

"Open the Gates"
(Continued from Second page)

ers, and give us the power to hear the tones of loved voices over a thousand miles of distance; or will you send him forth from here?

Will you wait for some common, uncultivated soldier, some new and electrified Rouget De Lisle to tear out of our song books the droning hymn "America," with its poverty-stricken verse, containing not one single element of poetry, and its air stolen from England's "God Save the King," to give us instead a noble poem, one worthy of Freedom's own domain? A poem grand and glad and strong, as though earth's mightiest people went shouting through the lines, and it shaken and thrilled by storms of triumphant music, that brings men to their feet while faces shrink and whiten with excitement, as the startled blood runs backward and puddles about the heart! Will you wait for this, or will you feed and train the emotional nature and high creative imagination of your noblest young mind, and bid him give to us and to immortality the American Marseillaise?

But you ask me, "How am I to know whether my imagination is worthy to be trained, and leaned upon as a creator? How am I to tell whether it is not all fantasy, and its structures only such stuff as dreams are made of?"

Let us see: Last night you were alone with your comrade books until the midnight had long gone by. The old dear voices grew in tenderness and power as your isolation from the sounds of life became more complete. Their creations of beauty took on a finer color. You saw the secret thread of gold running through the lines where King David had hidden it so many thousands of years ago.

You heard the song of the Lesbian Sapho ring from the rosebanned garden walls of Mytelene, and, as the matchless voice grew still, you heard the nightingales in a thousand groves break into a wild, melodious thunder of applause.

You rose in a mood of exaltation that seemed enchantment, and went out into the night and looked up at heaven's holy dome. And all you saw and heard was incarnated. The low wind in the fir tree was the voice of Ossian sobbing; and Shakespeare was the wide and star-sprent arch above you; and Shelly was a lost lark high in heaven, soaring and singing, and Homer was the far-off melancholy thunder of the sea.

And you ask me if that precious endowment for which great kings would barter their royalty can be trusted to roam at will or should they be kept in bondage!

God was not afraid to trust this power when he looked upon chaos and saw what was to be. It is not sacrilege to believe that the vast heart beat fast, and the great eyes were dimmed with the mist of tears, as he saw in a divine vision the heaven enrolled as a scroll, and deep behind deep, the ancient void gathered its multitudes of whirling worlds, and blazed with the splendor of a million suns. He saw this sad planet roll its appointed course, bearing upon its bosom its freight of helpless humanity, and heard that despairing cry coming back to Him from the years yet unborn, "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me!" And yet He could not stay his hand. The creative spirit urged him

on. He saw the rending of the temple veil "before earth's highest dust was laid."

Trust your noblest power as you trust your heart. Do not keep it caged as you would a bird to save you only. It pines for freedom and the great wilderness where it may spread glad wings and build, and sing. Open the gates and let it go.

Here in the dawn of the twentieth century, the young Brazillian, and others of his line of thought, are paltering with silk and gas, with the hope of some day navigating the air; but that is not the sort of air ship the grand imagination of the English Laureate saw more than half a century ago. When he saw "the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue" the ships were not gas bags to be punctured with a sharpened stick! the gossamersilk would have but a short life when it met the grappling hook! When he saw "the standards of the people plunging through the thunder storm" they waved from ships of steel and not from helpless bulks of imprisoned gas. Trust me, the high imagination of the master poet is a better guide than the skill and cunning of the talented Brazilian. The fields of air will soon be the highway of travel. Half of those who listen to me today will live to treat it not as a wonder, but as a commonplace experience. You will, ere twenty years have passed, be able to sit in the balconies of your homes and see lights flashing in the clouds from whence no thunder comes. You will hear the strains of music coming from above as the voices of women and children float down to you, and you will hear the hum of machinery aloft and the whirling of great steel wings as they winnow the high, cold air.

You need not doubt it. It is almost accomplished. We have conquered the earth and the sea, and now we march to the conquest of the upper air. It is a glorious field, and far safer than land or sea. The track is as wide as the circle of the earth, and there are a thousand levels, one above another, for the psassa ships. No one can obstruct the track; storms cannot dash forests across them, nor rains and melting snows wash them away. They will need no repair; no curves or deep cuts will hide one rushing load of precious lives from another. In the unobstructed highways of the air the ships will see each other when many leagues apart.

But the cramped imagination that toils with hempen twine, that potters with canvas kites; that builds with bamboo slats and strings and wings; that crouches in a wickerwork basket under a wobbling gas bag, will never carry the United States mails over a route from New York to Seattle, nor feed a hungry army in the Philippines. Some genius will give us the lean steel eagle that will dash through the storm instead of drifting before it. There was a Morse who sent the first message on threads of flame beneath the sea. There is a Marconi, the wizard of the etherial ocean, who has fashioned a world-wide whisper, and the ships are breathing it one to another as they pass in the night, hidden from sight by five hundred miles and the great curve of the water world.

Have we a young genius whose lofty spirit dares all things? One who is not afraid of the feeble folk who laughed at Morse and sneered at Field? Does he feel a scorn of the

limitations men set on endeavor? They let him lift his eyes from the earth and sea, and fill with his argosies the empty domain of the roaming winds, and give his name to the ages.

Material victories, the breaking down of obstructions, the subjugation of the refractory forces of nature, and of opposing men by the application of concrete power, is often grand, and leaves the conquerer with a mount of marble, high-builed to his memory; but there are monuments more enduring than bronze, or stone or gold. Grant saw only his enemy as he grappled with Lee in the Wilderness, tangled the stars and stripes with the stars and bars over the reeking works at the "bloody angle," and beat with a mangled and human battering ram against the flaming ridge at Cold Harbor.

But the prophetic imagination of Lincoln went on beyond the fighting lines, beyond the tumult of volcanic passions, beyond the narrow front where guidons waved and brave men rushed to death; beyond the bugles and the gonfalcons to where the sweet sky was smokeless and but a single flag was blowing. Above the roar of a hundred battles, he heard afar the clank of falling chains and saw "black swarms of traffic turned to men."

And so in time the grim battle face of the great soldier will fade, while the martyr's sad and patient eyes will take hold of the hearts of men as they look from the rare canvasses, a thousand years from now.

And so I am justified in my appeal to these institutions of learning, to instructors and to alumni, to do for future that which the past has done for us, that our age may not be looked back upon as a pampas of tiresome mediocrity, the only hillocks being the crumbling tombs of the buried rich.

To the young and brilliant president, and the earnest and talented members of this college, I cannot better speak than in the thrilling lines of Alice Cary, herself of the sweetest voice of all the long roll of nightingales who have thrilled this sad earth with melody:

"Oh workers in the harvest of truth,

Plant the world's wilderness with wholesome grain;

Sow the waste places with perennial ruth,

The labor is not in vain.

Be brave, be patient, break life's stubborn soil,

God's angel holds you with a steadfast hand;

The purple fruitage of your generous toil

Shall glorify the land!

Be brave, be noble, planting among thorns

The future harvest of the nation's rights,

For lo! the fiery pillars of the morns

Rest on the sunken nights!"

Of these brave young spirits who launch their Argoes today, let me hope that all do not sail in search of the golden fleece nor of the gleaming apples of Hesperides.

Give us one, if only one, who will need no monument, but whose name will be upon the lips of ten centuries.

What need he, or those who love him, care whether at last he sleep under a pile of marble domed with gold, or whether in a shallow, unmarked grave, with the grass blowing close to his face, hidden a foot below the violets.

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