

Artemus Ward's America

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In February 1923, France was in very bad shape indeed. She was at the height of the war, the real war, whereof the disturbances of 1914–1918 were only a curtain-raiser – the war which is still going on, apparently unbeknown to our futile “disarmament-conferences.” Under these hard circumstances France celebrated the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Ernest Renan, scholar, philosopher, man of letters. M. Poincaré made a speech, not as a member of the government, but as a member of the French Academy. M. Barthou, the present Foreign Minister, also spoke, not as a politician (I think he was out of office at the moment, though I am not sure), but as representing one of the other constituents of the Institute of France, – if my memory serves me, it was the Academy of Sciences, – and next morning the *Temps* devoted a good four-fifths of its space to a report of the event.

To get an idea of this in American terms, we should have to imagine our country far deeper in the doldrums than it was two years ago, yet taking its mind off its troubles long enough to celebrate, say, the centenary of Ralph Waldo Emerson as a national event; with Mr. Roosevelt representing Harvard University – and really doing it, doing it in the grand style – and ex-Secretary Adams representing the American Historical Society, also in the grand style; and the New York *Times* giving up something like twenty-two pages of its daily issue to the occasion!

America has often been reproached as doing little for its illustrious dead except for those whose memory can be profitably capitalized by politicians. This is as it may be. What has not been sufficiently remarked, I believe, is that in such cases the exigencies of exploitation lead us to glorify these worthies for qualities that they did not conspicuously possess, and to slight the qualities that really made them great. In putting out their memory for public consumption we misbrand it for partisan purposes so flagrantly that

if our politicians had to face an equivalent of the Food and Drugs Act there would be close quarters in the penitentiary most of the time.

For example, we do not celebrate Lincoln as a politician, yet his actual title to fame is that he was far and away the greatest politician we ever produced, and doubtless one of the first half-dozen politicians of the world. As a politician he was candid, always ready to say, as he did say, that the way of the politician is “a long step removed from common honesty”; but many American politicians have been equally candid – think of Penrose, Quay, Cameron. He never enriched himself in office, but very few of our Presidents have done that, and many politicians below the rank of the Presidency never turned a dishonest dollar – think of Hamilton, who made so many rich, yet remained all his life quite poor. Lincoln was nationally-minded, when his mind at last became set that way – well, think of John Adams and his son, John Quincy, who were born nationally-minded. Lincoln was eminently humane, generous, affable, humorous, patient, simple-hearted – but, dear me, so was Tim Sullivan. It is this misdirection of homage, this persistent excess of adulation for the wrong thing, that throws an air of fictitiousness and unreality over our praise of Lincoln and indeed over practically the whole body of Lincolniana.

Then on the other hand we celebrate Thomas Jefferson as the master-politician who built a powerful Minerva-like political party all out of his own head, and therewith saved the country. In April of every year his name is consistently and most blasphemously invoked upon clandestine purposes which he abhorred, and for the most part by men whom he would not have let set foot on his premises. Can one imagine, for instance, Mr. Roosevelt darkening the doors of the man who said in 1800, “What an augmentation of the field for jobbing, speculating, plundering, office-building and office-hunting would be produced by an assumption of all the State powers into the hands of the general government!” and who said in 1821 that “our government is now taking so steady a course as to show by what road it will pass to destruction, to wit: by consolidation first, and then corruption, its necessary consequence”? I can not imagine it.

The fact is, if Mr. Claude Bowers will permit me to say so, that Mr. Jefferson was but an indifferent politician. His party pretty well formed itself, out of material supplied mostly by the opposition, much as in 1932. The biographer's fable of a kind of political Svengali or Professor Moriarty makes agreeable reading even for those who know better, but it will not wash. To glorify Mr. Jefferson for these qualities is to misread his greatness completely and culpably; and in proportion as they are magnified, the qualities that really made him great are obscured.

But why should a people consider its illustrious dead so closely? Because its attitude toward them is an index of the national spirit; it marks the difference between a nation and an agglomeration. In 1882 Ernest Renan made an address at the Sorbonne on the question, "What is a Nation?" He showed that geography, language, race, religion, military requirements or economic interest does not make a nation. Some combination of them may constitute a source from which one draws one's gains, but, whether severally or in combination, they do not give rise to a national life. A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle evoked by the common possession of a rich legacy of remembrances, and by the will to keep improving this hereditary property for the benefit of those who shall receive it hereafter in their turn. "Man does not improvise himself," said Renan, austerely; a nation, like an individual, is the culmination of an age-long spiritual tendency; and therefore the cult of ancestors is the soundest of all cults, because it is our ancestors who have made us what we are.

