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AN ORATION

DELIVERED IN THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

WILMINGTON, N. C.,

BY

JOSHUA G. WRIGHT, Esq.,

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, A. D. 1851.

PRINTED AT THE "HERALD" BOOK AND JOB OFFICE.

WILMINGTON, N. C.

1851.

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WILMINGTON, N. C., June 5th, 1851.

Dear Sir :—At a meeting of the “Committee of Arrangements” for the next 4th July, your name was presented, and you were unanimously selected as the “Orator” for the occasion.

In making this appointment, the Committee are aware that they have departed from the usual course on such occasions. Hitherto, we have been accustomed to listen to words from more youthful lips; and it was pleasant, as well as profitable thus to be reminded of the glory of the past and of our bright prospects for the future. But those prospects are now clouded—the condition of the Country is such as to excite the anxiety of all good men; and the citizens of Wilmington are desirous of listening to older and more experienced counsels. The Committee believe that there is no one else, through whom this unanimous desire of the citizens can be more fully met; and they cannot but indulge the hope that, under the peculiar circumstances, you will accede to their request.

I beg to add my personal solicitations to those of the committee.

Most respectfully, your obedient servant,

ROB'T H. COWAN.

To JOSHUA G. WRIGHT, Esq.

WILMINGTON, N. C., June 6th, 1851.

Dear Sir :—Your communication informing me that I had been selected to deliver an Oration on the ensuing 4th of July, has been received. Under ordinary circumstances I should certainly decline the honor which has been tendered me, but in responding to your solicitation my action has been controlled by the existing crisis in the condition of the country, and my disinclination to falter in the discharge of any duty which her interests may seem to require.

There is emphatic truth in your remark that her “prospects are now clouded,” and though I feel that I can but inadequately answer the appeal which patriotism at such a time makes to every citizen of the Republic, still to the extent of my ability, I am ready for the call.

I beg that you will convey to the Committee my thanks for the appointment which they have conferred, and permit me to express my sense of obligation to you, for the kind terms in which, as its organ, you have addressed me.

With the highest respect, your obedient servant,

JOSHUA G. WRIGHT.

To R. H. COWAN, Esq., Chairman of Committee.

WILMINGTON, N. C., July 5th, 1851.

My Dear Sir :—We have been instructed by the “Committee of Arrangements” to tender their thanks for the highly eloquent and able Address delivered by you on the morning of the 4th inst; and to request a copy of the same for publication.

In communicating these instructions, we beg to express our entire concurrence with you, in your sentiments upon the questions at issue between the North and the South. Especially in those, which relate to our duty towards the State of South Carolina. We believe that those sentiments will be cordially received, and heartily responded to by the great majority of the citizens of Wilmington; and we trust that you will permit them to

be placed before that very large portion who were prevented by the crowded state of the Church, from hearing the address.

With high respect, your obedient servants,

ROB'T H. COWAN,
JAS. F. McREE,
WM. C. HOWARD.

To J. G. WRIGHT, Esq.

WILMINGTON, N. C., July 5th, 1851.

Gentlemen :—Your note soliciting a copy of my Address for publication has just reached me. Prepared as it was at your request, I feel that you have measurably a right of property in it. and though your estimate of its merits may be much too high, still I do not feel at liberty to withhold my acquiescence in the wish expressed by you.

You will please accept my thanks for the flattering opinion you have expressed of it, and believe me,

Very truly, your friend and servant,

JOSHUA G. WRIGHT.

To Messrs. R. H. COWAN, J. F. McREE and W. C. HOWARD, Committee.

