

Sources of Patriotism.

[An address delivered by A. H. Tanner, of Portland, before the Alumni Association of Christian College, June 14, 1880.]

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The great river as it flows on towards the mighty ocean, presents a majestic appearance; but he who would discover its source must hie away to the mountain gorges, must scramble far up the mountain side until he finds the little pools of water sparkling beneath clusters of willows, and he must follow them as they come leaping over precipice and rushing through hidden crevice until at last by the conjunction of all the influent streams he is carried out upon the bosom of the great river.

So he who would understand the sources of patriotism must go beyond the magnetic tinge of the day and the hour, must revisit the scenes of his youth, must recall memory's most hallowed associations, must recount the ties of a common language, a common religion, a common interest; must travel back over the dusky desert of the past, must listen to the voice of history, and the songs of the bards, until at last he is overcome by the irresistible influence of universal patriotism. Yea, he must analyze the little things connected with home and the earlier scenes of life. There he meets the indelible marks of early associations, the unchangeable vow of earliest affection; the holy inspiration of young ambition, the unfading impress of local scenery; the lights and shades which mould the character and shape in part the destinies of men.

The very breezes that fan with pleasant zephyrs the brow of youth, the beneficent dews of heaven which moisten the lily and the rose with new fragrance, the sweet music of the sparkling brook, the lowing herds that wend "slowly o'er the lea," the songs of an hundred birds; these, and ten thousand other peculiar local charms which memory holds up to the enraptured view, compose the tie that binds the heart with tenderest emotions to the land that gave us birth.

'Tis natural to love one's birth-place, not from some blind and unmeaning attachment, simply because it is the place of our birth. It is the scenes of our earliest joys and sorrows; every spot has become consecrated by some youthful sport, some tender friendship, some endearing affection, some reverential feeling. It is associated with all our moral habits, our principles and our virtues. The very sod seems almost a part of ourselves, for there are entombed the bones of our ancestors.

Leave the home of your adoption and go with me back to the land that gave you birth, seek out amid its varied changes the spots that had become as familiar as an oft-repeated story, and can you suppress the emotions of love, sympathy and affection that are entwined about your hearts? Perhaps the old log cabin or humble cottage has given way to some more imposing edifice, yet there is the grassy hillside over which in youthful amusement you chased the butterfly or the robin; yonder is the old grove beneath whose refreshing shades you listened to the sighing of the breeze and the rustle of the falling leaves. Further on you see again the pebbled stream, singing its same old song, where you sailed your little boat or gathered up the shells along the shore. Here is where you sat and heard for the last time perchance, stealing through the evening twilight, the touching strains of a mother's lullaby song. Then repair to your deserted spot where a few rustic slabs worn by the storms of many winters mark the place as sacred, and there beneath the serried leaves and scarlet vines that run like a sad regret out of the earth, you recognize the tomb of father, mother, sister, brother or friend. Would you call them forth to hear the kind and loving voices

echo through those old scenes once again? Alas! you sigh with the moaning breeze and turn away. But do you not love that spot? That old home! Yes, and by all the eternal stars that shine above us you would strike dumb the hand that should be raised in strife against it.

Patriotism begins with association. The tide of all our feelings, all our recollections, all our friendships, all our sympathies, ebbs and flows upon the glittering shores of association, and the waves with a ceaseless murmur are constantly casting the spray of remembrance upon our throbbing hearts.

We love those of our own kind and lay hold with eagerness of every circumstance that can form a bond of union. This fraternity of feeling implanted within the human breast attaches us to the territory of our fellow-citizens by the same law of association that endears us to the spot where we were born or the scene of some social pleasure. Thus the imagination forms to itself a complete idea of country and countrymen, which impresses every susceptible heart with irresistible force. In perusing the history of either we feel an interest which no other narrative can arouse. We sympathize with the fortunes of those who have trod the same ground that we now tread, and we appropriate to ourselves a share of the glory they required by their bravery and virtue. This peculiar interest is in general confined to our own country and people, for there is the source of our associations and all our endearing recollections. In thus prescribing the limit to our associations we engender that national feeling called patriotism. We love our country because it is the land of our home with all its hallowed memories, the land of those we love, the land of our fathers. A gifted poet expresses it all in this touching language:

"There is a land of every land the pride,
Beloved by heaven o'er all the world beside,
Where brighter suns dispense serener
lights,

And milder moons in paradise the night,
A land of beauty, valor, virtue, truth,
Time tutored age, and love exalted youth,
The wandering mariner whose eye explores
The wealthiest isles the most enchanted
shores,

Views not a realm so beautiful and fair,
Nor breathes the spirit of a purer air,
In every clime the magnet of his soul
Touched by remembrance trembles to that
pole

For in this land of Heaven's peculiar race,
The heritage of nature's noblest grace,
There is a spot of earth supremely blest,
A dearer spot than all the rest.

Where shall that land, that spot on earth
be found?

