CLOSING ADDRESS

OF THE

SIXTEENTH EXHIBITION,

OF THE

Ohio Mechanics' Institute.

BY

REV. G. T. FLANDERS.
CORRESPONDENCE.

CLERK'S LETTER,
Office Ohio Mechanics' Institute,
Cincinnati, November 16th, 1858.

Dear Sir:—I am directed by the Committee on the Sixteenth Exhibition of the Ohio Mechanics' Institute, to request of you a copy of the very admirable and appropriate address, delivered by you at the close of their late Exhibition, the same to be published in the general report of the Committee; believing that its circulation will help to promote the great objects which this department of the Institute is seeking to accomplish.

Your compliance with the above request, will be highly appreciated by the Institute.

Yours Very Respectfully,

To Rev. Geo T. Flanders.

To Rev. Geo T. Flanders.

THE REV. G. T. FLANDERS' REPLY.

Cincinnati, December 9th, 1858.

John B. Heich Esq. Dear Sir:—My address, delivered at the close of the sixteenth exhibition of the Ohio Mechanics' Institute, though in part extemporary is hereby placed at the disposal of the Institute Committee. In justice to myself it is proper to state, that it was prepared solely with reference to the occasion on which it was delivered, and with no expectation of its future publication.

Yours Very Respectfully,

G. T. Flanders.
THE AGE OF ENTERPRISE.

GENTLEMEN OF THE INSTITUTE:—

A story is humorously told of a Carthaginian warrior, renowned for his prowess in conflict with Roman arms, that some rustic Professor of a Military school proposed to give him rudimental instruction in the art of war!

Not unlike, in some respects, is the attitude in which the kindness of your Committee has placed me to-night. A Theologian, whose proper sphere of effort is purely moral, invited to address skilled and ingenious mechanics on an occasion like this! The task assigned me, superficially viewed, seems absolutely discouraging. But looking beneath the surface for the reality on which it depends, I perceive that there is a grand symbolism attached to the objects I see around me—a spiritual suggestiveness in the combinations of the scene, charged with prophetic significance, and well calculated to invite to profitable thought. I perceive lying back of these manifold products of skilled Industry, busy brains, vigorous muscles, sensitive nerves, patient spirits, sublime inspiration, and indomitable will. I perceive here the intelligence that is marching rapidly forward to the conquest and mastery of the world. The worker has succeeded in fusing the elements of beauty and grace, sublimity and strength, into the facile forms of use. He has personalized genius and utility in the wonderful products of intelligent and persistent toil. I perceive not their significance in the light of a cold and sceptical materialism, but in the transfiguration of a Divine Spirituality. They are not only symbols of genius and educated industry; but also heralds of the future, and inspired prophets of Destiny. They stand here in their several places in this beautiful Temple of Industry, silent, but eloquently impressive; each with separate individuality, each with special function and use, but blending at the
ordination of exquisite taste, to form an attractive and harmonious whole. They seem to have come here as if moved by a common impulse; as if inspired by a common attraction. Hither from store, shop, and mart, they have come on their beneficent and peaceful mission. The steam-engine is here, with its fiery heart and sinews of steel, to furnish the necessary motor. The type-machine is here to represent the Republic of Letters. The printing-press—famous "impressional medium!"—is here to give its impressions of the passing hour. The sewing-machine is here with its "song of the shirt"; but, thank God, it is sung no more "at a dolorous pitch"! And every stout and sturdy, every rugged and burly form of use, is represented in every conceivable way that even Yankee ingenuity could suggest. And skill is here with its costly fabrics; and music with its ethereal harmonics; and art with its magic pencil and rainbow dies. Did Arabian enchantment ever work greater marvels in its own chosen sphere of romance? And these multiplied creations of busy brains and skillful hands, are here to testify, not only for themselves, but of the thrift and enterprise of the Queen City. And not alone of the great city of the West, but of the Age. They are types of a new cycle of progress. They intimate that the completest and most perfect of the ages has come; that the centuries have flowered, and produced an offspring of universal characteristics—The Age of Enterprise.

The merely dramatic divisions of the past, symbolized no complete and genuine movement in which humanity was represented and bore part. They were, to be sure, legitimate scenes of the drama, but they were more local than general; mere side-jets of development, indicating intensity of movement and thinness of crust at a particular point. When other faculties of the soul were astir and bursting into flower, broader spheres of action, and a corresponding characterization, were demanded. The age that has succeeded the age of physical prowess, the age of Art, the age of literature, demands some term susceptible of the broadest application; a characterization which shall not only be accurately suggestive of the phases and leading tendencies of the present, but include also the peculiarities of the past. Enterprise is the word! Enterprise is its universal characteristic. In every department of labor and skill; in all physical, scientific, literary, and artistic achievements, the enterprise of
the present age is pre-eminent. It includes and involves all previous specific movements. It fills the globe with the din of labor and the bustle of traffic. It achieves excellence, and reaches toward perfection in all its manifold pursuits. It excels in feats of arms, in inventive genius, in mechanical triumphs, in artistic conceptions, in scientific discovery, in geographical explorations, in adventure and daring, in busy industry and bold movement everywhere, and with lusty life, and hearty will, it rolls its song of enterprise round the world.

