

AN
ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE CITIZENS OF BOSTON,

ON THE

SIXTY FIRST ANNIVERSARY

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

JULY 4, 1837.

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1837.

ORATION.

How pleasant is this occasion,—how rich with glad hopes and auspicious omens, the scene around us. In the revolving year, another of our national jubilees has returned, and the citizens of our community, amidst much to dishearten and depress them, yet unfettered by prejudice, untrammelled by party, free in nature's holiest freedom, have gathered around this sacred altar. The prayer of thanksgiving, as is meet first of all, has ascended to God, and music has chanted our hymn of praise. The fathers of New England are not yet forgotten. Prosperity has not dazzled, nor adversity clouded the vision of the sons; but here on the shores, which the patriots first trod, amidst the wonderful growth, of which they laid the foundation, on the anniversary of the day which crowned their labors of patriotism and self-sacrifice, have come up the children, with grateful homage and filial recollection, to give them the assurance, that they are still their children. And they welcome that assurance. Though their visible forms have departed from the earth, their spirits yet linger over their beloved land. Yes, fellow citizens, the eye of sense sees not all, who are gathered within these walls. To the vision of a patriotic faith, this assembly swells into a vaster multitude. Those honored fathers, the noble army of the martyrs, the great and good of

other days, the sages and heroes, Washington and Warren,—Hancock and Adams,—Otis and Quincy, all, all are here, are this moment with us. They partake in this occasion, they hear us, they speak to us, their presence more hallows this hallowed spot. Nor this only; but wherever throughout our broad land,—than which they knew no narrower limits for their sympathies and their home,—wherever throughout our whole country, the grateful children are assembled, there mingle the spirits of our common fathers, honoring as they are honored, and blessing as they are blessed.

It is meet, then, that this day should be consecrated. Let it be ever consecrated. It is that on which the present seems willing to pause for a moment, in its hurrying career, to commune with the past; ere it changes into the future. Reality, stern, noisy reality is for once awed to silence, that anticipation may listen to the instructive notes, which memory strikes from her golden harp. On this day, the distant are brought near,—the absent return,—the living and the dead meet. The living and the dead, how imposing the spectacle,—how salutary for us the interview. I call up no other thought, to give interest to this hour. In the august presence of those, who stood hand in hand and “shoulder to shoulder,” smiling at danger, and unawed at death, that freedom might be the inheritance of every son of America, how poor are the badges of party strife,—how trifling the distinctions, which divide our race. How solemnly, yet beautifully do the departed teach us, that devotion to our country is better than selfishness, and that patriotism is a part of religion. We catch their inspiration, for we have souls, and cannot but catch it, and we feel, that it is good for us to be here. Our hearts expand,

—the fetters of prejudice and bigotry snap asunder. We are not the rich and the poor, the high and the low; we are not partizans,—we are not enemies. We are men and countrymen. We have a common lineage, a common country, a common hope. The blended and blessed influences of all time, the past, the present, and the future, are upon us. Self is forgotten; and as they whom we alike honor, lived for their country and for us, we resolve that we will live for our country and posterity. By all that is beautiful in memory, then, by all that is valuable in the present, and momentous in the future, let this day never be forgotten.

It has been said, I know,—the winds have whispered, as they passed, but whispered only, for they dared not utter it aloud,—that it was time, that the observance of this occasion was done away, that its theme was trite, and that a half a century was long enough for the work of commemoration. But is it so, with the Christian Sabbath? That has been celebrated more than fifty times in a year, for more than eighteen hundred years, and shall it, for that reason, now be laid aside? This is our nation's sabbath, sacred to an event, which Christianity herself acknowledges, as amongst her kindred and friends. A half a century long enough for the work of commemoration? But is that period long enough for the enjoyment of that, which this day commemorates? Will he, who would abolish the observance of this festival, consent to part with that, which gives the festival its life and spirit? Let him who cannot hear the Declaration of his independence, aye, his own independence, read, or commented on, as often at least, as the anniversary of that day returns, when it was proclaimed by those, who pledged “their lives, their fortunes, and their

sacred honor," in its maintenance and defence,—let him tear the parchment, and fling it to the winds. Such an act can be no sacrilege to him. And when hereafter his children shall turn to him the inquiring gaze of youth, and ask the meaning of yonder pyramid of granite, let him look them in the face if he can.

But, no, fellow citizens, I will not believe that I address a solitary individual, who would pass by unnoticed his country's anniversary. Let the celebration of this day cease, and, be assured, that it will not be only, that the Fourth day of July has fallen into the current of unmarked time. It will be an indication that the spirit of liberty is dying out; and that our country itself is descending into that most mournful of all sepulchres, where moulder the remains of fallen republics. In the spirit of the elder Adams, then, if I could but reach to it, I would repeat, let this day be hallowed. Wherever we are, at the fireside, or in the assembly,—at home or abroad,—on the ocean or the land, let this day be hallowed. Be it hallowed, so long as a drop of the blood of the pilgrims runs in our veins. Be it hallowed, while freedom is more than a forgotten word, for

“While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand,
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall,
And when Rome falls, the world.”

