

support. Government is strictly an empirical science. Here theory is nothing, experience, everything. Then culture, which contemplates a knowledge of all that is good in the past, is certainly of the utmost importance to those whose task it is to govern.

Perhaps no country is flattered more to-day than ours. Mr. Bright, the great English liberal leader, says: "I believe that the people of the United States have offered to the world more valuable information during the last forty years, than all Europe put together." Although without doubt we have made rapid progress I think that this statement also must be taken *cum grano salis*. When our English friends flatter us thus they are thinking of our material prosperity rather than our advancement in that higher realm of thought which alone constitutes the true grandeur of nations. If a glacier should again sweep over America and carry every vestige of civilization with it to the sea, would we be remembered as the nation that built the longest railroad in the world, as the nation that built a Chicago in a few years, or would our fair land rather be remembered as the birthplace of Hamilton, Webster and Sumner?

Again we are apt to make an idol of our freedom. We worship our liberty of opinion. The average American stands several inches higher when he reflects that his opinion, although based on no logic or experience, weighs as much in the ballot as the opinion of the greatest of his countrymen. I would not restrict this liberty, for although it is a most dangerous liberty yet its restriction would be still more dangerous. Never, I think, in the history of our own country has the cloud of bewildered opinion been as dark and threatening as it is to-day. And I know of no more potent cause than a want of culture, a lack of that knowledge of the best that has been thought and said by mankind—a failure to see the future by the light of the past. If education is to be a security for our free institutions it

must deal with the principles of those institutions. It must unfold the principles of government by dispelling this cloud of bewildered opinion and letting in the vitalizing influence of culture. Then true culture, so far from being a hinderance, is a most necessary preparation for political life. H. H. W.

MARDI GRAS.

During the great festival of "Mardi Gras" in a southern city, I stood upon a balcony, and, for hours, watched the procession of maskers, making slow headway through the crowded street. There were ten thousand men taking part in the carnival, and, noting their grotesque costumes, it seemed to me that each had excelled the last in his hideousness. Frightful mythological characters, imps, elves, gnomes, sprites of the air, and demons from under the sea, were represented in the pageant. And as I watched the slow shifting scenes of that gorgeous panorama, I thought how little do men need to distort themselves out of human semblance to be disguised. Men conceal what they wish without the aid of mask and domino. The human face is but the mask which conceals the character. No soul stands out without some disguise between it and the rest of the world. We are all maskers taking a part in the grand carnival. We select our costumes and join the throng, each wears different devices, for different purposes, and hides his thoughts and motives under them. Some, perhaps, claim the "face" to be "the mirror of the mind," and pride themselves upon their ability to determine the character of a man by the appearance he presents in their intercourse with him, but as a general thing faces are unreadable and tell nothing of the owner's character. The merriest men, now and then, have the most solemn faces, and the most serious, cheerful ones. We cannot tell what a man has suffered during a long and troubled career, by the impress