the world determined the social equilibrium, and that this international centre of exchanges was an ambulatory spot on the earth's surface which seldom remained fixed for any considerable period of time, but which vibrated back and forth according as discoveries in applied science and geography changed avenues of communication, and caused trade routes to reconverge. Thus Babylon had given way to Rome, Rome to Constantinople, Constantinople to Venice, Venice to Antwerp, and finally, about 1810, London

became the undisputed capital of the world. Each migration represented a change in equilibrium, and, therefore, caused a social convulsion. At the outset this theory was derided. Such theories always are. But toward the period of the Boer War it was suggested that the supremacy of London appeared to be vacillating, and then it was taken more seriously. Indeed, by that time, the symptoms had become pretty convincing. They had first been noticed as far back as the panic of 1890 in London, which ruined the Barings. That local panic was followed by a contraction which induced the panic of 1893 at home, with which I have already dealt, and by 1900 there were symptoms of instability which suggested that the economic capital of civilization was already tending to shift toward America. The relative production of pig iron, for example, was significant. Nor were these the most alarming phenomena. England betrayed feebleness in the face of the attack of German competition, which had been growing fiercer ever since the consolidation of Germany after the War of 1870. But if these facts were true, and they could not be seriously denied, it was evident, on inspection, that civilization stood poised on the brink of a portentous crisis. For if the centre of exchanges, which had been stationary in London ever since Waterloo, should migrate either east

or west, — either to New York or to Berlin, — a conflict must ensue which would shake the whole world, since all the world had become a part of an organic whole, by reason of the intense stimulation of movement. No one, however, suspected that the catastrophe was imminent. I suggested its date myself as probably about 1930, but no one took me seriously. It actually came in 1914. Alone Henry, in "Phase," which he sent me two years before the war broke out, in 1912, elaborated a mathematical theory by which he predicted the catastrophe, before the event. Even I, then, thought he was exaggerating. I earnestly refer the reader, who may be interested, to "Phase."

As Henry neared the end of his application of the development of the thirteenth century according to scientific historical theory, in "Mont St. Michel and Chartres," he turned more and more toward his next step in the "Reformation," on which he constantly talked with me. He found the "Reformation" most antagonistic, chiefly, I think, because of the Puritan attack on women; for it was during the Reformation that the Virgin was dethroned and, according to his theory, I take it, that the degradation of woman began. For it is precisely here that I wish to point out a legal and philosophical distinction — one which hinges, as Henry

explains in the "Letter to Teachers," on the distinction between reason and instinct. Now as a lawyer and as a historian, I insist that society, as an organism, has little or no interest in woman's reason, but its very existence is bound up in her instincts. Intellectually, woman's reason has been a matter of indifference to men. As an intellectual competitor she has never been formidable; but maternity is a monopoly. It is the *passionate* instinct which is the cause and the effect of maternity, and which enables women to serve their great purpose as the cement of society. As an intellectual being, as the modern feminist would make her, she has only the importance of a degraded boy, though she is far more dangerous to society than such a boy would be, who would be relatively harmless.

It was, perhaps, during discussions such as these, that Henry grew curious to test the thought of the scientific world, and accordingly he wrote toward 1910 his "Letter to Teachers," which I then thought, and think even more strongly now than then, to have been the ablest exposition of the scientific theory of the degradation of energy and of the issue between intellect and instinct which has ever been made. If, as I have good reason to infer, the reception which this little book met with among the class to whom it was sent, was a disappointment to

Henry, in so far as it left them indifferent, it had at least a very great effect on me. I found, among other things, that if Henry had written this essay as a commentary upon his ancestor's life and fortunes, it could not have been more absolutely to the point, and this pleased me the more and was to me the more remarkable and convincing, as I do not imagine that Henry had, when he wrote it, John Quincy Adams at all in mind as a text for his discourse. I have only now to beg such of my readers as may be interested in these questions to read my account of my ancestor's misfortunes, in his dealing with democracy, and then turn to Henry's essay especially where, as for example on page 156, he goes into the question of the "degradation of energies"; or what he has to say on the relation of instinct to reason, when it comes to a consideration of the feminine question, on page 203. "The mere act of reproduction, which seems to have been the most absorbing and passionate purpose of primitive instinct, concerns history not at all," page 206. Certainly it does not concern the modern feminist, who repudiates such an instinct as unworthy of a civilized and educated modern woman, and by so doing announces herself as incapable of performing the only function in modern society which has the least vital importance to mankind. I come now to the consideration of "Phase,"

which is an attempt by means of a mathematical formula, based on the facts of past events, to determine the date at which social revolutions may occur; and to me this effort of Henry's is of intense, I may say of painful, interest. But it is also a sphere of his work in which I feel least competent to accompany him. I am inclined in "Phase" to surrender my judgment completely to his. This I say at once frankly. Some dozen years or more before "Phase" was produced the theory was advanced by me and was more or less accepted by Henry in the approval which he gave in general to "Civilization and Decay."