This doctrine is manifestly a little out with the temper of our enlightened age; for the moment, at any rate, one would say that improvisation is quite the rule, and that a spiritual heritage is about the very last thing that our enlightened age could be induced to take stock in. But suppose we grant provisionally that there may be some thing in the idea; then the next question is, Why should a people ever remind itself of any names but the famous ones? Because its spiritual heritage is purely a quality-product, and fame, which is largely the product of accident and circumstance, is no measure of a contribution to it. To recognize and correctly appraise a sound contribution, wherever found, is an index of the national spirit's intensity,

and thus the names that are great but not famous are a touchstone. We may put it that a people which has the true measure of its Bacons, Renans, Jeffersons, and feels a sense of spiritual continuity with them, is by way of being a nation; and a people which, over and above this, has the true measure of its Falklands, Jouberts, Thoreaus, and feels a sense of spiritual continuity with them, is by way of being a great nation.

II

These thoughts were brought to my mind last spring by an interesting circumstance connected with the memory of an American who was not famous. He was not famous while he lived, and he is not famous now. Charles Farrar Browne, who wrote under the pen-name of Artemus Ward, was born at Waterford, Maine, on the twenty-sixth of April, 1834. When his centenary came round, I looked through various publications for some mention of him, but found none. Probably the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* said something about its old reporter and contributor, but there was no copy of that paper handy, so I do not know. Such of our national publications as profess and call themselves literary said nothing; or rather, I should say, those that I examined said nothing – I can not pretend to have seen them all. The London *Times Literary Supplement*, however, in its issue for the week of April 26, gave him the whole of the front page and a column and a half run-over on the second.

One might suspect, of course, that the *Times's* essayist was hard up at the moment for something to write about. What with an article promised, press-day coming on, and one thing or another turning up to distract one's thoughts, this sometimes happens. Yet the essay did not read as if that were the case, but quite otherwise. Then, too, essayists have always to reckon with editors, and editors are notoriously close-fisted with their space, and inhospitable towards topics of doubtful interest. Moreover, the roster of British literary worthies is extremely long, and an essayist who is out to see what he can do with a respectable but obscure literary figure need not cross the ocean to find one. All in all, we may take it, I think, that Artemus Ward was not lugged in by the ears as a filler, but that the *Times* regarded

his centenary as valid front-page matter. This raises the question why the *Times* should so regard it. The essayist says frankly that “to most English people Artemus Ward is now only a name; yet the name persists.” Well, but why does it persist? Did Ward actually contribute anything to the spiritual heritage of English-speaking people that would justify the *Times* in reviving his memory? If so, what was it?

Certainly nothing in his public career; it was too short. He died in his thirty-third year, on the sixth of March, 1867. He had a first-rate reputation as a professional humorist, and as a lecturer in this field he did exceedingly well. He seems to have been successful with any kind of audience; he delighted Western silver-miners, Mormon elders and their flock, as well as the miscellaneous audiences of New York and London, where the high lights of politics, letters and society forgathered with the humbler hearers of his discourse. He edited *Vanity Fair* for a short time, in succession to Charles Godfrey Leland, but he could not brace his paper against the stress of the Civil War, and it died on his hands. One doubts, though, that he would have done much better under easier circumstances; his gifts did not lie that way.

Thus there is nothing in his career as editor and lecturer that helps us to reappraise him in terms of our own time. His personality was by all accounts most prepossessing and charming, but it is gone, and the other adventitious aids to his popularity have only an antiquarian interest for us, if any. All he has of present value – assuming that he has anything – is contained in the slim bulk of his writings; and here too the topics that he treated, and the names that appear on his pages, seem all but mythical. He wrote little and irregularly, almost scrappily, never at any length. His best work is in the odds-and-ends that he published in the *Plain Dealer* and *Vanity Fair* in the guise of letters from an itinerant showman; and in the three or four contributions that he made to *Punch*. As the writings of a professional humorist, I think one must say that they are largely dissatisfying. The *Times*'s essayist loyally makes the best of them, but can not quite commit himself to the conventional apparatus of eccentric spelling, extravaganza and frontier dialect that served the popular notion of American humour seventy years ago; nor yet can we.

