

and alienating land, we find, even today, the most radical differences between America and the Mother Country; while we also find that we have been leaders, and not followers, in those institutions where a resemblance now exists, such as our system of popular education, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, the secret ballot and the vast machinery of public charitable and reformatory work.

These things did not all originate in America, but the founders of our nation had a knowledge of continental law and literature, and were able to select from the experience of the ages a form of government, and a frame work of law, that have stood for more than a century and a half and have made the United States the greatest nation in the world.

If this knowledge did not reach us thru England, how else could we have received it? <sup>This</sup> is a natural question, and until the last half century perhaps could not have been satisfactorily answered. It is now known that the Netherlands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had the best schools, the wisest laws, the greatest prosperity, the most toleration, and the best form of government of any nation in the world at that time. With no natural resources, with small population, with no military experience, it battled Spain for eighty years and won a glorious victory for all mankind.

This influence, which paved the way for the Commonwealth in England and sounded the death knell for religious persecution, entered America thru several channels. We may rightly begin first with the Pilgrim Fathers, the leaders of whom came directly from thirteen years exile in the Netherlands. Hooker, who founded