the voice of Love had been but an irrelevant parenthesis.

"All the same, I never thought to find myself ranged against the aristocracy, any aristocracy. I simply believe in the best, you know, all along the line."

He was much amused.

"My dear lady, aristocracy over here — between democracy and plutocracy it has the deuce of a time. But joy, Edith, and peace, they've always been able to get along without — affluence."

"Don't speak that word," she said.

"It's outside the kingdom of Heaven."

EDWIN LAWRENCE GODKIN

BY JAMES FORD RHODES

Our two great journalists of the nineteenth century were Greeley and Godkin. Though differing in very many respects, they were alike in possessing a definite moral purpose. The most glorious and influential portion of Greetley’s career lay between the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska act in 1854 and the election of Lincoln in 1860, when the press played an important part in the upbuilding of a political party which formulated in a practical manner the anti-slavery sentiment of the country. Foremost among newspapers was the New York Tribune; foremost among editors was Horace Greeley. Of Greeley in his best days Godkin wrote: “He has an enthusiasm which never flags, and a faith in principles which nothing can shake, and an English style which, for vigor, terseness, clearness and simplicity has never been surpassed, except perhaps by Cobbett.”

Greeley and Godkin were alike in furnishing their readers with telling arguments. In northern New York and the Western Reserve of Ohio the weekly Tribune was a political Bible. “Why do you look so gloomy?” said a traveler, riding along the highway in the Western Reserve during the old anti-slavery days, to a farmer who was sitting moodily on a fence. “Because,” replied the farmer, “my Democratic friend next door got the best of me in an argument last night. But when I get my weekly Tribune to-morrow I’ll knock the foundations all out from under him.”

Premising that Godkin is as closely identified with the Nation and the Evening Post as Greeley with the Tribune, I shall refer to a personal experience. Passing a part of the winter of 1886 in a hotel at Thomasville, Georgia, it chanced that among the hundred or more guests there were eight or ten of us who regularly received the Nation by post. Ordinarily it arrived on the Friday noon train from Savannah, and when we came from our mid-day dinner into the hotel office, there, in our respective boxes, easily seen, and from their peculiar form recognized by every one, were our copies of the Nation. Occasionally the papers missed connection at Savannah, and our Nations did not arrive until after supper. It used to be said by certain scoffers that if a discussion of political questions came up in the afternoon of one of those days of disappointment, we readers were mum; but in the late evening, after having digested our political pabulum, we were ready to join issue with any antagonist. Indeed, each of us might have used the words of James Russell Lowell, written

1 Lecture read before Harvard University, April 13, 1908.
2 R. Ogden’s Life and Letters of E. L. Godkin, i, 255.
3 Rhodes’s History of the United States, ii, 72 (C. M. Depew).
while he was traveling on the continent and visiting many places where the Nation could not be bought: "All the time I was without it, my mind was chaos and I did n’t feel that I had a safe opinion to swear by." ¹

While the farmer of the Western Reserve and Lowell are extreme types of clientele, each represents fairly well the peculiar following of Greeley and of Godkin, which differed as much as did the personal traits of the two journalists. Godkin speaks of Greeley's "odd attire, shambling gait, simple, good-natured and hopelessly peaceable face, and long yellow locks." ² His "old white hat and white coat," which in New York were regarded as an affectation, counted with his following west of the Hudson River as a winning eccentricity. When he came out upon the lecture platform with crumpled shirt, cravat awry, and wrinkled coat looking as if he had traveled for a number of nights and days, such disorder appeared to many of his western audiences as nothing worse than the mark of a very busy man, who had paid them the compliment of leaving his editorial rooms to speak to them in person, and who had their full sympathy as he thus opened his discourse: "You must n’t, my friends, expect fine words from a rough busy man like me."

The people who read the Tribune did not expect fine words; they were used to the coarse, abusive language in which Greeley repelled attacks, and to his giving the lie with heartiness and vehemence.³ They enjoyed reading that "another lie was nailed to the counter," and that an antagonist "was a liar, knowing himself to be a liar and lying with naked intent to deceive." ⁴

On the contrary, the dress, the face, and the personal bearing of Godkin proclaimed at once the gentleman and cultivated man of the world. You felt that he was a man whom you would like to meet at dinner, accompany on a long walk, or cross the Atlantic with, were you an acquaintance or friend.

An incident related by Godkin himself shows that at least one distinguished gentleman did not enjoy sitting at meat with Greeley. During the spring of 1864 Godkin met Greeley at breakfast at the house of Mr. John A. C. Gray. William Cullen Bryant, at that time editor of the New York Evening Post, was one of the guests, and, when Greeley entered the room, was standing near the fireplace conversing with his host. On observing that Bryant did not speak to Greeley, Gray asked him in a whisper, "Don’t you know Mr. Greeley?" In a loud whisper Bryant replied, "No, I don’t; he’s a blackguard — he’s a blackguard." ⁵

In the numbers of people whom he influenced, Greeley had the advantage over Godkin. In February, 1855, the circulation of the Tribune was 172,000, and its own estimate of its readers half a million, which was certainly not excessive. It is not a consideration beyond bounds to infer that the readers of the Tribune in 1860 furnished a goodly part of the 1,886,000 votes which were received by Lincoln.

