

their country and good government in the future will be assured.

It behooves every patriotic American to try to instil patriotism into others in order that the evils confronting us today may be solved and result in benefitting humanity. If these evils are eradicated we will have a nation that will be an honor to the memory of those who, a little over a quarter of a century ago, died while annihilating that greatest of all evils, slavery.

#### LITERARY.

Along with the growth of sentiments of toleration in the breasts of those who profess themselves Christians has come an increasing desire to investigate the fundamental doctrines of other systems of religion. The day when those were denounced as heretics who had the presumption to suppose that some good elements might be found even in other religions than Christianity, is separated by a wide space from the present when it is becoming more and more customary not to form one's religious opinions at the dictation of any hierarchy, but by weighing and comparing the elements of all religions, accepting the good and rejecting the bad, in whatever system that good or bad be found.

The foregoing is illustrated by the amount of effort expended now as compared with former times in attempts to form an accurate conception of the merits and defects of one of Christianity's most deadly adversaries, the Mahometan religion. In the Middle Ages and, indeed, almost up to the present the followers of Christ, strong in their own faith and resentful of the claims of all other religions, felt no desire to investigate that which they knew beforehand to be filled with iniquity. The present century, however, has witnessed even clergymen depart from traditional custom, making earnest and prolonged efforts to penetrate to the heart of other religions, and to form an accurate conception of the life and merits of their founders. Accordingly, almost down to the present the founder of Mahometanism has been represented solely as a conscious imposter, a man whose marvelous success as a writer and leader of his fellow countrymen was the outcome of Satanic aid.

At the time when Mahometanism was contending with Christianity for the mastery in Europe, the leaders of the forces of Christianity many have considered that they were performing a pious duty in seeking to undermine the influence of the prophet of Arabia by misrepresenting his conduct and his aims. Now happily Mahometanism shows itself incapable of further aggressions, and Christianity no longer contends with it for very existence. Hence no valid excuse can now be offered for seeking to belittle the genius of Mahomet, and for withholding from him whatever praise is his due.

It is trite to observe that he is to be judged only by the standard of his time and country; trite but none the less necessary. For lest a person be continually watchful he will unconsciously measure an ancient personage by present standards. Furthermore, one must discriminate between Mahometanism as it is to day, and the religion as its founder; just as one must not regard as essential to true Christianity all the fantastic beliefs that have found credence since the Christian era began.

Mahomet was born at a time when Arabians were idolators sunk in the most debasing superstition. Arabia was the home of the persecuted of all sects, who neglected no opportunity to make proselytes. As in religion, so in political affairs, Arabia was the seat of the most frightful discord. Rob-

bery, private warfare, and thirst for revenge on all enemies seemed to preclude all possibility of union. Men gloried in the unrestrained freedom that had been the proudest legacy of long lines of ancestors.

Far different was the condition of Arabia sixty years afterwards. At that time Mahomet ruled absolutely the destinies of nearly all Arabians. The energy previously expended in private warfare was now to be directed to the subjugation of a world. Arabians were united by the only bond that could hold them together, the tie of common religious belief. From the most discordant elements Mahomet had formed a nation, which, after his death, was able, in spite of internal dissension, to win by conquest in eighty years as much territory as Rome had conquered in eight hundred! It is idle to question Mahomet's claim to greatness as a leader of men, as one who inspired his followers with an attachment to him that made them brave death with impunity.

But what was his motive in promulgating his creed? The monk of the Middle Ages answered that throughout all his career Mahomet was working for personal aggrandizement. The monk answered thus because it was inconceivable to him that any man should conscientiously refuse assent to the doctrines of his most holy Christian religion. Some men to-day labor under the delusion that to find any good in an antagonist of Christianity is impious; and hence at once set down Mahomet as a conscious imposter. Furthermore, blinded bigots have denounced as infidels the Milwans and Sales of Arabic learning, because, forsooth, their investigations had led them to consider Mahomet solely as an enthusiast, the victim of hallucination.

Even those who take the unfavorable view of his motive admit that in the early years of his mission there is little evidence that he was working only for private ends. During the first thirteen years of his mission he preached to the idolatrous Meccans a morality and religion incomparably superior to that which they already possessed. He had voluntarily forsaken the high estate to which he had been born. He received in return for thirteen weary years no recompense but the gibes and threats of the obdurate Meccans. Such persistency in defeat does not often characterize the one conscious of the falsity of his pretensions. There is no reasonable doubt that at this period of his life he was honest and sincere, a man who had the most unquestioning faith in what he preached.

Victory came suddenly after long years of disheartening defeat; and as in the case of many another man it turned his head. He still had the same object in view. But his later life is characterized by unscrupulousness as to the means he employed to attain his object. It was after he had entered on his career of victory that he appealed to the sword in order to gain proselytes; that he massacred the stubborn Jews, who would not accept his religion; that he exchanged meek appeals for bare toleration to imperious demands of submission. From this time, in striking contrast to the purity of his earlier years, his domestic life was sullied by vice. In some instances he claimed exemption from the restrictions he laid upon his followers. All this is doubly blameworthy in one claiming to be God's prophet.

But it is not to be inferred from these facts that he ceased to believe himself called of God to reform the world and bring it back to monotheism, from which all, even Christians, he believed had departed. What seems in his actions so inconsistent may often be explained, and explained alone, by the supposition that he was laboring under hallucination. His appeal to the sword—have no other religious reformers done likewise? One believing himself commissioned to call the