How majestic, indeed, are achievements of labor urged forward by the spirit of enterprise. The sturdy old Titan, he is monarch of the world! He waves his magic baton, and its ponderous machinery moves on. The white sails of commerce gleam over distant seas. Proud keels furrow the waters of every ocean round the globe. The smoke of his forges, darken the atmosphere and obscure the landscape; and the ceaseless rush of wheels, and the clamor of hammers, rise above the discord of busy streets. On he sweeps over land and sea, a grand embodiment of intelligence and power. Civilization with all the attendant graces of religion, follow in his train. His feats are the miracles of to-day. The world is greatly his debtor; for he cherishes the love of liberty, sows broad-cast the principles of virtue and independence, and crowns the land with honor, dignity, and peace.

But this age of enterprise has other characteristics than tireless energy and bold achievement. Labor was never before so honorable, dignified, and revered. Labor and respectability are more closely allied. "There are now no classes of respectable idle men among us. All idlers, of whatever degree, go by the common name of loafers! To be respectable, every man must do something; and he loses his station in society, if while he is of a proper age to labor, he has no regular and honorable employment." Thank God, it is honorable here to toil. I rejoice that it is so. The old superstition that labor is a curse, has well nigh vanished. God, from the first, made man for labor; and the ordinance that necessitates it is a beautiful and beneficent law.

"What is the king with his courtly train—
The king in his marble hall—
Measured by him who through pleasure and pain,
Lifts up the granite wall?"
CLOSING ADDRESS.

"The trowel shall live when the sceptre is gone,
And the monarch sleeps in shame;
The artizan builds in the deathless stone
To himself a pillar of fame."

Our noblemen are nature's noblemen. The true patent of nobility to-day is based on use. The badges our nobility wear have been bravely and nobly won. They have been wrought at loom and forge, in the shop of the artizan, in the counting-room, and at the plough. "When our mightiest councils meet, voices are listened to that have been heard among the reapers, and toil-scarred hands are lifted in acts of suffrage; and these are our honors. Our great charter of liberty bears the signature of men that have worked the printing-press, and wielded the lap-stone and the last; and we know that such men have been our strong defenders, and they are buried among the white bones of our battle-fields." The old proscriptive world, which for centuries turned its back on the laborer and awarded him its sneers, finds something in him now to admire and honor. It perceives the truth, slowly enough to be sure, that intellect and free labor are necessarily associated; and that the brightest manifestation of mind lies not in the ability to consume the products of labor, but in the ability to produce them. Intelligence and industry go hand in hand. Americans, I am proud to say, have been the quickest to perceive and recognize this truth; and it has, in turn, inspired them. All over the globe to-day, the name American is the synonym of enterprise; aye, of honor and worth. Is there danger that it will ever be otherwise? Not the least! Is it likely that it will ever be said in truth of our countrymen, what Sir Horace Vere said of his brother? "Pray, of what did your brother die?" said the Marquis of Spinola. "He died," said Sir Horace, "of having nothing to do!" Is there danger of this? The contingency is too remote to be seriously entertained. The principles of the American people are established, and their spirit, the bold, unflinching Anglo-Saxon Spirit, will maintain them. Reversion and decadence are the bugbears of the demagogue; the dreams of the misanthrope, never to be realized. The land of our birth is the pledge of the perpetuity of all the essential elements of American character. And when shorn of its noble forests; when its hills are exhausted of their rich stores of iron and coal; when the bosom of its generous soil is no longer gener-
ous and fruitful; when the seas that wash its shores, and its
great rivers and lakes bear no more the rich freights of its
now widely extending commerce; when its populous cities
dwindle to the importance of provincial towns, then, and not
until then, shall American ambition be paralyzed, American
genius slumber, and American enterprise die; and labor, with
its immeasurable instrumentalities of elevation and develop-
ment, vanish from the Republic of the free!
In assisting to develop the inherent respectability of labor,
and to elevate the laborer to an honorable position in society,
you, gentlemen of the Institute, have borne, and are now bearing,
a distinguished part. These schools, where intellect is trained
to the most practically efficient workings, are among the noblest
institutions of our land. They rise, in all our great cities, the
landmarks of intellectual and solid growth; and they indicate
with unfailing accuracy, the real state of the American mind;
the pulsation, whether diseased or healthy, of the American
heart. For somehow, as by a Divine ordination, labor and
good morals are necessarily associated. "The idle man's brain
is the devil's workshop." It is prolific of well nigh all the ills
that disturb the social state. Violations of public and personal
security, maraudings, and every variety of crime, are referable
to idleness as their principal cause. In the same catalogue may
be included the minor vices of loafersm, puppyism, dandyism,
which form the basis of mental and moral imbecility. What-
ever institution, therefore, contributes to the elevation and
respectability of labor, is a friend of good morals, of good gov-
ernment, and of the intellectual and spiritual well-being of man.
In this, also, there is a function of sacredness not to be denied.
Indeed, as Carlyle says, "all work is sacred. There is some-
ing thing of divineness in it. There is a perennial nobleness in
work. Sweat of the brow, from that up to sweat of the brain;
sweat of the heart, which includes all Kepler Calculations, all
Newton Meditations, all Sciences, spoken Epics, all acted Hero-
isms, Martyrdoms, up to the agony of 'bloody sweat,' which
all men have called divine—all true work is religion! Admira-
ble was the saying of the old monks—'Laborare est orare'—
work is worship! Older than all preached gospels, was this
unpreached, inarticulate ineradicable, forever enduring Gospel
—'Work, and therein have well-being!'"
The Ohio Mechanics' Institute may be justly regarded, there-
fore, as not only a school of intellectual training, but as a pat-
ron of good morals. It has claims not only on the Industrial,
but upon the Moral and Religious interests of Cincinnati. It
appeals not so much to selfish pecuniary interests, as to our
sense of obligation and duty to individual man and society. It
addresses pointedly the individual conscience and heart; and I
do not hesitate to state my conviction that this Institution, with
its splendid Museum, its large and well selected Library, its
School of Design, its manifold appliances of education in its
peculiar sphere, is better adapted to fill, successfully, a large
field of usefulness to the general community, in promoting a
liberal and generous culture, and establishing firmly, the prin-
ciples of perseverance, honor and rectitude, than any single
Theological establishment in this city.

