

*A NATION OF CITIES.*

A little over one hundred years ago our forefathers declared themselves to be a free people. After a long and desperate struggle against one of the most powerful nations of Europe they became a nation,—a nation which has extended its borders and grown in population and wealth until to-day it ranks among the greatest nations of the earth.

What has caused this phenomenal growth? Have occult influences been at work? No! What then has caused it?

Nature out of her boundless store has endowed us with a temperate climate,—vast mineral wealth,—a long line of sea coast with many good harbors,—a chain of great lakes on our northern border,—one of the most magnificent river systems in the world,—almost illimitable forests of the finest timber and an immense area of fertile farming land.

Dame Nature hath endowed us with all of these advantages; yet it seems to me that there is one thing besides, that has had an even greater influence on our national growth and development, which has given to us liberty of thought and action, our free ballot, our free schools, our free press and liberty to worship our God as we may desire; which has served to unite the states into one grand whole; which is the most enduring monument to the wisdom of our forefathers, namely: our Constitution, which as the years roll by becomes more powerful and more precious to us.

These were some of our original sources of wealth. Have we made wise use of them? Let us stop a moment and see what has come from our comparatively insignificant beginning.

The vast mineral wealth that lies within our borders is being constantly developed. Manufacturing establishments are springing up on every side, which, taking the raw product of our mines, return it to us in forms of beauty and utility. Our foreign and domestic commerce is increasing with every passing year. Our forests are giving way

before the woodman's axe. The products of our fertile fields find their way to every part of the earth.

To-day where only a few years ago the red man pitched his wigwam and roamed unmolested through the forest or over the broad prairie, the iron horse forces its way. On every hand villages are springing up, embryo cities as it were. The constant whirl of machinery is heard. Everywhere the sounds of labor abound as we fashion articles that shall bring the wealth of the world to our feet. Every incoming ocean steamship brings to our shores hundreds of immigrants who come to make a home in our fair land. Men of all nations and conditions flock here. Every day brings forth new discoveries in science and art. Busy brains are striving to find newer, better, and quicker methods of doing work. We have chained the power of steam and made it our servant. We have harnessed the lightning and made it do our bidding. We have accomplished more in the one hundred years of our life as a nation than had been done in many centuries before.

What marvelous strides we have made! What a change from the infant republic with its population of four millions to the mighty nation of to-day with its sixty million of people! We have made an unprecedented advance, but we are not satisfied. We are not content to lie back on the laurels we have won. Our cry is ever "Onward."

Who can tell what the century to come shall bring? We may not reach that ideal state which Edward Bellamy in his book "Looking Backward" has unfolded to us. It may never be that our government shall control all industries. Our President may not be the head of all our business interests, our music, our literature, our art, "yet it doth not appear what we shall be" when the embryo cities of to-day shall have become a reality. When we shall in truth have become a nation of cities will our country then be more corrupt? Will morality be at a lower ebb among us? I say emphatically, No! And why not? Because illiteracy and vice go hand in hand. As educa-