No doubt there is excellent humour in Ward's writings. For instance, with the current ethics of our stage in mind, one may see great humour in his account of a disagreement with a former partner whose name was Billson, over a matter of policy.

Billson and me orjanized a strollin dramatic company, & we played The Drunkard, or the Falling Saved, with a real Drunkard. The play didn't take particularly, and says Billson to me, Let's give 'em some immoral dramy. We had a large troop onto our hands, consistin of eight tragedians and a bass drum, but I says, No, Billson; and then says I, Billson, you hain't got a well-balanced mind. Says he, Yes, I have, old hoss-fly (he was a low cuss) – yes, I have. I have a mind, says he, that balances in any direction that the public rekires. That's wot I call a well-balanced mind.

Again, remembering our purely conventional acceptance of the death-scene on the stage, – Mimi, Violetta, Tristan, Valentine, – this incident in Billson's earlier career is delightfully amusing:

The miser'ble man once played Hamlet. There was n't any orchestry, and wishin to expire to slow moosic, he died playin onto a claironett himself, interspersed with hart-rendin groans.

But if all Ward's humour were as good as this (and by no means all of it is; his work is very uneven) we should still be obliged to say that one must look elsewhere for a really significant contribution to our spiritual heritage.

Where, then, are we to look? If his quality as a humorist is not conspicuous, if there are others who, to say the least, perfectly stand comparison with him in this field, – as certainly there are, – did he have another quality that does conspicuously set him off against them? Is he a victim of the misbranding process which I described at length a moment ago, so that in citing him as a humorist, as we invariably do, we are citing him for the wrong thing? I think it is highly probable.

III

I suggest that Ward was the first really great critic of American society, and that in this capacity he remains to-day, as he said of his Grate Show,

“ekalled by few & exceld by none.” In fact, the only one who seems to me to stand with him is another victim of popular misbranding in our own time, Mr. Dooley. In our appreciation of both these men it is interesting to see how far our instinct outruns our intelligence; we think they affect us by the power of their humour, when nine times out of ten what actually affects us is the power of their criticism – and here, no doubt, we have the reason why their names persist. For instance, there is no great humour in Ward’s oft-quoted observation on the fanatical extravagances of Abolitionism; what really interests us is its exact correspondence with history’s verdict upon them. Nevertheless the predisposition bred by misbranding leads us to think we are interested in the humour which is not there, rather than in the criticism which is there. I quote the remark afresh to show how this is so:

Feller Sitterzens, the Afrikan may be Our Brother. Sevral hily respectyble gentlemen and sum talented females tell us so, & fur argyment’s sake I mite be injooiced to grant it, tho I don’t beleeve it myself. But the Afrikan is n’t sevral of our brothers & all our fust wife’s relashuns. He is n’t our grandfather and our grategrandfather and our Aunt in the country. Scacely. & yit numeris persons would have us think so.

There is no trouble now about making a sound critical estimate of the public questions that led up to the Civil War, or of the men whom those issues brought into prominence. Making one in 1862 was another matter. Every political *démarche* has a pretext as well as a cause; and for one reason or another things are usually managed so that the lambent warmth of patriotism shall play around the pretext only – one could write a very telling treatise on the function of the pretext in practical politics. The ability to disengage the pretext, to appraise it for what it is, and to keep a clear and steady view of the cause, is a mark of the true critic; and the ability to do this amid a riot of the worst passions and the meanest prejudices is a mark of the great critic.

Ward had this ability. He was a Unionist, a friend of the Administration, yet his greatest praise of Lincoln was for remaining “unscared and unmoved by Secesh in front of you and Abbolish at the back of you, each one of which is a little wuss than the other, if possible.” He had no illusions whatever

about the actual place of slavery in the category of war-issues. On tour in Alabama with his Grate Show at the outbreak of the war:

I saw a nigger sittin on a fence a-playin on a banjo. "My Afrikan Brother," sed I, coting from a Tract I onct red, "you belong to a very interesting race. Your masters is going to war excloosively on your account."

"Yes, boss," he replied, "an' I wish 'em honorable graves," and he went on playin the banjo, larfin all over and openin his mouth wide enuff to drive in an oldfashioned 2-wheeled chaise.

