

The hour when a high school sends forth a body of young men and women who are to take their places in the rank and file of citizenship and contribute to the city's future weal or woe should be an auspicious one in which to reflect upon the civic progress of the past and the probable improvements in the future. The fact that this is Jamestown's centennial year naturally attracts our attention to its founding and founders. The history of its transition from settlers clearing to immature city is like that of its prototypes innumerable—a struggle of conflicting opinions and personalities, a series of failures and successes, a sequence of misdirected effort and final achievement. It is upon one hundred years of such progress that our present municipal stability rests.

While yet far to the east of us, there was no pressure from crowded population, pioneers braving danger and privation, with no guide but the sun and no chart but the hunter's instinct, pushed their way through a pathless wilderness and settled in Chautauqua county. They came to a country favored of God; its northern boundary washed by mighty inland seas and its southern fields drained by the Father of Rivers. It is situated on the divide of a continent, in the basin of two famous watercourses, the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi. Upon the summit of this divide, six hundred feet above the tumbling white caps of Lake Erie, spreads the sunlit bosom of the highest navigable lake in the world, mirroring on its tranquil surface the gossamers of the changing atmosphere. Her indentations are arranged in picturesque irregularity. The monotony of furrowed field and grazing land is broken by grove and glen, dark with shadow or light with dancing sun rays, havens of rest to weary. From the lake above, the Chadakoin meanders between a double chain of hills, through mead and moor, makes a hurried plunge over the rapids and past the quarry to the headwaters of the Allegheny below. Where could the home seeker find such adornment in nature combined with healthful climate and luxuriant vegetation? Our county can challenge the world to show elsewhere such qualities of beauty and utility.

Mankind early improved the advantages of Chautauqua. The footpath of the stealthy Indian became the bridlepath of the explorer, the military highway of the conquering soldiery of France, and the portage road of the pioneer. Year by year settlements were hewn from the forest. Soon the hum of the spinning wheel within the log cabin vied with the reverberations of the axe in the clearing. The white man in the pride of his power had subdued the wilderness and built a home. Scarce was a flame kindled upon the family hearth and a latchstring hung out before the settlers erected the first rude school house, the original home of learning. The westward course of empire had established a new outpost and left its sentinels—Chautauqua County was the frontier guard of the Anglo-Saxon race.

This was the beginning of the nineteenth century. The inventions which had wrought a revolution in the industrial world were then unknown. Our government had not passed the stage of experiment and Europe, swayed by the transcendental genius of Napoleon, whose Waterloo was yet unfought,

prophesied the failure of America's attempt at democracy. Jefferson, whose star was still in the ascendant, and Hamilton not yet fallen by the hand of treason, were gathering about themselves those groups of admirers who founded our two political parties to perpetuate their principles. Louisiana was a possession of France and the beef trust had not then discovered Chicago. The Ohio valley still echoed with the Indian's war song. Chautauqua was "Eldorado of the far west." The Indian had departed. No more was his midnight campfire reflected in the waters of the lake, no more his slogan heard upon its shore. For unnumbered ages it had been his hunting ground. With what ferocity it was invaded or with what valor it was defended we can easily conjecture. The earthworks they left behind prove this to have long been the home of a prehistoric people and remain as mute chronicles of a primitive and legendary history whose details we piece out with guess-work aided by Fennimore Cooper. But the warriors who built these fortifications have reposed in unbroken stillness for ages in burial mounds more ancient than the forests which overshadow them. The monotony of savage life was interrupted only by the more savage warfare kindled by a jealous and vindictive nature. The efforts of the powerful Iroquois were but feeble in the conflict with destiny. Whether they called the white man to their council fire that they might bury the tomahawk and smoke the pipe of peace together, or arrayed themselves in paint and war gear to repel the inroads of the pale face, they were steadily dispossessed and crowded towards the land of the setting sun.

It is natural that this vanishing people should have woven many a tradition about their favorite hunting ground. Whether the name "Chautauqua," involved as it is, in obscurity, comes from the lake being the ancient medicine water of the Senecas, or is an allusion to the legend of the Indian maiden who was swallowed up in its "engulfing waters," or is derived from a savage fish story, or merely has the commonplace significance "foggy place," we know not no do we care. It is still the medicine water of a nation and white men still tell fish stories about it. But we know that the red man enshrouded our country in mystery and retiring left us in the name of lake and river the enduring symbol of savagery. The Six nations are vanquished. Their hunting ground is the white man's vineyard and their fishing ground the highway of his commerce.

A century has now fled since Jamestown Prendergast followed his wandering steeds down the lakeshore and found a camp of Indians by the rapids where Jamestown is now situated. Since the days before Chautauqua's waters were vexed by coursing steamers, or the Chadakoin choked by the foundation of bridge and factory, man has wrought his miracles of improvement. He has built one of the industrial cities of the world.

But for the sake of securing commercial prominence has not our city disregarded its most precious possessions? That they might build a paved walk to pleasure the whim of engineering skill or mathematical exactness, authorities have destroyed trees which no city administration, be it ever so green, can replace in years. To save expense, the picturesque banks of the winding outlet have

become a public dumping ground. To enhance the city's valuation, commercial buildings have been erected along the Chadakoin in arrant disregard of their appearance. Our hillsides have been gutted for gravel and caverns so caused left to stare in the face of the future. While the city, through public indifference, has allowed private greed to disfigure the choicest gifts of nature, overwhelmed with an eleventh hour horror of its own ugliness it has spent thousands building parks in locations less favorable than those it has neglected.

Probably none today would wish Jamestown any career but one of unrivaled commercial prosperity. It is a matter of pride that wherever the foot of civilized man has trod there has gone some product of the skill and labor of our citizens. But if a high school course has not taught us to place a higher than commercial estimate upon the works of nature, the vital quality of our education is wanting. It may not be ours to seek out the beauties of new country or organize a municipality; it may not be for us to sweep an ancient people from power or to labor upon the outposts of civilization. But it is for us to rescue nature's endowment from the hand of the despoiler and deliver her beauty from the blight of avarice.

There was once a city that sat enthroned upon seven hills—a city in whose splendid beauty an ancient race proudly exulted.

To us in this garden spot of new America is given a little city, also built upon hills and set gem-like within the seven encircling ends of a silver stream. Let it be one of the responsible and abiding tasks of our lives to make this loved home of our youth year by year more worthy of the setting which has been so cunningly fashioned by Nature's matchless handicraft.