At different times, while Godkin was editor, the Nation stated its exact circulation, which, as I remember it, was about 10,000, and it probably had 50,000 readers. As many of its readers were in the class of Lowell, its indirect influence was immense. Emerson said that the Nation had "breadth, variety, self-sustainment, and an admirable style of thought and expression." — "I owe much to the Nation," wrote Francis Parkman. "I regard it as the most valuable of American journals, and feel that the best interests of the country are doubly involved in its success." — "What an influence you have!" said George William Curtis to Godkin. "What a sanitary element in our affairs the Nation is!" — "To my generation,"

¹ Ogden, ii, 88. ² Ibid., i, 257. ³ Parton's Greeley, pp. 331, 576; my own recollections; Ogden, i, 255. ⁴ Godkin, "Random Recollections," Evening Post, Dec. 30, 1899. ⁵ Ogden, i, 168.
Edwin Lawrence Godkin wrote William James, "Godkin's was certainly the towering influence in all thought concerning public affairs, and indirectly his influence has certainly been more pervasive than that of any other writer of the generation, for he influenced other writers who never quoted him, and determined the whole current of discussion." — "When the work of this century is summed up," wrote Charles Eliot Norton to Godkin, "what you have done for the good old cause of civilization, the cause which is always defeated but always after defeat taking more advanced position than before — what you have done for this cause will count for much." — "I am conscious," wrote President Eliot to Godkin, "that the Nation has had a decided effect on my opinions and my action for nearly forty years; and I believe it has had like effect on thousands of educated Americans." 1

A string of quotations, as is well known, becomes wearisome; but the importance of the point that I am trying to make will perhaps justify one more. "I find myself so thoroughly agreeing with the Nation always," wrote Lowell, "that I am half persuaded that I edit it myself!" 2 Truly Lowell had a good company: Emerson, Parkman, Curtis, Norton, James, Eliot, — all teachers in various ways. Through their lectures, books, and speeches, they influenced college students at an impressionable age; they appealed to young and to middle-aged men; and they furnished comfort and entertainment for the old. It would have been difficult to find anywhere in the country an educated man whose thought was not affected by some one of these seven; and their influence on editorial writers for newspapers was remarkable. These seven were all taught by Godkin.

"Every Friday morning when the Nation comes," wrote Lowell to Godkin, "I fill my pipe and read it from beginning to end. Do you do it all yourself? Or are there really so many clever men in the country?" 3 Lowell's experience, with or without tobacco, was undoubtedly that of hundreds, perhaps of thousands, of educated men, and the query he raised was not an uncommon one. At one time, Godkin, I believe, wrote most of "The Week," which was made up of brief and pungent comments on events, as well as the principal editorial articles. The power of iteration, which the journalist possesses, is great, and, when that power is wielded by a man of keen intelligence and wide information, possessing a knowledge of the world, a sense of humor, and an effective literary style, it becomes tremendous. The only escape from Godkin's iteration was one frequently tried, and that was, to stop the Nation.

Although Godkin published three volumes of Essays, the honors he received during his lifetime were due to his work as editor of the Nation and the Evening Post; and this is his chief title to fame. The education, early experience, and aspiration of such a journalist are naturally matter of interest. Born in 1831, in the County of Wicklow in the southeastern part of Ireland, the son of a Presbyterian minister, he was able to say when referring to Goldwin Smith, "I am an Irishman but I am as English in blood as he is." 4 Receiving his higher education at Queen's College, Belfast, he took a lively interest in present politics, his college friends being Liberals. John Stuart Mill was their prophet, Grote and Bentham their daily companions, and America was their promised land. "To the scoffs of the Tories that our schemes were impracticable," he has written of these days, "our answer was that in America, barring slavery, they were actually at work. There, the chief of the State and the legislators were freely elected by the people. There, the offices were open to everybody who had the capacity to fill them. There was no army or navy, two great curses of humanity in all ages. There was to be no war except war in

1 Ogden, i, 221, 249, 251, 252; ii, 222, 231
2 Letters of J. R. Lowell, ii, 76.
3 Letters of J. R. Lowell, i, 368.
4 Ogden, i, 1.
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... In fact, we did not doubt that in America at last the triumph of humanity over its own weaknesses and superstitions was being achieved, and the dream of Christendom was at last being realized."

As a correspondent of the London Daily News he went to the Crimea. The scenes at Malakoff gave him a disgust for war which thenceforth he never failed to express upon every opportunity. When a man of sixty-eight, reckoning its cost in blood and treasure, he deemed the Crimean War entirely unnecessary and very deplorable. Godkin arrived in America in November, 1856, and soon afterwards, with Olmsted’s Journey in the Seaboard Slave States, the Back Country and Texas, as guide-books, took a horseback journey through the South. Following closely Olmsted’s trail, and speaking therefore with knowledge, he has paid him one of the highest compliments one traveler ever paid another. “Olmsted’s work,” he wrote, “in vividness of description and in photographic minuteness far surpasses Arthur Young’s.” During this journey he wrote letters to the London Daily News, and these were continued after his return to New York City. For the last three years of our Civil War, he was its regular correspondent, and, as no one denies that he was a powerful advocate when his heart was enlisted, he rendered efficient service to the cause of the North. The News was strongly pro-Northern, and Godkin furnished the facts which rendered its leaders sound and instructive as well as sympathetic. All this while he was seeing socially the best people in New York City, and making useful and desirable acquaintances in Boston and Cambridge.

The interesting story of the foundation of the Nation has been told a number of times, and it will suffice for our purpose to say that there were forty stockholders who contributed a capital of one hundred thousand dollars, one-half of which was raised in Boston, and one-quarter each in Philadelphia and New York. Godkin was the editor, and next to him the chief promoters were James M. McKim of Philadelphia and Charles Eliot Norton. The first number of this “weekly journal of politics, literature, science and art” appeared on July 6, 1865. Financial embarrassment and disagreements among the stockholders marked the first year of its existence, at the end of which Godkin, McKim, and Frederick Law Olmsted took over the property, and continued the publication under the proprietorship of E. L. Godkin & Co. “The Nation owed its continued existence to Charles Eliot Norton,” wrote Godkin in 1889. “It was his calm and confidence amid the shrieks of combatants... which enabled me to do my work even with decency.”