A public movement launched under a pretext of liberation always breeds a monstrously inflated notion of the qualities of the people or class whom it is proposed to liberate. The more highly vocal and voluble element in American society idealized the Negro in Ward's day as elaborately as in our day it idealized the indigent Poles, the oppressed Armenians, the suffering Belgians, and now idealizes the proletariat. The old showman stopped at Richmond after the surrender, and a Negro bellboy showed him to his quarters:

I accompanied the Afrikan to my lodgins. "My brother," I sed, "air you aware that you 've been 'mancipated? Do you realize how glorus it is to be free? Tell me, my dear brother, does it not seem like some dreams, or do you realize the great fact in all its livin and holy magnitood?"

He sed he would take some gin.

Ward knew well the kind of men that circumstances were bringing to the fore, in both high places and low. He seems aware that great national disturbances leave a society with its *Oberhefe* and its *Unterhefe* precipitated, as in German beer – its scum at the top and its dregs at the bottom. The essential levity of certain characters who are prominent in our *Oberhefe* to-day must, I think, remind the judicious of the old showman's advice to Lincoln concerning his Secretary of War:

Tell E. Stanton that his boldness, honesty and vigger merits all prase, but to keep his undergarmints on. E. Stanton has appeerently only one weakness, which it is he can't allus keep his undergarmints from flyin up over his hed.

At the outset of Mr. Roosevelt's Administration, also, certain features of the New Deal must have brought to mind Ward's admirable suggestion for the make-up of a Brain Trust:

"How 'bout my Cabinit, Mister Ward?" sed Abe.

"Fill it up with Showmen, sir! Showmen is devoid of politics. They hain't got any principles. They know how to cater for the public. They know what the public wants, North and South. Showmen, sir, is honest men. If you doubt their literary ability, look at their posters and see small bills. If you want a Cabinit as is a Cabinit, fill it up with showmen, but don't call on me. The moral wax figger perfeshun must n't be permitted to go down while there's a drop of blood in these vains."

In the muck of the *Unterhefe*, as well, Ward's eye easily made out the unsavoury figure of the profiteer. His *Romance of William Barker*, the Young Patriot, is a brief but pungent summary of the doctrine of "business as usual." He also knew the patrioteer, whom war lets loose upon the community as a sneaking spy and inquisitor-at-large. Boarding a train in Alabama:

I hadn't more'n fairly squatted afore a dark-lookin man with a swinister expression onto his countenance entered the cars, and lookin very sharp at me, he axed what was my principles.

"Secesh," I ansered. "I'm a Dissoluter. I'm in favor of Jeff Davis, Bowregard, Pickens, Capt. Kidd, Bloobead, Munro Edards, the devil, Mrs. Cunningham, and all the rest of 'em."

"You're in favor of the war?"

"Certingly. By all means. I'm in favor of this war and also of the next war. I've been in favor of the next war for over sixteen years."

"War to the knife?" sed the man.

"Blud, Eargo, blud!" sed I, tho them words isn't origgernal with me.

Ward measured the depth of routine patriotism in North and South alike with unflinching accuracy. He wrote several pieces showing the progress of the war-fever among his neighbours in Baldwinsville, Indiana, and they reflect faithfully all the ignorant ferocity, the puerilities of petty self-interest, the abject hypocrisies, that were rampant in every twopenny town in the United States seventeen years ago, and in similar circumstances will be rampant again. These pieces are so closely articulated that I can not quote

from them; they must be read in their entirety. One may say as little as one likes for their humour, but their criticism is sound and searching. The showman was gentler with the South, as became a visitor; yet where can better criticism be found than this, in his letter from Richmond after General Lee's surrender?

There is raly a great deal of Union sentiment in this city. I can see it on every hand.

I met a man today – I am not at liberty to tell his name, but he is a old and infloential citizen of Richmond, and sez he, “Why, we’ve bin fightin agin the Old Flag! Lor bless me, how sing’lar!” He then borrered five dollars of me and bust into a flood of tears.

IV

It is closeness of correspondence with the verdict of history, or with what Aristotle calls “the determination of the judicious,” that establishes the validity of criticism. Ward's pages give a remarkably complete appraisal of what our publicists call “the American psychology,” whereby one may see clearly what it looks like, and what the civilization ensuing upon it looks like, when viewed *sub specie æternitatis*. There are very few aspects of our collective life which he does not illuminate and exhibit as they really are, rather than as distorted by the myopia of prepossession or the delirium of vanity. Like a good artist, he does this by indirection. The great literary artist is one who powerfully impresses a reader with an attitude of mind, a mood, a temper, a state of being, without describing it. If he describes it – if, that is, he anywhere injects himself into the process – the effect is lost. This is the literary art so manifest in the Gospel narrative; and it is this that makes Turgenev supreme among modern artists.

