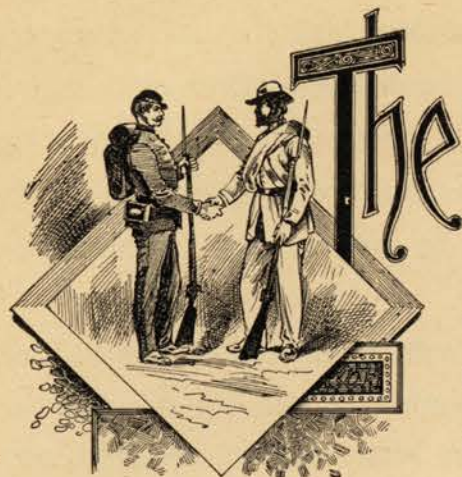


INTRODUCTION.



MOST important crisis of modern history was the Civil War in the United States. That war was as critical as it was bloody; as much pervaded with the higher destinies of all men and races as it was burdened with the sympathies and wet with the anguish of the American people. The forces that gathered their volume, rolled together and broke in that great conflict were on the one side the remaining energies of the ancient régime, and on the other the rising energies of a new civil and political order in the world.

The transformation effected by our war for the Union was complete. It extended from the domestic life of the American people upwards through their social life, their political life, their civil life, and culminated in their national life. The war swept the whole diapason of American civilization from its lowest to its highest key, and the reverberation which the powerful hand of time started among the vibrating keys is still heard along the remote and cloudy horizon of all continents.

The Civil War began deep down in the *domestic condition* of our people. The family and home estate lay in the bottom of the contention which, beginning as far back as the adoption of the Constitution, broke at last into actual violence in 1861. The domestic life in the Old Thirteen Colonies had been diverse in the last degree. Politically, the colonists had agreed on one thing, namely, that they would separate themselves from the Mother Country and become a nation of freemen. This agreement was political and civil in character, but it was not domestic, and, we are pained to say, not national. The domestic estate was not, and could not be, unified at the date of the Revolution, and if not then, certainly not at the date of the Constitution. Neither could national union in the highest and best sense be then achieved.

The Puritan family and the Cavalier family of our eighteenth century were two facts almost totally unlike. The Quaker family was unlike either. The other families incidently established on the American coast, such as the Dutch, the Swedish and the nondescript and pauper, miscellaneous families that might be found here and there, added other elements, in which there were few identities and many contradictions, feeble sympathies and vast divergencies.

In course of time most of these domestic varieties were absorbed into the two great types of a free, robust, restless, aggressive Northern family, and a concentrated, highly localized, haughty, well-mannered and domineering Southern family. The one rested on free labor, and the other on bond service. The one was made up of members all of whom, men and women alike, aged and young, great and small, worked with their hands. The other was made up of an aristocracy which had inherited the *theory* that it is the function of capital to own labor as one of the elements of its strength and perpetuity, and the actual and ever-present *condition* of African slavery.

One of the greatest differences between the Old North and the Old South was in the supreme localization of the Southern family and the adventurous, moving spirit that carried the Northern family ever onward to some new habitation, which lost its better part as soon as it had become an old habitation. The South—the old slave-holding States of the Union—was an aggregation of slave-holding families, under whom was a large intermediate class of poor white people and millions of black slaves. The North—that is the old free States—was made up of an aggregation of free-labor families, rapidly multiplying, restless, removing, adventurous, tending toward the new States and Territories, building an additional commonwealth wherever that might be done.

This discordant domestic life was brought at length by political cohesion and civil structure into a union; but there was no *assimilation*, and in course of time a great conflict broke out, whereby history was to decide whether the one type or the other type of the domestic life should prevail in the great central belt of North America.

But the war for the Union was also a *political* contest. The forces of a great political life rushed together and expended themselves in the shock of actual battle. It was not exactly a contest between the old Whig and the old Democratic party for the mastery of the Union, but rather the battle of new political armies which had sprung up and rapidly organized themselves out of the wrecks and débris which the preceding parties had left behind them. Neither was the young Republican party, which became *par excellence* the party of the Union, the old Whig party; nor was the Secession party the old Democratic party. True, the Union party was made up in large measure of the