Sixteen years after the Nation was started, in 1881, Godkin sold it out to the Evening Post, becoming associate editor of that journal, with Carl Schurz as his chief. The Nation was thereafter published as the weekly edition of the Evening Post. In 1883 Schurz retired and Godkin was made editor-in-chief, having the aid and support of one of the owners, Horace White. On January 1, 1900, on account of ill health, he withdrew from the editorship of the Evening Post, thus retiring from active journalism.

For thirty-five years he had devoted himself to his work with extraordinary ability and singleness of purpose. Marked appreciation came to him: invitations to deliver courses of lectures from both Harvard and Yale, the degree of A. M. from Harvard, and the degree of D. C. L. from Oxford. What might have been a turning-point in his career was the offer in 1870 of the professorship of history at Harvard. He was strongly tempted to ac-

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1 Evening Post, Dec. 30, 1899; Ogden, i, 11.
2 Evening Post, Dec. 30, 1899.
3 Ibid.; Ogden, i, 113.

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4 Evening Post, December 30, 1899; Ogden, i, passim; The Nation, June 25, 1885, May 25, 1902.
5 Ogden, ii, chap. xiii.
cept it, but, before coming to a decision, he took counsel of a number of friends; and few men, I think, have ever received such wise and disinterested advice as did Godkin when he was thus hesitating in what way he should apply his teaching. The burden of the advice was not to take the professorship if he had to give up the Nation.

Frederick Law Olmsted wrote to him: "If you can't write fully half of 'The Week' and half the leaders, and control the drift and tone of the whole while living at Cambridge, give up the professorship, for the Nation is worth many professorships. It is a question of loyalty over a question of comfort." Lowell wrote to him in the same strain: "Stay if the two things are incompatible. We may find another professor by and by. ... but we can't find another editor for the Nation." From Germany, John Bigelow sent a characteristic message: "Tell the University to require each student to take a copy of the Nation. Do not profess history for them in any other way. I dare say your lectures would be good, but why limit your pupils to hundreds which are now counted by thousands?"

As is well known, Godkin relinquished the idea of the college connection and stuck to his job, although the quiet and serenity of a professor's life in Cambridge contrasted with his own turbulent days appealed to him powerfully. "Ten years hence," he wrote to Norton, "if things go on as they are now I shall be the most odious man in America. Not that I shall not have plenty of friends, but my enemies will be far more numerous and active." Six years after he had founded the Nation, and one year after he had declined the Harvard professorship, when he was yet but forty years old, he gave this humorously exaggerated account of his physical failings due to his nervous strain: "I began the Nation young, handsome, and fascinating, and am now withered and somewhat broken, rheumatism gaining on me rapidly, my complexion ruined, as also my figure, for I am growing stout." 2

But his choice between the Harvard professorship and the Nation was a wise one. He was a born writer of paragraphs and editorials. The files of the Nation are his monument. A crown of his laborious days is the tribute of James Bryce: "The Nation was the best weekly not only in America but in the world." 3

Thirty-five years of journalism, in which Godkin was accustomed to give hard blows, did not, as he himself fore-shadowed, call forth a unanimous chorus of praise; and the objections of intelligent and high-minded men are well worth taking into account. The most common one is that his criticism was always destructive; that he had an eye for the weak side of causes and men that he did not favor, and these he set forth with unremitting vigor without regard for palliating circumstances; that he erected a high and impossible ideal and judged all men by it; hence, if a public man was right eight times out of ten, he would seize upon the two failures and so parade them with his withering sarcasm that the reader could get no other idea than that the man was either weak or wicked. An editor of very positive opinions, he was apt to convey the idea that if any one differed from him on a vital question like the tariff or finance or civil service reform, he was necessarily a bad man. He made no allowances for the weaknesses of human nature, and had no idea that he himself ever could be mistaken. Though a powerful critic, he did not realize the highest criticism, which discerns and brings out the good as well as the evil. He won his reputation by dealing out censure, which has a rare attraction for a certain class of minds, as Tacitus observed in his History. "People," he wrote, "lend a ready ear to detraction and spite," for "malignity wears the imposing appearance of independence." 4

1 Ogden, ii, chap. xi.
2 Ibid., ii, 51.
3 Studies in Contemporary Biography, p. 372.
4 Tacitus, History, i, 1.
The influence of the Nation, therefore, — so these objectors to Godkin aver, — was especially unfortunate on the intelligent youth of the country. It was in 1870 that John Bigelow, whom I have just quoted, advised Harvard University to include the Nation among its requirements; and it is true that at that time, and for a good while afterwards, the Nation was favorite reading for serious Harvard students. The same practice undoubtedly prevailed at most other colleges. Now I have been told that the effect of reading the Nation was to prevent these young men from understanding their own country; that, as Godkin himself did not comprehend America, he was an unsound teacher and made his youthful readers see her through a false medium. And I am further informed that in mature life it cost an effort, a mental wrench, so to speak, to get rid of this influence and see things as they really were, which was necessary for usefulness in lives cast in America. The United States was our country; she was entitled to our love and service; and yet such a frame of mind was impossible, so this objection runs, if we read and believed the writing of the Nation.

A man of character and ability, who had filled a number of public offices with credit, told me that the influence of the Nation had been potent in keeping college graduates out of public life, that things in the United States were painted so black both relatively and absolutely that the young men naturally reasoned, “Why shall we concern ourselves about a country which is surely going to destruction?” Far better, they may have said, to pattern after Plato’s philosopher who kept out of politics, being “like one who retires under the shelter of a wall in the storm of dust and sleet which the driving wind hurries along.”