Ward once said of writers like himself (and I venture to emphasize his very remarkable words) that “the truth has found more aid from them than from all the grave polemist and solid writers that have ever spoken or written. . . . They have helped the truth along *without encumbering it with themselves*.” If, indeed, we approach Ward as a critic, leaving aside all thought of his humour, we may see how ably he has helped along the truth

about our civilization; and how, too, he has helped it along in the way that good things are as a rule most effectively helped along – by indirection.

As Ward saw America, its god was Good Business; its monotheism was impregnable. Of man's five fundamental social instincts only one, the instinct of expansion, had free play, and its range was limitless. The instincts of intellect and knowledge, of religion and morals, of beauty and poetry, of social life and manners, were disallowed and perverted. The old showman is himself a most orthodox monotheist; when all comes to all, he worships only the god of Good Business and him only does he serve. At Oberlin College he called on Professor Peck "for the purpuss of skewerin Kolonial Hall to exhibit fly wax works and beests of Pray into."

Sez Perfesser Peck, "Mister Ward, I don't know 'bout this bizness. What air your sentiments?"

Sez I, "I hain't got any."

"Good God!" cried the Perfesser. "Did I understan you to say you have no sentiments?"

"Nary a sentiment," sez I.

"Mister Ward, don't your blud bile at the thawt that three million and a half of your cullud brethren air a clankin their chains in the South?"

Sez I, "Not a bile. Let 'em clank. . . The pint is, can I have your Hall by payin a fair price? You air full of sentiments. That's your lay, while I'm a exhibiter of startlin curiosities. What d'ye say?"

Ward understood the conventional defense-mechanisms and subterfuges that must be employed pretty regularly to lend plausibility to one's adventures in the service of the one true god. Prince de Metternich says that when he visited Paris in the days of Louis-Philippe he grew so sick of the word *fraternité* that if he had a brother he would call him cousin. For nearly twenty years the word "moral" has been so debased in the promotion of political mountebankery and scoundrelism that the sound of it affects a decent person with the utmost repugnance. Ever since 1917, when I have caught a statesman or a publicist using that word in even the most innocent connexion, it has instantly brought to my mind the letter that Ward wrote to a newspaper editor for puffs of his Grate Show.

My show at present consists of three moral Bares, a Kanjraroo... besides several miscellanyus moral wax statoots of celebrated piruts & murderers... I shall have my hanbills dun at your office. Depend upon it... Also git up a tremenjus excitement in yr. paper 'bowt my onparaleld Show. We must fetch the public sumhow. We must wurk on their feelins. *Cum the moral on 'em strong.*

In all this we may see how well Ward anticipates “the determination of the judicious,” how precisely his criticism agrees with the verdict of history. Likewise when one surveys the general order of civilization that he exhibits, one sees the same close correspondence. A society that gives play only to the instinct of expansion must inevitably be characterized by a low type of intellect, a grotesque type of religion, a factitious type of morals, an imperfect type of beauty, an imperfect type of social life and manners. In a word, it is uncivilized; well, just such is the society that Ward depicts. Baldwinsville’s intellectual pabulum is provided by the local *Bugle-horn of Liberty*, edited by Mr. Slinkers; Ward gives us specimens of Mr. Slinker’s editorial style and substance, and they afford a competent measure of his readers. Baldwinsville’s religious aspirations are satisfied with what Burke calls “the dissidence of Dissent, and the protestantism of the Protestant religions,” as interpreted by Parson Batkins. Its resources of sentiment and poetry are measured by the showman’s courtship of Betsy Jane Peasley, and their subsequent domestic life. Its ideal of social life and manners is displayed in the merrymaking over the birth of the showman’s twins. In all, Baldwinsville is perhaps not devoid of interest, yet clearly the student of civilized man would find little there to serve his purpose; and, while its citizens are doubtless not devoid of certain virtues, he would find them intolerable company.