FRIENDS AND FREEMEN :

I come to greet you, on this proud day of American Independence. The revolution of another year has given it another and a higher mark in the calendar of time, and now as ever, we hail its advent with patriotic pride and joy. It is the Sabbath day of Freedom which has come again to bless our land, and with reverent patriotism we are here to hallow its return. Nor is it only here, but every where throughout our wide domain, on this our annual anniversary the national heart beats with a quicker throb and responsive to the emotion the national voice is heard in its loudest and loftiest anthems of liberty. But let us not dishonor the occasion, or attempt to limit its illimitable influence, by restricting its importance to the narrow confines of our country. From the day that it first stood forth in commanding dignity before the world, it has belonged to the world, and though peculiarly consecrated to American feeling, still its glory has gone abroad throughout the universe. It was to us the great day of deliverance, and therefore is it, that like the "Passover of God's own people we have set it apart from every other day in the sun's whole course." Anxious to pay it appropriate homage, we have come up hither to mingle in the ministrations of a pure patriotism, and to bring anew our oblations to its altar. The crowded mart, but yesterday so thronged with the busy sons of commerce, is this day hushed—the ~~hardy~~ sons of toil forbear their wonted work—the scholar turns from the lettered labor of his life—

and even the bower of beauty is deserted, in order that its fair inhabitant may lend the ornament of her presence, to this great gala day of Freedom.

And well does it become us, thus to signalize this great epoch in American history. It may be that it needs no such commemoration but it *deserves it*. It cannot be that we can ever grow forgetful of the deeds of those whose memories should be inurned in our hearts, but filial gratitude to our fathers, *demand*s that we should in some signal way mark our appreciation of the great work wrought by them for their children. Full well did they know the perilous hazards they incurred, when resolving to be free, they sent forth their bold Declaration of Independence like a trumpet note of defiance to the oppressor. But through the gloom, they saw the glory, and their souls exulted as in prophetic vision they beheld the blessings that their ultimate triumph would secure to posterity.— When looked the world upon such a scene as that of our fathers, as in high debate, they argued out the question of Independence for their country, and more than all, when they closed and crowned the argument by the adoption of that great measure which may well be styled the very creed of liberty. Nor classic Greece, nor imperial Rome in their palmyest day can parallel the sublime heroism of that band of sages then convened. For ages had the rights of man been the very scorn and scoff of tyranny,— long had the deep darkness of despair rested upon the political heavens, and though here and there a star gleamed out, they were the stars of an appalling night.

At length the light of our great example broke upon the world, and as at creation's morn, the fiat of Omnipotence went forth "Let there be light" and all earth grew glad beneath the quick descending radiance, so did the brightness of that flame of liberty kindled by our fathers in this Western hemisphere, spread abroad to gladden the

suffering millions of mankind. Like the pillar of fire by night, which blazed out for the escape of the Hebrew host, it pointed us the way of deliverance from our enslavement, and beneath its clear light we read, and the world with us, those axioms of liberty enshrined in that great State Paper, which in its recital of our wrongs furnished the amplest vindication of our rights. Englishmen boast their Magna Charta, won by the bold Barons of Runnymede from a tyrant King, but with how much prouder triumph should Americans point to that Declaration of Independence, which first spoke this great land of ours into existence as a nation among the powers of the earth. As loyal subjects, often had we sent up the prayerful petition to the throne, but the voice of supplication fell unheeded on the inexorable ear of tyranny. As indignant freemen, often had we thundered out the bold remonstrance against the aggressions of royalty, but in taunting tones the answer came back to us that our claims for redress were but the clamor of rebellion. 'Thus trifled with and trampled on—with every avenue to clemency closed against us, we turned from an English Parliament to an American Congress, nor was it long ere Richard Henry Lee, the American Cicero as he was styled, moved that great measure of Independence which was so gloriously sustained by his brave compeers in council, and which eventuated in the Declaration that the "United Colonies were and of right ought to be Free and Independent States."

And now came "the tug of war." Nor should we ever on the return of this memorable anniversary, fail to offer the passing tribute of our regard to those brave spirits who when the day of debate was over, at once sought the field of many a bloody fight, to champion the cause of our country. Would that with the hand of a skilful minstrel, I could so touch "the harp of this celebration," as to tune its strings to strains of richest melody in honor of those