Such considerations undoubtedly lost the Nation valuable subscribers. I have been struck with three circumstances in juxtaposition. At the time of Judge Hoar’s forced resignation from Grant’s cabinet in 1870, the Nation said, “In peace as in war ‘that is best blood which hath most iron in’t;’ and much is to be excused to the man [that is, Judge Hoar] who has for the first time in many years of Washington history given a back-handed blow to many an impudent and arrogant dispenser of patronage. He may well be proud of most of the enmity that he won while in office, and may go back contented to Massachusetts to be her most honored citizen.” Two months later Lowell wrote to Godkin, “The bound volumes of the Nation standing on Judge Hoar’s library table, as I saw them the other day, were a sign of the estimation in which it is held by solid people and it is they who in the long run decide the fortunes of such a journal.” But the Nation lost Judge Hoar’s support. When I called upon him in 1893 he was no longer taking or reading it.

It is the sum of individual experiences that makes up the influence of a journal like the Nation, and one may therefore be pardoned the egotism necessarily arising from a relation of one’s own contact with it. In 1866, while a student at the University of Chicago, I remember well that, in a desultory talk in the English Literature class, Professor William Matthews spoke of the Nation and advised the students to read it each week as a political education of high value. This was the first knowledge I had of it, but I was at that time, along with many other young men, devoted to the Round Table, an “Independent weekly review of Politics, Finance, Literature, Society and Art,” which flourished between the years 1864 and 1868. We asked the professor, “Do you consider the Nation superior to the Round Table?” — “Decidedly,” was his reply. “The editors of the Round Table seem to write for the sake of writing, while the men who are expressing themselves in the Nation do so because their

1 Republic.

2 June 23; Rhodes, vi, 382.

3 Ogden, ii, 66.
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hearts and minds are full of their matter." This was a just estimate of the difference between the two journals. The *Round Table*, modeled after the *Saturday Review*, was a feeble imitation of the London weekly, then in its palmy days, while the *Nation*, which was patterned after the *Spectator*, did not suffer by the side of its model. On this hint from Professor Matthews, I began taking and reading the *Nation*, and with the exception of one year in Europe during my student days, I have read it ever since.

Before I touch on certain specifications I must premise that the influence of this journal on a Westerner, who read it in a receptive spirit, was probably more potent than on one living in the East. The arrogance of a higher civilization in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia than elsewhere in the United States, the term "wild and woolly West" applied to the region west of the Alleghany Mountains, is somewhat irritating to a Westerner. Yet it remains none the less true that, other things being equal, a man living in the environment of Boston or New York would have arrived more easily and more quickly at certain sound political views I shall proceed to specify than he would while living in Cleveland or Chicago. The gospel which Godkin preached was needed much more in the West than in the East; and his disciples in the western country had for him a high degree of reverence. In the biography of Godkin, allusion is made to the small pecuniary return for his work, but in thinking of him we never considered the money question. We supposed that he made a living; we knew from his articles that he was a gentleman and saw much of good society, and there was not one of us who would not rather have been in his shoes than in those of the richest man in New York. We placed such trust in him — which his life shows to have been abundantly justified — that we should have lost all confidence in human nature had he ever been tempted by place or profit. And his influence was abid-

ing. Presidents, statesmen, senators, congressmen rose and fell; political administrations changed; good, bad, and weak public men passed away; but Godkin preached to us every week a timely and cogent sermon.

To return now to my personal experience. I owe wholly to the *Nation* my conviction in favor of civil service reform; in fact, it was from these columns that I first came to understand the question. The arguments advanced were sane and strong, and especially intelligible to men in business, who, in the main, chose their employees on the ground of fitness, and who made it a rule to retain and advance competent and honest men in their employ. I think that on this subject the indirect influence of the *Nation* was very great, in furnishing arguments to men like myself, who never lost an opportunity to restate them, and to editorial writers for the western newspapers, who generally read the *Nation* and who were apt to reproduce its line of reasoning. When I look back to 1869, the year in which I became a voter, and recall the strenuous opposition to civil service reform on the part of the politicians of both parties, and the indifference of the public, I confess that I am amazed at the progress which has been made. Such a reform is of course effected only by a number of contributing causes and some favoring circumstances, but I feel certain that it was accelerated by the constant and vigorous support of the *Nation*.

I owe to the *Nation* more than to any other agency my correct ideas on finance in two crises. The first was the "greenback craze" from 1869 to 1875. It was easy to be a hard-money man in Boston or New York, where one might imbibe the correct doctrine as one everywhere takes in the fundamental principles of civilization and morality. But it was not so in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, where the severe money stringency before and during the panic of 1873, and the depression after it, caused many good and representative men to join in the cry for a
larger issue of greenbacks by the government. It required no moral courage for the average citizen to resist what in 1875 seemed to be the popular move, but it did require the correct knowledge and the forcible arguments put forward weekly by the Nation. I do not forget my indebtedness to John Sherman, Carl Schurz, and Senator Thurman, but Sherman and Thurman were not always consistent on this question, and Schurz's voice was only occasionally heard; but every seven days came the Nation with its unremitting iteration, and it was an iteration varied enough to be always interesting and worthy of study. As one looks back over nearly forty years of politics one likes to recall the occasions when one has done the thing one's mature judgment fully approves; and I like to think that in 1875 I refused to vote for my party's candidate for governor, the Democratic William Allen whose platform was "that the volume of currency be made and kept equal to the wants of trade."

A severer ordeal was the silver question of 1878, because the argument for silver was more weighty than that for irredeemable paper, and was believed to be sound by business men of both parties. I remember that many representative business men of Cleveland used to assemble around the large luncheon table of the Union Club and discuss the pending silver-coinage bill, which received the votes of both of the senators from Ohio and of all her representatives except Garfield. The gold men were in a minority also at the luncheon table, but, fortified by the Nation, we thought that we held our own in this daily discussion.