Ward copper-rivets his criticism by his complete identification of the showman with this profoundly imperfect society. The showman carries the atmosphere of Baldwinsville with him wherever he goes; its views of life and its demands on life are his; they are sufficient to delight and satisfy him. As a guest of the Shakers, he applies to their peculiar practices the standards of a religion as grotesque and imperfect as their own, and does it with an utterly naïve unconsciousness that any other standards might be applica-

ble. Among the Mormons and the Free Lovers he applies the standards of Baldwinsville's factitious morality in the same naïve fashion. He confronts the Woman's Rights Association with Baldwinsville's most straitest doctrine of domesticity. In the realm of æsthetics he responds cordially to the sex-attraction of Piccolomini and Patti, but wonders why Patti does not sing in English since she does so well in Italian. The male members of the troupe do not interest him, and he pronounces the immemorial judgment of Baldwinsville on the futility of their occupation.

As fur Brignoly, Ferri and Junky, they air dowlless grate, but I think sich able-boddied men would look better tillin the sile than dressin theirselves up in black close & white kid gluv & shoutin in a furrin tung. Mister Junky is a noble-lookin old man & orter lead armies on to Battel instid of shoutin in a furrin tung.

But while wisdom, shrewdness, and penetration may make a great critic, they are not enough to make a critic of the very first order. They make a Swift or a Juvenal; they do not make a Cervantes or a Rabelais. Lucidity of mind is not enough for that; it must be balanced by largeness of temper, by an easy, urbane, unruffled superiority to the subject of its criticism. Swift was a great and sound critic, but of this temper he had all too little; his writings bristle with the *sæva indignatio* which induces in the reader a frame of mind quite alien to that which criticism of the first order brings out. Ward's contemporary, Mark Twain, – he was a year younger than Ward, – was a great critic, but the *sæva indignatio*, when not actually present in his writings, is never far off; one is conscious of it as of a thunderstorm yet distant but likely to break at any time. Ward had the true critical temper; it pervades his criticism and makes it wholly acceptable. Its influence dissolves rancour; by its aid one surveys the hardness and hideousness of Baldwinsville in a truly Socratic spirit, with no resentment, and with no evangelical desire to expostulate with the citizens of Baldwinsville upon their waste of life. To see how thoroughly pervasive Ward's critical temper is, let us notice how the old showman writes his wife from "the Athens of America."

Dear Betsy: I write you this from Boston, "the Modern Atkins," as it is denomyunated, altho I skurcely know what those air.

How insignificant the remark seems; yet, when we let it sink in, how well it manages to colour one's whole cast of thought, and to induce precisely the right frame of mind in which to approach the gentle, rather agreeable, but somewhat self-contained provincialism which characterized the Boston of 1860. Probably this is as interesting an exhibit as one could find of the medium in which criticism of the first order works. The inscription on Ward's tomb says that "his name will live as a sweet and unfading recollection"; and his name may indeed remind us that a critical equipment of the first order must include sweetness no less than light.

V

And so we come back to our text; we come back to our reason why a people should keep alive the memory of its great men, the obscure as well as the famous; and above all, why it should carefully and clearly discern the qualities that made them great. If I were asked whether France is a nation, I would not waste time over the consolidating genius of Louis XI. I would point to the celebration of the memory of Ernest Renan, and invite my questioner to consider closely the spirit that animated the speeches of M. Poincaré and M. Barthou. I would say that a nation exists where there is a sense of participation in a common spiritual heritage, and a will to improve that heritage for the benefit of those to whom it shall be in turn passed on. Where this sense and will do not exist, no nation exists. There may be an agglomeration of whatever sort, held together by adventitious ties of whatever sort, but this is not a nation.

Our histories tell us that the Civil War finally and forever established the United States as a nation, rather than a an association of sovereign states. One hesitates a little about accepting this statement. The Civil War forged out a political entity, but a political entity is not a nation; far from it – think of the old Austrian Empire. We are an economic agglomeration of importance, doing business over an enormous free-trade area; but, as Renan said, "a customs-union is not a fatherland," and there is even better authority for suspecting that a people's life consisteth not in the abundance

of the things that it possesseth. The question whether the United States is actually a nation has interest, and I leave it with my readers, since I can not pretend that my own opinion in the matter is particularly valuable. I merely suggest that in the nature of things a people's regard for its spiritual ancestry would seem to be a fair measure of its right to call itself a nation, and also a fair index of its national life.