whose deeds have made the days of our Revolution emphatically the heroic age of our land. The story of their sufferings and their heroism has been often told, but should never be forgotten. We owe it to them, to ourselves, and to our children, to cherish the recollection of their achievements, and to keep bright the escutcheon of their fame. "Think of your forefathers and of your posterity," was the exhortation of Galgacus of Britain, when leading on his followers against the invading legions of Rome, and well may we adopt the sentiment of the barbarian chief, towards the heroes of our revolutionary struggle. In the commemorative recollection of them, we not only discharge a pious duty to the dead, but also do much to perpetuate in the living, that spirit which shall prompt them to emulate the deeds of those who have done so much for us and for the world. From the day that the alarm of liberty was first sounded on the field of Lexington, to that on which the proud hurrah of victory was heard upon the still more memorable plains of York Town, it was clear to every discerning eye, that the American heart was fixed in invincible revolt against that allegiance which it had so long confessed and felt. And when at length the behest of the nation was heard in the call to arms, Pallas like, America stepped forth in all the panoply of war.

For seven long years, with chequered fortune, we fought the good fight of a righteous cause—a cause which the argument of words having been found too feeble to defend, was committed to the sterner argument of the ball and the bayonet, on the field. Guarded by that God who rules the destinies of men and nations, we triumphed, and with us too will triumph all the subjugated sons of earth. Already, like eager Pilgrims, do they press to our land as to the Mecca of Freedom—already has nation after nation broken its yoke of bondage, and long since has the prophecy of the poet, so beautifully descriptive of the anticipated

emancipation of the old world, become in many cases the recorded truth of history.

“ I saw the expecting regions stand,
 To catch the coming flame in turn,
 I saw from ready hand to hand,
 The bright but struggling glory burn.
 And each as she received the flame,
 Lighted her altar with its ray,
 Then smiling to the next who came,
 Speeded it on its sparkling way.”

And is it not a source of joyous satisfaction for us to know that we are of lineage with those who first struck that blow for liberty in this new world, which has been felt to the remotest borders of that old world from which our fathers came. Should it not swell your hearts with exultation, men of North Carolina, to remember that the first high note which was heard for Independence in the days of our Colonial vassalage, was sounded within the confines of your own brave commonwealth. To the bold spirits of Mecklenburg belongs the imperishable glory of declaring themselves, in May, 1775, a free and independent people, “subject to no power but their God and the General Government of Congress, to the maintenance of which independence, they solemnly pledged to each other their mutual co-operation, their lives, their fortunes and their most sacred honor.” Nor is this all. Turn to the Journal of the Provincial Congress of North Carolina, assembled at Halifax, in April, 1776, and you will there find the *first legislative recommendation* of a Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress, that was made on the Continent of America. These are proud memorials of the past, hung up in history, where all the world may read them, and learn from them, that as our fathers were no laggards in the cause of freedom, so never will their sons dishonor such sires, by submitting to aggression on their rights, come when or whence it may.

Standing as we do at so remote a distance from the day of our national thralldom, and encompassed with so many blessings which a munificent Providence has lavished upon us, I fear that we far too inadequately appreciate the merits of those whose labors have secured to us the vast and various good we now enjoy. Indeed it is no easy thing for a people rejoicing in the plenitude of such prosperity as now gladdens our land, to realize aright its condition during that long night of misrule, which once brooded over its happiness and its hopes. History may narrate and imagination lend its aid to the page which speaks of that eventful period, and yet how little can we know of the heroic deeds and still more heroic sufferings of those lion-hearted men who launched out so boldly on all the varieties of an untried being. Regardless of all consequences, they threw themselves upon the waves of war which rolled over our land, and with "hearts of controversy" breasted every surge that threatened to engulf them. Let us then on this day, under the auspices of which they won their trophies, take due care that we prove not forgetful of their memory, and though "no sound can awake them to glory again," still let us never fail to hand down the sacred traditions of their fame to each succeeding generation that may live after them,

"To the sages who spoke—to the heroes who bled—

To the day and the deed, strike the harp-strings of glory ;

Let the song of the ransom'd remember the dead,

And the tongue of the eloquent hallow the story."