In my conversion from a belief in a protective tariff to the advocacy of one for revenue only, I recognize an obligation to Godkin, but his was only one of many influences. I owe the Nation much for its accurate knowledge of foreign affairs, especially of English politics, in which its readers were enlightened by one of the most capable of living men, Albert V. Dicey. I am indebted to it for sound ideas on municipal government and for its advocacy of many minor measures, such for instance as the International Copyright Bill. I owe it something for its later attitude on Reconstruction, and its condemnation of the negro carpet-bag governments in the South. In a word, the Nation was on the side of civilization and good political morals.

Confessing thus my great political indebtedness to Godkin, it is with some reluctance that I present a certain phase of his thought which was regretted by many of his best friends, and which undoubtedly limited his influence in the later years of his life. A knowledge of this eccentricity is, however, essential to a thorough comprehension of the man. It is frequently said that Godkin rarely, if ever, made a retraction or a rectification of personal charges shown to be incorrect. A thorough search of the Nation's columns would be necessary fully to substantiate this statement, but my own impression, covering as it does thirty-three years' reading of the paper under Godkin's control, inclines me to believe in its truth, as I do not remember an instance of the kind.

A grave fault of omission occurs to me as showing a regrettable bias in a leader of intelligent opinion. January 5, 1897, General Francis A. Walker died. He had served with credit as an officer during our Civil War, and in two thoughtful books had made a valuable contribution to its military history. He was superintendent of the United States Census of 1870, and did work that statisticians and historians refer to with gratitude and praise. For sixteen years he served with honor the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as its president. He was a celebrated political economist, his books being (I think) as well known in England as in this country. Yale, Amherst, Harvard, Columbia, St. Andrews, and Dublin conferred upon him the degree of LL. D. Withal he served his city with
public spirit. Trinity Church, "crowded and silent" in celebrating its last service over the dead body of Walker, witnessed one of the three most impressive funerals which Boston has seen for at least sixteen years—a funeral conspicuous for the attendance of a large number of delegates from colleges and learned societies.

Walker was distinctly of the intellectual elite of the country. But the Nation made not the slightest reference to his death. In the issue of January 7, appearing two days later, I looked for an allusion in "The Week," and subsequently for one of those remarkable and discriminating eulogies, which in smaller type follow the editorials, and for which the Nation is justly celebrated; but there was not one word. You might search the 1897 volume of the Nation and, but for a brief reference in the April "Notes" to Walker's annual report posthumously published, you would not learn that a great intellectual leader had passed away. I wrote to a valued contributor of the Nation, a friend of Walker, of Godkin, and of Wendell P. Garrison (the literary editor), inquiring if he knew the reason for the omission, and in answer he could only tell me that his amazement had been as great as mine. He at first looked eagerly, and, when the last number came in which a eulogy could possibly appear, he turned over the pages of the Nation with sorrowful regret, hardly believing his eyes that the article he sought was not there.

Now I suspect that the reason of this extraordinary omission was due to the irreconcilable opinions of Walker and Godkin on a question of finance. It was a period when the contest between the advocates of a single gold standard and the bimetallists raged fiercely, and the contest had not been fully settled by the election of McKinley in 1896. Godkin was emphatically for gold, Walker equally emphatic for a double standard. And they clashed. It is a notable example of the peculiarity of Godkin, to allow at the portal of death the one point of political policy on which he and Walker disagreed to outweigh the nine points in which they were at one.

Most readers of the Nation noticed distinctly that, from 1895 on, its tone became more pessimistic and its criticism was marked by greater acerbity. Mr. Rollo Ogden in his biography shows that Godkin's feeling of disappointment over the progress of the democratic experiment in America, and his hopelessness of our future, began at an earlier date.

During his first years in the United States, he had no desire to return to his mother country. When the financial fortune of the Nation was doubtful, he wrote to Norton that he should not go back to England except as a "last extremity. It would be going back into an atmosphere that I detest, and a social system that I have hated since I was fourteen years old." 1 In 1889, after an absence of twenty-seven years, he went to England. The best intellectual society of London and Oxford opened its doors to him and he fell under its charm as would any American who was the recipient of marked attentions from people of such distinction. He began to draw contrasts which were not favorable to his adopted country. "I took a walk along the wonderful Thames embankment," he wrote, "a splendid work, and I sighed to think how impossible it would be to get such a thing done in New York. The differences in government and political manners are in fact awful, and for me very depressing. Henry James [with whom he stopped in London] and I talk over them sometimes 'des larmes dans la voix.'" 2 In 1894, however, Godkin wrote in the Forum: "There is probably no government in the world today as stable as that of the United States. The chief advantage of democratic government is, in a country like this, the enormous force it can command in an emergency." 3 But next year his pessimism is clearly apparent. On January 12, 1895, he wrote to Norton: "You see I am not sanguine about the future

1 Ogden, ii, 140.
2 Problems of Modern Democracy, 200.
of democracy. I think we shall have a long period of decline like that which followed (?) the fall of the Roman Empire, and then a recrudescence under some other form of society.”

A number of things had combined to affect him profoundly. An admirer of Grover Cleveland and three times a warm supporter of his candidacy for the presidency, he saw with regret the loss of his hold on his party, which was drifting into the hands of the advocates of free silver. Then in December, 1895, Godkin lost faith in his idol. “I was thunderstruck by Cleveland’s message” on the Venezuela question, he wrote to Norton. His submission to the Jingoes “is a terrible shock.” Later, in a calm review of passing events, he called the message a “sudden declaration of war without notice against Great Britain.” The danger of such a proceeding he had pointed out to Norton: “Our immense democracy, mostly ignorant . . . is constantly on the brink of some frightful catastrophe like that which overtook France in 1870.”