Art thou a man? a patriot look round,
Oh thou shalt find nowhere thy footsteps
room

That land thy country and that spot thy
home."

Aside from local scenery and associations, a common language does much to inspire patriotic impulses. Man was designed for a sociable creature and was made with an inclination and under a necessity to have fellowship with those of his own kind, and given language as the great instrument and common tie of society.

The division of mankind into distinct communities in accordance with the natural divisions of the surface of the globe formed by chains of mountains, impassable rivers and the oceans which separate the larger continents, gave rise to a diversity of languages as different as the customs and habits of the people themselves. A certain language becomes so identified with a particular part of the earth's surface that we regard it as almost a part of the country itself. The French, German and Italian languages lead us by natural instinct to the French, German and Italian soil. We can hardly think of America without considering our English a part of it. All its hills and valleys and mountains have reverberated its echoes these three hundred years. The trees that overhang the brook, the

groves upon the hillside, and the forests of the valley have all been moved to vibrations, by the sweet story of love, by the happy farmer calling to the herd, by the war-cry of freedom—all in our native English. It is by this association of ideas, by the halo of reminiscences and the magic of love that language is constantly creating new ties, and giving to the land we love more hallowed and endearing recollections.

For these reasons the inhabitants of the different countries love their own language the best of all. This respect a man has for his native tongue, the love he bears his own language creates a love for his native land. The home of his language is his home, and though he may wander far from and learn from necessity to adopt another language, yet however familiar he may become with it the language of his own birth-place, the language his mother first taught him to lisp, falls upon his enraptured ear like the music of sweetest song and carries the mind back to its scenes.

A man driven away from the associations of his country and beyond the hearing of his own language is thrust out upon the sea of universal sadness, darkness, and despair. This feeling is beautifully expressed in Shakespeare's play of king Richard II. where Norfolk says upon receiving his sentence of banishment at the hands of the king:

"The language I have learned these forty
years,
My native English now I must forego;
And now my tongue's use to me is more
Than an unstringed viol or a harp,
Or like a cunning instrument cased up,
Or being open put into his hands,
That knows no touch to tune the harmony,
within my mouth you have engaled my
tongue

Doubly, port collided with my teeth and
lips,
And dull, unfeeling, barren ignorance,
I made my goaler to attend me;
I am too old to fawn upon a nurse,
Too far in years to be a pupil now;
What is thy sentence then but speechless
death,
Which robs my tongue from breathing
native breath."

When language becomes interwoven into the more alluring fields of literature it is still more effective as a source of patriotism. Poetry, history, romance, and song familiarize every spot until they seem our friends. We hear Burns sing of his native Scotland and almost wish we could take to ourselves the wings of the morning and fly thither. We listen awhile to the sweet incantations of Moore and long to hie away to the green swards of the Emerald Isle. Then we hear again the patriotic songs of our own Whittier, Longfellow and Bryant floating out from the grand old New England states, rising above and shedding such a glow of greatness upon us, that catching the inspiration we are moved to exclaim "Thank God that we—we too are American citizens."

Dickens, Scott and Hawthorne lead us through the scenes chosen for their well laid plots and so truthfully do they hold the mirror up to nature, that the boundless fields and prairies stretch out illimitably to the fancy as the eye scans their descriptions. We are stirred by the bustle of the camp at dawn, and soothed by its quiet or delighted by its picturesque aspect under the shadow of night. The imagination revels amid the green oak clumps and verdant vines, the expanding plains and the glancing river, the forest aisle and the silent stars.

Our hearts are so thrilled at their vivid representation and perfect exposure of nature in all her free magnificence, that we love the grand old woodland that sheltered and protected Scott's "Bride of Lammermoor," the grand "Old Manse" of Hawthorne, and the silent stars that shone so gently upon the dear "little Nell" of Dickens.

But grander than all the rest comes the fair and impartial hand of history. The unbiased record of the past, which

the gifted historian makes to rise before us like some structure of grandest architectural art with its magnificent proportions, its symmetrical corner and its starlit dome—a structure having for its foundation the eternal pyramids of Egypt, upon which the people chronicled the doings of their kings; its walls reared by the Hebrews, Phœnicians, Chaldeans and Assyrians, crowned by the immortal writings of Herodotus and embellished by the workmanship of Tacitus, Josephus, Gibbon, Hume, Macauley and Barcroft. As we approach the sublime temple thus erected, and trace upon every inch of its material, the record of some struggle for human liberty and human rights, the sprinklings of the blood of the martyrs and the tear drippings of the Puritans, we are forced to conclude that ours is a priceless heritage. When we have passed in and through these gloomy corridors to the last magnificent apartment where the glory of the present bursts in upon us, with its peace and liberty, with its proud and free America shining forth at the very dome, the patriot's heart swelling to its utmost capacity vents itself in poetic grandeur:

"O! liberty, can man resign thee,
Once having felt thy generous flame;
Can dungeons, bolts, or bars confine thee
Or whips thy noble spirit, tame."

