

The Science of Manifest Destiny.

Cuba, Mexico, Hawaii! Whichever of our wide windows we look through there lies a fresh prize for ambition; a new field for the experiment of republican theories. The national power, influence, cupidity, enlarge in geometrical ratio to the frontier. The primal sin, by which we fell, was the appropriation of Texas. Then followed California, with its golden cornucopia. Then Cuban forays upon the Texan models; Isthmus difficulties pointing to the annexation of Mexico as the cheapest solution; covetous longings for the lovely isles of the Pacific King: longings which possession alone can appease. These are the upper, sun-kindled points of current history, to which posterity will look back as beacon-stations whence the scope and bearings of the age may be measured. They are the phenomena of a new mental direction. Every nation, as it passes from the swaddling-bands and other needful restrictions of infancy, calls for wider room, and gets it by the strong arm or the cunning policy. National energy, as it develops, devotes itself to acquisition. But it is the boldness, the magnificent scope, the indomitable purpose of the American people, that distinguish their plans of aggrandizement from all that has gone before.

These phenomena have multiplied so rapidly, as to constitute a new science. Manifest Destiny must have its chair within friendly proximity to those of Political Economy and the Science of Government. It ranks with the speculative Sciences. The action of time will undoubtedly eliminate from existing elements a coherent system. Experiment adds materials daily. Nicaragua and Tehuantepec assist us, and will presently establish our feet in the midst of palpitating Mexico, and among the petty wranglers of Central America. Surveys on the coasts of Asia, and demands upon Japan are urged, where a few years since were discussed fresh Indian cessions, new outposts on the Missouri, and exploring enterprizes to the Rocky Mountains. The National horizon is supposed to stop no where short of the very verge of doom. Theologians air their polemics upon the quære, which one of the great prophetic empires we are to represent. The Seer who shall tell us of anything less than eventual world-wide supremacy, will be denounced as a croaker; a prophet of evil tidings. Our rôle is set down, and the world's the stage. An unflinching faith in the Nation; a naive trustfulness in some childish dream of impracticable grandeur, are the only postulates of the Science.

It is a little curious, as an illustration how soon heat enough is engendered in a new theory to crack it in twain, to note that Manifest Destiny already counts two sets of believers. They may be classed as patriots and cosmopolites. The former find the fruition of Destiny in the political and commercial enlargement of our country. They count up exultingly the returns of each successive census. Tables of population, tonnage, revenue, have all the charm of Nature in the eyes of the poet, among these votaries of the god Terminus. They crave Cuba because of its enormous wealth in sugar, tobacco, fruit. They look at it with the eye of thrift, and mourn the waste resulting from inadequate culture, indifferent labor, and a miserable scheme of government. Tehuantepec must of course be theirs; for its extraordinary facilities are the necessary prerogatives of our future greatness. The Sandwich Islands are in the schedule: for our fishers vex the North Pacific Seas more sorely year by year, and much need an oasis in the waste of waters. Japan must abandon old fashions in our favor, that we may unbar the obscure chambers of her fabulous wealth, and share the contents. These are the dogmas of the patriotic school. Veiled behind loftier pretensions, they occasionally pass muster as the doctrines of the wider and deeper-hearted cosmopolites; howbeit, they are infinitely narrower and shallower. It is a more refined and inclusive selfishness. It is the patriotism of John Bull as transmitted to the posterity of that respectable but self-complacent progenitor. A glance at the map proves how carefully England has paved and protected her ways about the world. She has stepping-stones lodged everywhere in the ocean. The path to India is guarded by the proximity of Gibraltar and Sierra Leone; by St. Helena, the Cape, Mozambique, Aden, Ceylon. She has a fort in the Baltic; islands and fortresses in the Mediterranean; islands and fortresses wherever they can be secured near her American possessions. And this is the great exemplar of our patriotic predestinarians. Republicanism is all very well and ought to be extended, but always under the American flag; and if, following the Roman type, it now and then assume the shape of a dependency or province unendowed with the blessings of self-government, so much the better. It is not everybody who craves to be free, that knows how to use freedom; and our patriots tender the national services to act as trustee for the recovered liberties, just as an attorney, after a successful suit, offers to borrow the money.

The Cosmopolitan dogmatists have warmer blood in their veins. Manifest Destiny with them is a sublime calling. They organize Lone Star Associations, and Colleges *de Propaganda Fide*. They quote the fathers of the Republic as of their faith and order. The world is their theatre of operations. The press, money, agitation, and the occasional use of gunpowder merely as an entering wedge, are among the engines they operate with. They have more faith in republicanism than in Americanism. Liberty rather than country is the stimulus. Not that they love the latter less but the former more. Their great purpose is hardly distinguishable from an absolute abstraction. To disseminate the true political theory, to sow the good seed on stony and sterile or on smooth and responsive soil indifferently; to have Republics in the Pampas or Caffre-land; Presidents in Thibet; and constituent assemblies in Russia; these are the ultimate consequences of the Cosmopolitan theory; than which, it must be owned, nothing could possibly be more comprehensively philanthropic.

Between these two sects of believers in Manifest Predestination, these political Calvinists on the one hand, and the Universalists, or those advocating world-wide Republicanism, on the other, is there no middle ground, where compromise may be possible? Doubtless yes. A political evangel may very well be preached with the same impressive eloquence that sped the religion of Islam, like a prairie-fire, from Persia to the Pillars of Hercules; the conjoint eloquence of Saint and Scimitar. The influence of republican example may be strengthened and enforced by the direct application of power. In this way can Mexico be republicanized, and in no other. Cuba and its enslaved population, must owe its future liberties either to this principle, whether employed in the form of grape-shot, or as round dollars. It is morally certain that purely democratic institutions can never exist quietly in South America, unless some inconceivable revolution occur in the character of the people. Everywhere, beyond our own borders, on this Western hemisphere, do we see the need of the steady, ballasting traits of Anglo-Saxonism. It will never do to argue the practicability of our system beyond the confines of the race, until the experiment has been abundantly tried. The lights now before us seem to justify the idea that such institutions as those our Fathers devised, must be sustained by the continued exercise of traits peculiar to the national character. Believing this, and both branches of the Predestinarians accepting the fact that the national influence and national force must operate together, we see nothing irrational in the hope of a more dazzling future for the race than imagination has yet ventured to outline. Not a continent, a half-globe, but the world—shall be ours. Through what vista into the future shall we look to see a more splendid destiny?