In 1896 he was deeply distressed at the country having to choose for president between the arch-protectionist McKinley and the free-silver advocate Bryan, for he had spent a good part of his life combatting a protective tariff and advocating sound money. Though the Evening Post contributed powerfully to the election of McKinley, from the fact that its catechism, teaching financial truths in a popular form, was distributed throughout the West in immense quantities by the chairman of the Republican National Committee, Godkin himself refused to vote for McKinley and put in his ballot for Palmer, the gold Democrat.

The Spanish-American war seems to have destroyed any lingering hope that he had left for the future of American democracy. He spoke of it as “a perfectly avoidable war forced on by a band of unscrupulous politicians” who had behind them “a roaring mob.” The taking of the Philippines and the subsequent war in these islands confirmed him in his despair. In a private letter written from Paris, he said, “American ideals were the intellectual food of my youth, and to see America converted into a senseless, Old-World conqueror, embitters my age.” To another he wrote that his former “high and fond ideals about America were now all shattered.”

Such regrets expressed by an honest and sincere man with a high ideal must command our respectful attention. Though due in part to old age and enfeebled health, they are still more attributable to his disappointment that the country had not developed in the way that he had marked out for her. For with men of Godkin’s positive convictions, there is only one way to salvation. Sometimes such men are true prophets; at other times, while they see clearly certain aspects of a case, their narrowness of vision prevents them from taking in the whole range of possibilities, especially when the enthusiasm of manhood is gone.

Godkin took a broader view in 1868, which he forcibly expressed in a letter to the London Daily News. “There is no careful and intelligent observer,” he wrote, “whether he be a friend to democracy or not, who can help admiring the unbroken power with which the popular common sense—shrewdness or intelligence, I care not what you call it, which so often makes the American farmer a far better politician than nine tenths of the best read European political philosophers—works under all this tumult and confusion of tongues. The newspapers and politicians fret and fume and shout and denounce; but the great mass, the nine-

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1 Ogden, ii, 199. 2 Ibid., ii, 202. 3 “Random Recollections,” Evening Post, Dec. 30, 1895. 4 Ogden, ii, 202. 5 Ibid., ii, 214. 6 Ogden, ii, 238. 7 Ibid., ii, 219. 8 Ibid., ii, 237. 9 Biographical Studies, 378.
teen or twenty millions, work away in the fields and workshops, saying little, thinking much, hardy, earnest, self-reliant, very tolerant, very indulgent, very shrewd, but ready whenever the government needs it, with musket, or purse, or vote, as the case may be, laughing and cheering occasionally at public meetings, but when you meet them individually on the high road or in their own houses, very cool, then, sensible men, filled with no delusions, carried away by no frenzies, believing firmly in the future greatness and glory of the republic, but holding to no other article of faith as essential to political salvation."

Before continuing the quotation I wish to call attention to the fact that Godkin's illustration was more effective in 1868 than now: then there was a solemn and vital meaning to the prayers offered up for persons going to sea that they might be preserved from the dangers of the deep. "Every now and then," he went on to say, "as one watches the political storms in the United States, one is reminded of one's feelings as one lies in bed on a stormy night in an ocean steamer in a head wind. Each blow of the sea shakes the ship from stem to stern, and every now and then a tremendous one seems to paralyze her. The machinery seems to stop work; there is a dead pause, and you think for a moment the end has come; but the throbbing begins once more, and if you go up on deck and look down in the hold, you see the firemen and engineers at their posts, apparently unconscious of anything but their work, and as sure of getting into port as if there was not a ripple on the water."

This letter of Godkin's was written on January 8, 1868, when Congress was engaged in the reconstruction of the South on the basis of negro suffrage, when the quarrel between Congress and President Johnson was acute and his impeachment not two months off. At about this time Godkin set down Evarts's opinion that "we are witnessing the decline of public morality which usually presages revolution," and reported that Howells was talking "despondently like everybody else about the condition of morals and manners." Of like tenor was the opinion of an arch-conservative, George Ticknor, written in 1869, which bears a resemblance to the lamentation of Godkin's later years. "The civil war of '61," wrote Ticknor, "has made a great gulf between what happened before it in our century and what has happened since, or what is likely to happen hereafter. It does not seem to me as if I were living in the country in which I was born, or in which I received whatever I ever got of political education or principles. Webster seems to have been the last of the Romans." In 1868 Godkin was an optimist, having a cogent answer to all gloomy predictions; from 1893 to 1902 he was a pessimist; yet reasons just as strong may be adduced for considering the future of the country secure in the later as were urged in the earlier period. But as Godkin grew older, he became a moral censor, and it is characteristic of censors to exaggerate both the evil of the present and the good of the past. Thus in 1899 he wrote of the years 1857-1860: "The air was full of the real Americanism. The American gospel was on people's lips and was growing with fervor. Force was worshiped, but it was moral force: it was the force of reason, of humanity, of human equality, of a good example. The abolitionist gospel seemed to be permeating the views of the American people, and overturning and destroying the last remaining traditions of the old-world public morality. It was really what might be called the golden age of America." These were the days of slavery. James Buchanan was president. The internal policy of the party in power was expressed in the Dred Scott decision and the attempt to force slavery on Kansas; the foreign policy, in the Ostend

1 Ogden, i, 301, 307.
2 Life and Letters, ii, 485.
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Manifesto, which declared that if Spain would not sell Cuba the United States would take it by force. The rule in the civil service was, "to the victors belong the spoils." And New York City, where Godkin resided, had for its mayor Fernando Wood.