But it is not my purpose to blazon the glories of the past. Time would fail me, to tell the chivalrous story of the feats of arms performed by the men of our revolutionary contest. Nor is it necessary that I should here rehearse it, or marshal again the shadowy ranks of the dead, while the fields of their fame are all before you. Monmouth and York, Eutaw and Saratoga, still consecrate our land, while with-

in your very gaze as it were, your own King's Mountain still stands in all the majesty of nature, as one of the proudest monuments of their valor. In the annals of your country's history you will find the record of those sufferings and achievements about which I have said but little, though I could not with my sense of the proprieties due to this day, have said less.

But though the Congress of '76 had proclaimed our Independence, and though our fathers in passing through the fiery ordeal of the war which followed, had so gloriously secured our liberties, there yet remained an arduous and perilous task for the sages of our country to accomplish. From the bondage of our political condition we had ascended to a proud position among the powers of the earth, but even then from the summit of our political Pisgah, we were only permitted to look out upon that land of promise which the prospect disclosed to our view. The truths announced in that great manifesto of freedom which we had sent forth to the world were recognized, and to that recognition the sign manual of King George had been given, but for those who had so triumphed over the reluctant Monarch, there was as yet no government. What was to be the future character of our national existence was the great problem presented for solution. Successful against foreign aggression, how were we to protect ourselves from those internal elements of discord and disaster so rife among every people, and only the more likely to exist among us, on account of those free principles which pervaded our land.

These were grave questions and great were the difficulties which attended a practical answer. An attempt was made to furnish that answer in the creation of a league of friendship between confederate and independent States, and in the constitution of a Congress, whose authority should be co-extensive with the limits of the Nation. But

so restricted were its powers, or rather so entirely destitute was it of all executive power, that the body politic exhausted as it was by the war of the revolution, and still more enfeebled as it was by the impotence of the new confederacy, languished at the point of dissolution. At this perilous crisis in the history of our country, the memorable Congress of '87 convened in Philadelphia, and after near four months of anxious deliberation by an assembly of devoted patriotism and distinguished statesmanship, they presented to the country for its adoption, that model polity, bearing on its front this inscription: "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

Hence came that Union which was born of the constituent sovereignty of the people—which has so long stood the test of time, and beneath the broad banner of which we have so long lived and prospered. It matters but little now what were the impediments which first checked its formation, nor shall I usurp the office of the historian by the labored recital of them. Suffice it to say that the existing social institutions of the country—the chartered rights so dear to many of the Colonies, and more than all the State sovereignties content with their own political condition and jealous of a superior sovereign,—none more so than your own North Carolina—together with the great diversities of interest, opinions and habits then prevailing, seemed to forbid the hope of success in the formation of a government adequate to the exigencies of the country, and comprehensive as the country itself. Despite all these obstacles, however, it triumphed,—those States that had gone so gloriously together through the war of the Revolution.

rallied around it—the American Republic was complete, and as it stood out in all its lovely grandeur before the vision of the victims of tyranny, was to them like the “Holy City coming down from God, out of Heaven, beautiful as a bride adorned for her husband.”

Here was a new era in the science of government, and truly a benign one for the oppressed of every land. To us was it permitted first to announce to the world the capacity of man for self-government, and fortunate was it for the practical exemplification of the truth of the announcement, that in the inception of our experiment, we were blessed with the presence and principles of those who had been actively instrumental in the establishment of our Union. Nor was this all, the spirit of the compact was the very life of the government, and the political association which had been formed, was everywhere sustained and strengthened by a unity of feeling which gave the best guaranty of its stability and success.

Would to God that a kindred sympathy of sentiment was now diffused through our land. Alas, however, for the perfectibility of all things human, those cheering auguries which attended the first movement of our Nation on its high career, and which were so auspiciously fulfilled in its subsequent progress, seem now about to fail us. A cloud of fearful aspect has thrown its darkness across that halcyon heaven, in the blessed sunlight of which, we had hoped forever to rejoice and live. That Union which was based upon foundations so deep, and upborne by pillars so strong, that we fondly thought it might defy all “the waves and weathers of time,” seems now to the eye of many to totter—perchance to its fall.