Henry, in "Phase," reached a conclusion which even I thought exaggerated. He in 1912 named the year 1917 as the date at which a probably revolutionary acceleration of thought would take place, and in fact in that year America was drawn into the war by the resistless attraction of the British economic system, and to-day Great Britain and America, like the parts of some gigantic saurian which has been severed in a prehistoric contest, seem half unconsciously to be trying to unite in an economic organism, perhaps to be controlled by a syndicate of bankers who will direct the movements of the putative governments of this enormous aggregation of vested interests independent of the popular will.

And this brings me to the somewhat alarming task of considering Henry's forecast in "Phase," of the world's possible future. For though it is generally conceded that the outlook for civilization is murky, Henry's calculation suggests that its catastrophe may be actually at hand.

Assuming that we are still in the mechanical phase, and using the same formula which he used in his estimate touching the year 1917, Henry finds that we may probably enter the "ethereal phase" in 1921, or in somewhere about two years from the present time, when thought will reach the limit of its possibilities. How such an age would express itself must be to most of us problematical, since, according to Henry, only a few highly trained and gifted men will then be able to understand each other; but attempting to translate such hypothetical thought into ordinary legal or political terms, the more we reflect upon what we see going on about us, the less unreasonable such a limit of time becomes. Supposing thought to indeed reach its limit, and action to correspond to the intensity of the acceleration of thought, as it always hitherto has done, we reach a social condition which is already to a certain degree indicated.

For some years past many symptoms seem not obscurely to indicate that we tend to sink into that chaos

of democratic mediocrity which Henry likens to the ocean, where waters which have fallen to sea level are engulfed, and can no more do useful work. In such an ocean tempests are generated by the operations of usurers, and such tempests are apt to be stilled by massacres, such as have become to us familiar of late, in countries like Armenia.

In view of what has occurred within these four or five years, such a forecast for 1921 now would be less astonishing than would a forecast of what we now behold have been, had it been made in 1912. Viewed impartially, we present the aspect of a society in extremely unstable equilibrium, which is being attacked on every hand by potent forces from without, and which is yet being preyed on from within by a destructive tumor.

It is only needful to glance, for a single instant, at the imbecility which democracy presented at Paris in its efforts to make a peace with Germany, to become conscious of the external pressure. Recently, in New York, Mr. Gary in a speech admitted that the war now closing had been an effect of competition. This fact, which has been patent from the outset to every observant mind, was at first hotly, not to say angrily, denied by the banking fraternity, lest they should be held responsible therefor, and thereby restrained in their action. Since Mr. Gary's speech, however, the fact of its having been an economic

war may, probably, be assumed to be admitted. But an economic war is the fiercest and most pitiless of all wars, since to make a lasting peace in competition implies either the extermination or enslavement of the vanquished. If the vanquished is to be conciliated, that is to say, to be restored to a position in which he can act as a freeman, he must be granted rights which will enable him to compete on equal terms with the victors, and the old conditions will be automatically revived. That is to say there must be a still more bitter struggle within a generation, — at furthest.

Now this dilemma is not easy to solve. To exterminate ninety millions of Germans would be a difficult task, even for a conqueror like Jenghiz Khan, or as stern a Roman as Cato. With the modern democratic sentiment, it probably could not be done. Enslavement would be little, if any, better. In the first place, to enslave so large a part of humanity is very expensive because of the cost of maintaining an adequate guard, and secondly, slavery has been found, ever since the days of Rome, to decisively degrade the masters. Not that the present standard of democratic intelligence needs or could well withstand much degrading. It is only necessary to compare the personnel of the present commissioners at Paris with that of the Congress of Vienna after Waterloo to be as-

sured of the movement. Nor was the Congress of Vienna either a wonderfully intelligent or successful body. Still, they shone with brilliancy in comparison with what we now have. Or take, as an illustration of the same phenomenon, the commissioners who were sent by Mr. Madison to Ghent to negotiate the peace with England in 1814, and they stand in relation to the present American delegation at Paris in pretty much the same position in which General Washington's cabinet stood to the cabinet of Jackson. It is a subject for meditation.