In this somewhat rambling paper I have subjected Godkin to a severe test by a contrast of his public and private utterances covering many years, not however with the intention of accusing him of inconsistency. Ferrero writes that historians of our day find it easy to expose the contradictions of Cicero, but they forget that probably as much could be said of his contemporaries, if we possessed also their private correspondence. Similarly, it is a pertinent question how many journalists and how many public men would stand as well as Godkin in this matter of consistency if we possessed the same abundant records of their activity?

The more careful the study of Godkin's utterances, the less will be the irritation felt by men who love and believe in their country. It is evident that he was a born critic, and his private correspondence is full of expressions showing that if he had been conducting a journal in England, his criticism of certain phases of English policy would have been as severe as those which he indulged in weekly at the expense of this country. "How Ireland sits heavy on your soul!" he wrote to James Bryce. "Salisbury was an utterly discredited Foreign Secretary when you brought up Home Rule. Now he is one of the wisest of men. Balfour and Chamberlain have all been lifted into eminence by opposition to Home Rule simply." To Professor Norton: "Chamberlain is a capital specimen of the rise of an unscrupulous politician." Again: "The fall of England into the hands of a creature like Chamberlain recalls the capture of Rome by Alaric." To another friend: "I do not like to talk about the Boer War, it is too painful. . . . When I do speak of the war my language becomes unfit for publication." On seeing the Queen and the Prince of Wales driving through the gardens at Windsor, his comment was, "Fat, useless royalty;" and in 1897 he wrote from England to Arthur Sedgwick, "There are many things here which reconcile me to America."

In truth, much of his criticism of America is only an elaboration of his criticism of democracy. In common with many Europeans born at about the same time, who began their political life as radicals, he shows his keen disappointment that democracy has not regenerated mankind. "There is not a country in the world, living under parliamentary government," he wrote, "which has not begun to complain of the decline in the quality of its legislators. More and more, it is said, the work of government is falling into the hands of men to whom even small pay is important, and who are suspected of adding to their income by corruption. The withdrawal of the more intelligent class from legislative duties is more and more lamented, and the complaint is somewhat justified by the mass of crude, hasty, incoherent and unnecessary laws which are poured on the world at every session."

I have thus far spoken only of the political influence of the Nation, but its literary department was equally important. Associated with Godkin from the beginning was Wendell P. Garrison, who became literary editor of the journal, and who, Godkin wrote in 1871, "has really toiled for six years with the fidelity of a Christian martyr and upon the pay of an oysterman." I have often heard the literary criticism of the Nation called destructive like the political, but, it appears to me, with less reason. Books for review were sent to experts in different parts of the country, and the list of contributors included many professors from various colleges. While the editor, I be-
lieve, retained, and sometimes exercised, the right to omit parts of the review and make some additions, yet writers drawn from so many sources must have preserved their own individuality. I have heard it said that the Nation gave you the impression of having been entirely written by one man; but whatever there is more than fanciful in that impression must have arisen from the general agreement between the editor and the contributors. Paul Leicester Ford once told me that, when he wrote a criticism for the Nation, he unconsciously took on the Nation's style, but he could write in that way for no other journal, nor did he ever fall into it in his books. Garrison was much more tolerant than is sometimes supposed. I know of his sending many books to two men, one of whom differed from him radically on the negro question and the other on socialism.

It is only after hearing much detraction of the literary department of the Nation, and after considerable reflection, that I have arrived at the conviction that it came somewhat near to realizing criticism as defined by Matthew Arnold, thus: "A disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." 1 I am well aware that it was not always equal, and I remember two harsh reviews which ought not to have been printed: but this simply proves that the editor was human and the Nation was not perfect. I feel safe however in saying that if the best critical reviews of the Nation were collected and printed in book form, they would show an aspiration after the standard erected by Sainte-Beuve and Matthew Arnold.

Again I must appeal to my individual experience. The man who lived in the middle West for the twenty-five years between 1865 and 1890 needed the literary department of the Nation more than one who lived in Boston or New York. Most of the books written in America were by New England, New York, and Philadelphia authors, and in those communities literary criticism was evolved by social contact in clubs and other gatherings. We had nothing of the sort in Cleveland, where a writer of books walking down Euclid Avenue would have been stared at as a somewhat remarkable personage. The literary columns of the Nation were therefore our most important link between our practical life and the literary world. I used to read into my Index Retrun long extracts from important reviews, in which the writers appeared to have a thorough grasp of their subjects; and these I read and re-read as I would a significant passage in a favorite book. In the days when many of us were profoundly influenced by Herbert Spencer's Sociology, I was somewhat astonished to read one week in the Nation, in a review of Pollock's Introduction to the Science of Politics, these words: "Herbert Spencer's contributions to political and historical science seem to us mere commonplaces, sometimes false, sometimes true, but in both cases trying to disguise their essential flatness and commonness in a garb of dogmatic formalism." 2 Such an opinion, evidencing a conflict between two intellectual guides, staggered me, and it was with some curiosity that I looked subsequently, when the Index to Periodicals came out, to see who had the temerity thus to belittle Spencer — the greatest political philosopher, so some of his disciples thought, since Aristotle. I ascertained that the writer of the review was James Bryce, and whatever else might be thought, it could not be denied that the controversy was one between giants. I can, I think, date the beginning of my emancipation from Spencer from that review in 1891.

In the same year I read a discriminating eulogy of George Bancroft, ending with an intelligent criticism of his history which produced on me a marked impression. The reviewer wrote: Bancroft falls into "that error so common with the graphic school of historians — the exaggerated estimate of manuscripts or

1 Essays, 38.
2 Vol. 52, p. 267.
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fragmentary material at the expense of what is printed and permanent. . . . But a fault far more serious than this is one which Mr. Bancroft shared with his historical contemporaries, but in which he far exceeded any of them—an utter ignoring of the very meaning and significance of a quotation mark.”