And whence this danger? In the perpetration of an unprovoked and unremitted sectional wrong you will find an answer. Fanaticism garbed as an angel of light, but

with all the instincts of a demon of darkness, directing her movements, now walks through the land and upon the feelings, the rights, the interests, and it may be the existence of the South, is waging a war of invasion which if not arrested, may become a war of destruction. The truth, mournful as it is, can no longer be disguised, that portentous danger overhangs the Republic, and that the blow which threatens its demolition is to be wreaked on the unoffending South.

A great and growing portion of the North and other regions where a congenial sympathy prevails, repudiating the duties of citizenship, and forgetful of the moral obligation which binds their conscience to the Constitution of the country, have enlisted in a crusade against that institution, to the inheritance of which you were born, and by the subversion of which you must perish—an institution which has existed under the divine government, from the earliest antiquity, and which was sanctioned by that Saviour of mankind who feared not boldly to rebuke alike Sadducee and Pharisee, but from whose hallowed lips there never came a word of denunciation against slavery. An institution which has been the handmaid of civilization in all ages and well nigh all nations, which, in fine, when religiously considered, is altogether defensible, and which when viewed as a question of political economy, involving the interests of the master and the slave, is nothing less to us, than a political *necessity*.

Against it, the aggressive morality of the North has been long directed, nor is it necessary that I should here expose the spurious philanthropy, or analyze the ethics of those, whose theory is a repudiation of the Old and New Testament of their God. It is enough for me to know that the peace and prosperity of our homes are invaded by this pestilent horde—that the serpents of Fanaticism are upon us, and that like Laocoon of old, we shall be crushed

to our ruin, unless we break free forever from their complicated folds.

Tell me not that political abolition is the blown bubble of unthinking folly, and soon will burst—the mere ephemeron of a day, that will soon live out its brief existence and then sleep forever—much too insignificant to arrest the attention or alarm the fears of the South. I tell you nay. From a contemptible club of zealots, it has become a well organized party, at one time exercising a controlling influence over local politics, and at another making itself felt in the national councils of the country. It has subsidized the press for the abuse of us, polluted the pulpit with its anathemas of us, aye laid its sacrilegious hand upon Churches around whose altar men of the same faith were wont to worship but to rend them, and claiming for itself an identity with religion, unfurls its sacred standard and calls upon all christendom to rally around it.

Nor let it be said that the fanatics are few in number, for if this were true they are ever active and expert in the accomplishment of their nefarious purpose, and meet with but little of energetic opposition from those around them. It was the sentiment of Rome's great orator, "that the bad will always attack with far more spirit than the good will defend, sound principles. The republic," said he, "is assailed with far more force and contumacy, than it is defended, because bold and profligate men are impelled by a nod, and move of their own accord against it; but I know not how it happens, that good men are always more tardy. They neglect the beginning of things and only rouse themselves in the last extremity." And who are they that thus molest our peace and invade our rights? Friends of the slave? They are forging fetters to bind him in a bondage from which naught but death can free him. Friends of the country? They are daily striking at its heart with the murderous arm of the homicide, and seem resolved to

continue the attack until they have driven life from every vital vein which animates it. Let them not talk to us of nullification—the doctrine of liberation which they promulgate, is a direct violation of the national compact—let them not declaim against secession, for by conduct such as theirs, the process of separation has been originated, and unless checked on its way, will soon reach its consummation. Like treacherous allies, they have played us false. They have kept but Punic faith with us, that faith, which more than all the arms of conquering Rome, laid Carthage in the dust. With the word of promise to the ear, they have broken it to the hope, and we now find ourselves confederates of a Union which every Southern heart knows could never have been formed if the hostilities of the present period had been waged against us in the memorable days of '89.

And is it not time for the South to awake to a sense of the danger which menaces her? With all this enginery of evil pointed at her life, to which I have adverted, and more than all, with the almost universal public opinion of the North in moral resistance against her great institution—that public opinion, which, when misdirected, is a Molock of destruction, shall she supinely sleep on 'till she can no longer command her destiny? Forbid it Freemen!