When from the transactions of past ages and foreign lands, we return to what is near and familiar; when we are transported over the surface of the planet and view the myriads who have occupied it before us, and their relative conditions; when we are enabled to contrast our own country and countrymen with other lands and other nations; when we are made to realize that the liberty we enjoy is but the result of a succession of struggles running back into the dark ages of the past—by the study of history we the more fully appreciate our present happy condition, and love with a loftier pride our institutions and our country.

Again, the force of noble example inspires a nation with patriotic impulses.

The memory of all her sages and all her heroes forms a lasting monument at whose base grateful millions bow and worship. Coming down through the misty ages can be heard their sentiments bearing the ring of chivalry and the voice of freedom. While dead yet they live. Their deeds of valor, devotion and sacrifice are immortal, and as a sort of inspiring cause hovers over the nation to arouse it to action and animate its defenders.

The renowned generals when upon the eve of great and terrible conflicts, have often invoked their aid and endeavored to impress upon their soldiers the idea that somewhere, from some unseen world their forefathers were looking upon them to approve or condemn their gallantry. Napoleon, at the battle of the Pyramids, exclaimed, "Soldiers! from the tops of yonder Pyramids twenty centuries look down upon you." Caesar, at one of his hardest fought battles, shouted to his retreating forces, "The bones of your sires will rise up and curse you." Bozzaris, if we believe the poet, pleaded with his hesitating and doubting followers, to

"Strike till the last armed foe expires,
Strike for your altars and your fires;
Strike for the green graves of your sires,
God and your native land."

The names and deeds of men become so associated with the rise and progress of a nation, and so interwoven into all its history, that their very mention is a magic wand to arouse the people to warmest enthusiasm, to the noblest devotion, to the grandest heroism.

Who can forget or cease to love the land that gave birth to a Washington, Marion, Hamilton, Henry, Scott, Lincoln, and the other immortals we call our own. As long as the children of a grateful posterity are taught to lisp their names, as long as a single

vestige of our history remains, as long as the sun shines upon America and American freemen able to trace out the source of that freedom, the mention of their names will inspire the loftiest and noblest love of country.

Who could see the land that their blood has enriched trampled by a foreign foe? Who could see the flag they fought so nobly to defend trailed in the dust? Who could see the glorious union they established rent asunder by domestic strife? Who could see the chains of bondage loosed by them, put on again at the nod of Tyranny? Who does not love the land of those who fought so nobly to remove from the heavens an insatiate monster, and wrote upon the eternal dome glittering with stars, the grand sentiment of any age—*Universal emancipation*? Who could visit the scenes of their immortal struggles for this heaven born principle and not seem to hear their voices, gentle as the rustle of love's white wing floating in the air above?

Pronounce them the first men of the age and you have not yet done them justice, "turn back your eyes upon the records of all time, summons from the creation of the world to this day the mighty dead of every age and every clime, and among the race of merely mortal men," is there a galaxy of heroes and sages who can claim to take precedence of them? Time, rising to his feet, amid the shattered hopes and blood-stained ambitions that lie scattered along his path, sends back the answer—*none*. No, there are none. Peerless and alone, like snow capped peaks, they stand upon the mighty desert of the past and shed their lustre upon the land they loved. And do we not love that land; the land they made in fact as well as name? "The land of the free and the home of the brave." The land in every quarter of which lie scattered our honored dead. The land where religious freedom was born. The land where liberty struggled to her feet and shouted in thunder tones that started the world "all men are free and equal." The land where the slave and the god sink into the dust together. The land of beauty, valor, virtue, truth. The land of proud and free America.

It would be hard to say which we love the most, America or our immediate ancestors, but without the one we could not have had the other. The age, the clime and the men had met together, and the coalition brought forth time's noblest offspring. God so decreed it. The marks of his favor are written upon every page of our history from the earliest moment of our national existence until this hour it has been the promised land. "This other Eden—*demi-paradise*, This fortress built by nature for herself Against infection, and the hand of war, This happy breed of me, this little world."

Omni-potence intended as his own and its patriot sons and daughters will forever preserve and defend it.

There are many other causes which inspire the noble affection of patriotism which I have not the time to enlarge upon. A common religion, a common interest, a love for the institutions of a country, the system of education, and a free press are all fountains at which the patriot slacks his thirst and turns away to live and to die for his country.

When we review all these ties, numerous and diversified as they are, which bind one to his native land, an important question arises—Can a foreigner become a patriot? I answer never. We talk of foreigners swearing off their allegiance to their country. It is impossible. Just as impossible as it is for the eagle to soar aloft to meet the sun robbed of his plumage. They may hold up their hands before the blazing throne of the Great Jehovah and swear to absolve all allegiance to their country. But it is a farce—the direst mockery. No oath, no change of time, condition nor place, can break the ties of home, of