The upshot has been that, because of this incapacity, the bankers have apparently found it necessary to take the settlement of a peace out of the hands of the nominal political authorities and come to some agreement among themselves. What that agreement is we do not know, and perhaps may never know, save as events discover it in the future, but of this we may be certain: it will be an arrangement which will conduce to the further dominance of the great moneyed interests.

And yet, serious as this situation may appear to be in the light of the present unstable social equilibrium, it is naught beside the terrors which threaten our society, as at present organized, by the unsexing of women. Since the great industrial capitalistic movement began throughout the modern world toward 1830, the modern feminist

has sought to put the woman upon a basis of legal equality at which she would be enabled, as it was thought, to become the economic competitor of man. At length, after nearly a century, and as one of the effects of the recent war, she seems to have succeeded in her ambition. So far as possible the great sexual instinct has been weakened or suppressed. So far as possible it is now ignored systematically in our education. Woman is ashamed of her sex and imitates the man. And the results are manifest enough to alarm the most optimistic and confiding. The effect has been to turn enormous numbers of women into the ranks of the lower paid classes of labor, but far worse, in substance, to destroy the influence of woman in modern civilization, save in so far as her enfranchisement tends to degrade the democratic level of intelligence. The woman, as the cement of society, the head of the family, and the centre of cohesion, has, for all intents and purposes, ceased to exist. She has become a wandering isolated unit, rather a dispersive than a collective force.

Already the working of the poison is apparent in our system of law, and it is appalling. The family principle has decayed until, as a legal conception, it has ceased to exist. The father has no authority, the wife is absolutely independent and so are the children, save so far as the state exerts a modified control, as in the matter of edu-

cation. The graduated tax seeks to equalize the earning power of the individual, and the inheritance tax confiscates accumulations to the state. The advanced feminist claims for the woman the right to develop herself according to her own will. She may decline to bear children, or, if she consents, she is to bear them to whom she may choose. Such conditions, if carried out logically, must create chaos. If so, the state must regulate such matters, and the woman must be required to serve the state by bearing children as the man serves the state in the army. The state must assume the education and cost of children, when so born, and must subsequently employ them at an average wage, all thus being put on an equality. Such is the manifest direction in which the efforts of our advanced feminists tend.

It may be very confidently assumed, however, that such efforts will only result in the enslavement of the weaker or the poorer class. The rich and fortunate usurer will always enjoy exemption from all regulations which inconvenience him, even as they do now throughout the world. We have seen the working of the democratic system during the recent war. The bankers, as a class, stayed at home, and the management of all business, and, above all the fixing of prices, fell automatically into the hands of those who were the strongest. As John Quincy

Adams discovered in 1828, democracy would not permit the ablest staff of officials, to be chosen by him, to administer the public trust. Democracy, on the contrary, has insisted on degrading the public service to a common level of incapacity, thereby throwing the management of all difficult public problems, such as the use of railroads and canals, into private hands, in order that they might escape ruin, and thence has come the predicament in which we, in particular, and the world at large, now stand.

The democratic principle of public conduct has always been "that to the victor belongs the spoil," and public property has been administered accordingly. It is the system of averages or of levelling downward. We see it in the trade union. The wage is fixed according to the capacity of the feeblest workman, precisely as the pace of the regiment is fixed by the walk of the slowest horse. But under nature's system of competition the opposite tendency prevails, and prevails to a terrible excess, even to the excess of war. And social war, or massacre, would seem to be the natural ending of the democratic philosophy. Viewed thus, Henry's estimate of time seems not to be beyond the limit of probability, but whether right or wrong, in point of time, the ultimate conclusion seems to be, sooner or later, humanly speaking, a certainty.

Lastly, I have one word more touching that profoundest of problems, — Is this universe purposeful or chaotic, particularly as viewed in the light of astronomy?

Mr. Adams always loved and promoted astronomy, for, as a young man, he doubted not that he saw therein the working and the purpose of the divine mind. As he aged, doubts gathered, and I have quoted his diary, X, 39, to show whither his mind tended at seventy-one. Had he lived, he might well have reached the ground taken by his grandson in "Phase," who used the comet as the emblem of chaos. ("Phase," p. 300, et seq.) But Mr. Adams always adored order and loathed the very idea of chaos. Yet he died for astronomy, the science of chaos. Such is human effort and prescience.[1]

[1] If the reader is interested in scientific chaos, I refer him to Simon Newcomb's "Astronomy for Students," Second Edition, Chapter VII, Cosmogony, page 492, et seq.