How stand you men of the South this day in numerical power? Turn to the late census of your country and there you will find the startling fact that we now count a federal population of more than 23,000,000—that, near 14,000,000 of this number belong to the Free States, and little more than 9,000,000 to the Slave States. Superadd to this, the constant annual influx of that alien and hostile population which crowd to our shores, with no feeling in sympathy with our social condition, and you cannot fail to perceive the impending peril. The sword of Damocles overhangs,

us, an in an unsuspecting hour, it may fall upon our defenceless heads.

And where are we in this extremity to look for protection but to ourselves? Where are we, the masters of these millions, and as such their protectors, to find security for them, but in our united resolution to shield them from the experiments of Fanaticism? Where are we to find hope for the perpetuity of this glorious confederacy of States but in the *union of the South for the sake of the Union*.

These are inquiries which should assume a cogent character when addressed to the Southern mind, for they involve the great question of our section, and are not to be evaded by flippant flourishes of rhetoric upon the greatness of our country, or words—mere words of boastful confidence on the perpetuity of our Union. A remedy for the wrongs we are suffering must be found, and may Heaven avert the day when we shall be compelled to seek it in disunion. Whether you are believers or infidels in the doctrine of secession, I ask not to know, nor is it any part of that mission upon which patriotism has sent me here to-day, to argue out this much vexed question. But the day may come—aye, most assuredly will come, unless the signs of the present largely belie the future, when we shall have to raise ourselves to the height of this great argument—“when power will retreat to its original”—when the despoiled and dishonored sons of the South may be compelled to take up the weapons of defence and strike for their outraged rights.

“Strike 'till the last armed foe expires,
Strike for their altars and their fires:
Strike for the green graves of their sires,
God—and their native land!”

I am no alarmist—I raise no parricidal arm against my country. Gladly would I make this Union an eternal league of love, but I should be guilty of disloyalty to the

land of our common birth if I withheld the voice of warning at this great crisis in our condition. Nor let it be supposed that they are ever the best friends of the country whose patriotism is so sublimated in its nature, that their minds are fixed in the belief that naught but unmingled good can hereafter result from a union which has hitherto been so prolific of blessings to our land—who can discern nothing of wrong to the South in the past, nor of danger to her great interests in the future. Such men are not the true guardians of the republic, and if we but follow their example, we may rest assured that the day will come, when we shall be roused from our dream of fancied security but to witness a reality which will be fraught with the wreck of our every hope. In order then to avert the danger which now stands so menacingly before us, we must confront and conquer it—we must maintain our ascendancy over those Pharisaical purists who thank God that they are not as other men are—slaveholders. We must hold fast our control over this institution or we are undone. We must not permit our rights to be kept in abeyance at the will of others, nor hold any position inferior to that of freemen in the assertion of them. Such should ever be our course, and if we do not take and keep it, the day will inevitably arrive when the fair and fertile South with her diminished, if not destroyed staples, and her universally depreciated interests, shall become a wilderness of want and wo. All that we ask is that the integrity of the national compact may be preserved inviolate. Give us back the primitive purity of the Government. Reanimate the dead body of the Constitution with the spirit that was breathed into it by those who first spoke it into life, and our chafed spirits will be soothed—the unclenched hand of fellowship extended again in amity, and our hearts hallowed to the love of the Union—that Union, which in solemn covenant guaranteed the protection of our interests, and which

should never forget that great principle of liberty, that allegiance and protection are reciprocal.

I repeat then, let us be united upon this momentous measure—let us not deliberate on its great issues with divided counsels, lest by our discord the enemy is emboldened in his aggressions, and we become the instruments of our own dishonor and destruction. We revolt with horror from the Demon of Disunion—let us have care lest we find for him an ally in the Demon of Division among ourselves. It may be that some of those who feel that the preservation of this institution is to them as to us of vital importance, are too apt to make their judgment wait upon their passions, and in the rashness of their resentment are eager for the adoption of a course which bodes no good to our common cause. Already has our nearest sister on our Southern border, given fearful indication of her determination to assume an independent position before the country—a position which can never be defended by that arm which she alone expects to wield for its defence. If, however, we cannot lend her our co-operation, let us not exasperate her by our denunciations—let us strive to win her back to better counsels—let us hope that her proud spirit will yet yield to clearer-sighted self-interests and the kindred sympathies of her sisters. And more than all let us not stigmatize her sons as traitors.

