

*THE AGE OF REALITIES,*

To a person standing on the pyramid of the centuries, looking out over the achievements of history, no fact is more patent to view than that this is an age of realities.

Nor are these realities the result of sudden upheaval in the realness of mind; but a necessary consequence of that great law of progress which operates in all departments of life.

The old mythology veiled in mystery passed into legends; legends shrouded in uncertainty have developed into traditions; traditions vested with possibility have been supplanted by thoughts; thoughts, clothed with power have produced the real; and this realism has been the most potent factor in civilization.

The manhood of antiquity fettered by ignorance was content to let the phenomena of life, so full of mystery pass by unexplained, and in his ignorance man paid homage to the most common-place facts of nature.

The manhood of legendary times, living in an atmosphere of superstition, veiled his face before the manifestation of things wonderful to him, and his superstition blinded his mental vision by which alone he could solve their mysteries.

But the man of to day confronts, unawed, these phenomena, and demands a reason for the manifestations; he pays no *homage*, nor suffers himself to be blinded; but conscious of the power of intellect, he scans the most minute, and the most majestic objects alike, nor rests content until there stands out before his mind in all its strength and beauty the true and real.

The result has been that all the departments of life have felt the impetus of realism; and it has completely revolutionized the history of the world.

One glance at the condition of the most enlightened of nations a century ago, suffices to remind us of the grand changes which have taken place within a few years, changes by which our civilization has been enriched and man has been elevated.

This realism has been most apparent in the three great divisions of life, government, science, and religion. Any one as old as the nineteenth century, has seen a large proportion of the progress in civilization made by the race.

The conception of freedom as held by the Greek and Latin republics was liberty of class or clan alone, not of the *individual* which is a modern idea; and on this idea of *individual* liberty is founded the true principle of *patriotism* by which such spirits as Washington and Jefferson were animated. *Motionless* may be the hand that *traced* the charter of independence, *hushed* the eloquent *lips* that sustained it; but the patriotism that inspired it shall perish never.

Marvelous also has been the march of science. Fifty years ago the great forces of the universe (of nature) were useless so far as contributing to our comforts was concerned. To-day they come to us pleading for employment. The gases touch us and bid us feel for them, the solids lie under us in perfect vassalage, the sea rolls at our feet to bear away our burden while the lightning flashes on the heavens the inscription, electricity was made for man, and what mighty progress has been made in the realms of christianity. Cleared of its mysticism it has been made to humanize laws and check the passions of depraved humanity. Incorporated into the life it has purified man's social conditions, dignified character, and fostered those benevolent institutions which were foreshadowed by its great Teacher when He went about the earth doing good.

In the three great departments of government, science and christianity, we find the noblest proofs of the realities existent in the world to-day.

The old theory of patriotism was so organically connected with that of war as to admit of no separation; but the world to-day knows that war has done more to fetter liberty than to free it. In ancient times, the wars of Rome enslaved every free state and finished the murder of liberty by destroying herself. In modern times, what but war destroyed the republics of Italy; annihilated