The history of such an institution, gentlemen, interests me
greatly. I learn, that, like many noble men, now "deserving
well of their country," the early career of the Institute was
one of struggle and poverty, but signalized, eventually, with
appreciation and success. And I hear that the result has not
been reached without sacrifice. The names of many honored
citizens grace its rolls, and with each name I find connected
a story of effort and sacrifice peculiarly its own. Prominent
among them I see the name of Greenwood. The masterly
enterprise, the iron will, and private purse of this energetic
worker, appear to have been necessary to guide the enterprise
to complete success. "The right man in the right place,"
always comes at last. When great undertakings languish;
when great principles are at stake and seem likely to perish; at
such an hour of peril the Providential man appears. His lofti-
ness of purpose, his benevolence and firmness of spirit, his
enlarged view and prophetic ken, indicate his fitness for the
crisis. Conscious of responsibility, and enthroned on princi-
ple, he becomes inspired. He is one

"Who, if called upon to face
Some awful moment to which heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad, for human kind,
______________ is attired
With sudden brightness like a man inspired;
And through the heat of conflict keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw."

He embraces the opportunity. With confident firmness he
steps upon the stage. He meets every emergency, and submits to every sacrifice; and concentrating public attention on the one great point of interest, he wins universal approval and commands success. Bid the crowd give way, that this man may fall into rank with men who shall be remembered hereafter as the benefactors of their kind.

Borne forward now upon the tide of popularity and success, the stage of trial and the furnace of difficulty passed, an auspicious future lies before you. With an increasing membership and patronage, with accumulating means of usefulness, we may safely predict for the Institute a long and prosperous career. Sound then the call to the young men of the city, of whatever class; to the traders, artists, and master-mechanics of the city, of whatever profession; to the fair and beautiful ladies of the city, whose approving smiles command success: bid them to the enterprise; bid them bear it aloft among the noblest enterprises of the time; with its signals all out, its banners afloat, streaming victory from every fold!

The Sixteenth Exhibition excels all former exhibitions in the number and variety of its articles, in brilliancy of general arrangement, in the patronage an appreciating public has seen fit to accord. But may it be cast immeasurably in the shade, in each of these particulars, by the exhibition of 1859!

Alas! that this busy scene, so radiant and gay, must speedily vanish; that this Temple of Industry, now so densely crowded with beauty and intelligence, shall soon be tenantless and dumb. But it is an ennobling thought that these displays of skill and enterprise are now transpiring all over the land. Autumn, the most charming season of the American year, is dedicated the Sabbath of Industry, the Holiday of Toil. On the Christian Sabbath the worship of a united people goes up to God from ten thousand shrines, from the lakes to the gulf, from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast. So when Autumn comes on its annual mission, bearing home the lavish bounties of the year, the temples of industry are thrown open, the altars prepared, the ritual appointed, and the people go up to celebrate the jubilee of use.

Fitting and appropriate season! May it ever be thus devoted! When golden harvests wave no more on hill-side and plain; when orchards have dropt their fruitage, and the gardens are dull and sere; crowd then again, fair ladies and worthy gentlemen, this temple with the symbols of your skill, and the
trophies of your labor; decorate its walls, throng its floor, and pour through its aisles the happy sounds of movement and life. Through the instrumentalities of labor and religion we are approaching the epoch of peace. One after another the discords cease. The attentive ear can perceive that the great soul is slowly coming into harmony. Brave spirits are everywhere at work aiding this result. The night wanes; the hill-tops are golden with the promise of morning. The \textit{day} is here! Labor has accomplished its destiny, and earth is a terrestrial Paradise.