Which of the gallant tier of the Old Thirteen has written for herself a higher name on fame's unmouldering pillar? Where's the State that during each and all of our national conflicts has sought and found for herself in the language of her Butler, whose martyr spirit went up from the plains of Mexico, "a more conspicuous place in the picture" of martial glory. Let us not then, charge upon her the crime of treason, because she exhibits more of valor than discretion. Her destiny may be our destiny—her victory or defeat, our glory or shame. We should remem-

ber that we often misname that treason, which is but an exalted sentiment of liberty, a developement of that feeling which never permits a free people to prefer their existence to their honor. Your Washington once was loyal to his King, but when that King became a tyrant, he became a traitor to him and wrested from him his dominion over that free and fair land which we exult to call our country.—When in May, 1765, the celebrated resolutions against the Stamp Act were discussed in the Assembly of Virginia, who carried them successfully through that then loyal body? Who could have saved her from the deep dishonor of approving such an outrage on her rights, but her own “forest born Demosthenes,” the immortal Henry. With the quick sagacity of a patriot he discerned the iniquitous tyranny of the measure—trumpet tongued, he thundered out his denunciations of royalty, and soaring aloft on the eagle-wing of his eloquence, exclaimed, “Cæsar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third—(“Treason!” cried the Speaker. “Treason! Treason!” echoed the House;—)—may profit by their example. If this be Treason make the most of it.” And mark it, the Treason of that day, was the parent of the Independence which we this day commemorate. Away then with the words of traitor on the one hand and submissionist on the other, words of goading reproach as they are, words which only tend to beget the treason which we deprecate, or to debase us by that submission which we abhor.

But, my friends, I forbear to press a theme so tragic as that which tells of the dismemberment of my country—and believe me it is for the love I bear my country, that I have thus this day addressed you on your position, your duties and your danger, in order that by your union you may overawe aggression, and so escape the peril of the future. I strike another, a holier, and a happier chord, more in harmony with this, the hour of our celebration. I ascend to

that high summit to which the greatness of my country has advanced, and gazing thence upon creation's map, vainly do I look for any land so bright, so brilliant in its past and present, as this goodly heritage which God has given us. With a commerce which puts its girdle round the globe—with an agriculture which smiles on every hand and pours from the horn of her abundance the amplest blessings, alike for us here and for the famishing sons of earth elsewhere—with an industry which animates every energy, and makes glad every hill and plain and valley, who can wish to mar the enchantment of a scene like this? I turn to the Constitution of my country as it came from the hands of our fathers, a magnificent creation, complete in every form and lineament of liberty, and feel that vainly may the world hope to behold the Utopia of the speculative politician, unless its realization is found in our well organized system of government. Who then, can look out upon this bright day of our prosperity—this Union, which like a “steadfast planet” has beamed so benignly for us and for the world, and not send up his daily litany to Heaven, that the dark night of disunion may never descend upon it, to shroud its glory? I catch a cheering omen in that great measure of peace which the patriotic wisdom of the country has so recently matured, and hailing it as a bow of promise for our land, my “faith becomes triumphant o'er my fears.”

Let us then, while with unblenching front we stand up for our rights, turn no deaf ear to the invocations of patriotism, and still maintain our fidelity to the *Compromise*, the *Constitution* and the *Union*. Let us still rally under that starry standard which has so long covered us as a mantle in peace, and which has so often waved victoriously for us in war. God grant that as an unbroken brotherhood of freemen, we may ever gaze on that bird and banner which have been so long united—that we may never

live to see that tree of liberty which was planted by our fathers, watered by the blood of their sons, and that beneath the blessed dews of peace it may gather strength to contend with every storm.

“ Long in its shade may children’s children come,
And welcome earth’s poor wanderers to a home ;
Long may it live, and every blast defy,
’Till time’s last whirlwind sweeps the vaulted sky.”





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