Sound and scientific doctrine is this; and the whole article exhibited a thorough knowledge of our colonial and revolutionary history which inspired confidence in the conclusions of the writer, who, I later ascertained, was Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

These two examples could be multiplied at length. There were many reviewers from Harvard and Yale; and undoubtedly other eastern colleges were well represented. The University of Wisconsin furnished at least one contributor, as probably did the University of Michigan and other western colleges. Men in Washington, New York, and Boston, not in academic life, were drawn upon; a soldier of the Civil War, living in Cincinnati, a man of affairs, sent many reviews. James Bryce was an occasional contributor, and at least three notable reviews came from the pen of Albert V. Dicey. In 1885, Godkin, in speaking of the Nation’s department of Literature and Art, wrote that “the list of those who have contributed to the columns of the paper from the first issue to the present day contains a large number of the most eminent names in American literature, science, art, philosophy, and law.”

With men so gifted, and chosen from all parts of the country, uniformly destructive criticism could not have prevailed. Among them were optimists as well as pessimists, and men as independent in thought as was Godkin himself.

Believing that Godkin’s thirty-five years of critical work was of great benefit to this country, I have sometimes asked myself whether the fact of his being a foreigner has made it more irritating to many good people, who term his criticism “fault-finding” or “scolding.” Although he married in America and his home life was centred here, he confessed that in many essential things it was a foreign country. Some readers who admired the Nation told Mr. Bryce that they did not want “to be taught by a European how to run this republic.” But Bryce, who in this matter is the most competent of judges, intimates that Godkin’s foreign education, giving him detachment and perspective, was a distinct advantage. If it will help any one to a better appreciation of the man, let Godkin be regarded as “a chiel amang us takin’ notes;” as an observer not so philosophic as Tocqueville, not so genial and sympathetic as Bryce. Yet, whether we look upon him as an Irishman, an Englishman, or an American, let us rejoice that he cast his lot with us, and that we have had the benefit of his illuminating pen.

He was not always right; he was sometimes unjust; he often told the truth with “needless asperity,” as Parkman put it; but his merits so outweighed his defects that he had a marked influence on opinion, and probably on history, during his thirty-five years of journalistic work, when, according to James Bryce, he showed a courage such as is rare everywhere. General J. D. Cox, who had not missed a number of the Nation from 1865 to 1899, wrote to Godkin, on hearing of his prospective retirement from the Evening Post, “I really believe that earnest men, all over the land, whether they agree with you or differ, will unite in the exclamation which Lincoln made as to Grant, ‘we can’t spare this man—he fights.’”

Our country, wrapped up in no smug complacency, listened to this man, respected him and supported him, and on his death a number of people were glad to unite to endow a lectureship in his honor in Harvard University.

In closing, I cannot do better than

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1 Vol. 52, p. 66. 2 June 25, 1885.

9 Ogden, ii, 116. 4 Ibid., i, 252. 5 Biographical Studies, 370. 6 Ogden, ii, 229.
quote what may be called Godkin's farewell words, printed forty days before the attack of cerebral hemorrhage which ended his active career. "The election of the chief officer of the State by universal suffrage," he wrote, "by a nation approaching one hundred millions, is not simply a novelty in the history of man's efforts to govern himself, but an experiment of which no one can foresee the result. The mass is yearly becoming more and more difficult to move. The old arts of persuasion are already ceasing to be employed on it. Presidential elections are less and less carried by speeches and articles. The American people is a less instructed people than it used to be. The necessity for drilling, organizing, and guiding it, in order to extract the vote from it is becoming plain; and out of this necessity has arisen the boss system, which is now found in existence everywhere, is growing more powerful, and has thus far resisted all attempts to overthrow it."

I shall not stop to urge a qualification of some of these statements, but will proceed to the brighter side of our case, which Godkin, even in his pessimistic mood, could not fail to see distinctly. "On the other hand," he continued, "I think the progress made by the colleges throughout the country, big and little, both in the quality of the instruction and in the amount of money devoted to books, laboratories, and educational facilities of all kinds is something unparalleled in the history of the civilized world. And the progress of the nation in all the arts, except that of government, in science, in literature, in commerce, in invention, is something unprecedented and becomes daily more astonishing. How it is that this splendid progress does not drag on politics with it I do not profess to know."

Let us be as hopeful as was Godkin in his earlier days, and rest assured that intellectual training will eventually exert its power in politics, as it has done in business and in other domains of active life.

\[1 \text{Evening Post, Dec. 30, 1899.}\]

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**THE HEART OF THE UNITED STATES**

**BY JAMES P. MUNROE**

"The centre of population, now in Indiana, is traveling straight towards the middle point of Illinois. The centre of manufacturing has reached as yet only eastern Ohio, but is marching in a beeline for Chicago." This, the Illinois boast, is perhaps with somewhat rare coincidence the truth; and that state, in more than one meaning, is soon to be the controlling Heart of the United States. Therefore it is of vital, as well as of curious interest for New Englanders — fast becoming mere onlookers in the national administration — to examine and, so to speak, to auscultate this organ which will increasingly regulate the body politic.

Illinois drips fatness. Its black, oozy soil which eagerly devours one's shoes; its corn that, refined by selective processes, almost exudes oil; its hogs that can scarcely see through the deep folds of their unctuous envelope; its beefsteaks, pork-chops, and corn-cakes, glistening from the ceaseless sizzling of the frying-pan; its very speech, with mouthed syllables and exaggerated r's, — all are fat with a fatness almost indecent to the spare New Englander. Moreover the oleaginous carnival seems only just begun. Fertilizers and nitrogen-collectors are making the sand-dunes blossom; swamp-draining and well-driving are equalizing
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