This day, as I have said, is sacred to the past, and I should be false to my trust, if I failed, in the outset, to call up its record. The past, our past history, what a crowded canvass, what a noble picture. I shall not of course, presume to enter into details here. It cannot be necessary in an assembly of those, whose homes are on the very spot, where so many of its most interesting scenes were enacted. If there be one individual, who is yet to learn the history of his

country's origin, and of that independence which was achieved in his behalf, let him bless his stars, that he lives in a land of primary schools, and let his first act be, to gain admittance there. To them I must refer him, for time would fail me, even for an outline. And, the story of the events, which this day commemorates, cannot be told with any truth, or to any effect, without the details. The gathering of the exiles, for the last time, upon the shores of their native and still beloved land,—the embarking,—the passage,—the landing,—the settlement,—the colonial dependence,—the provincial struggles,—the oppression on one side, the mild remonstrance, on the other,—that remonstrance deepening into defiance, as that oppression rose into tyranny,—discontent becoming hate,—the first dawning of the idea of independence,—the whispering of it to each other,—the firm resolve that it should be theirs,—the declaration and the blow, these are the events, that crowd our past, as the stars the firmament. And what justice can be done them, or any one of them even, within the limits of this occasion! He who would paint them, must make a distinct picture of each; nay, into each separate picture, he must introduce a multitude of incidents, not only to heighten the interest, but as absolutely indispensable to a correct representation. I must stop with the bare enumeration of the topics, and trust to the associations which surround, to expand and impress them.

Nor for an adequate description of the founders and defenders of the infant republic, does this occasion give scope. Who, as he contemplates them in comparison with the men of his own day, does not feel as if they were a distinct race of beings, and almost ask, with the childish wonder, with which he

first read of the long lives of the patriarchs, if it be really true, that such men once trod upon the same earth with himself? To be understood, they must be studied. If we would really know these illustrious personages, we must take them by that hand, which toil had made vigorous;—we must look into their stern, but honest countenances;—we must observe the dignity on their brow, the puritanic, if you please, but the real sanctity of their mein, and the unflinching integrity of their hearts. We must converse with them, and listen to their deep-felt, but well-weighed sentiments. We must meet them in the council, where feeling, as it should be, was the servant of reason,—where judgment overawed passion,—where forbearance and courage were in beautiful harmony,—where selfishness shrunk away from the presence of self-devotion, and where an austere, perhaps, but a genuine christianity presided in majesty over the whole. We must go out with them into the public walk, in their intercourse with their fellows, where republicanism was not rudeness, nor courtesy deemed cringing,—where they honored the honorable, though they feared none. And, above all, in one lovelier interview still, we must sit with them at their homes, amid their wives and children, around the domestic hearth, that blessed spot, at which, next to God's own altar, the holiest fires of patriotism and public virtue are lighted. We must be thus familiar with our fathers, if we would really know them. And it is the very charm of their characters, that they not only bear, but demand, the most intimate acquaintance. I am sure, therefore, that I can do them no justice here.

The same remark may emphatically be made of the war of the revolution. In its result, it is true, it

has no parallel. But in its progress, it has been exceeded by many, in striking features. The campaigns of Buonaparte, considered merely as military displays, have an unsurpassed brilliancy. The bold conceptions, the rapid execution, action and victory simultaneous almost with thought, appear miraculous. We are astonished, confounded. The best description of them, therefore, is a sketch. Their interest consists in the appearance, the outside. To examine them minutely, would be to go behind the scenes of a pageant.

But of the war of our revolution, the very reverse of all this, is true. You cannot despatch that, with a stereotyped account of the nodding of plumes, the flourish of trumpets, the roar of artillery, "the flight, the pursuit and the victory." Its interest consists not in the display, but the means. Its characteristic was prudent conduct, rather than brilliant achievement. It was marked more by what was borne, than what was acted. He, therefore, who would understand its real merits, must be familiar with its inmost springs: and to do justice to the men, whose names are identified with it, we must witness the trials they suffered, the obstacles they surmounted, the faith that never faltered, the hope that never sunk, and the fortitude, that knew not despair. Let him, who would thoroughly understand the war of the revolution, read the letters of Washington, which have recently been published. They alone constitute the best history of it, that can be written. And the immortal leader,—how does he shine in yet brighter lustre, as he is viewed by the light, which his private and official correspondence throws upon his character. It is easy enough to speak in loose generalities, and to say that he was a distinguished general, and that he con-

ducted the war which he led, to a successful result. But the same may be said of a multitude of others. We can see how far he transcends the common herd of military heroes, only when we test him by the fiery ordeal of an undisguised exhibition of his daily acts and thoughts. Thus only can we appreciate his true characteristics,—a spotless purity of motive,—a judgment that bordered on the miraculous,—a fortitude, that a succession, and, at times, an accumulation of all the obstacles, which could thwart his plans, was not able to subdue,—and crowning all, that wondrous self control which deaf to the voice of personal ambition, and to the loud and often complaining, but always mistaken call from without, that he would hazard all upon some bold stroke, enabled him to stand, upon a calm survey of his resources, firm to the only true policy, and to persevere in that unobtrusive, but wise course of defence, by which and which alone, this country was saved. Need I say, then, that the closet is the place, for communion with the Father of his Country?

But though thus compelled to forbear from the details, we may yet gather up the spirit of the past. And may I venture an attempt to catch a few glimpses of this spirit, in connection with a topic, which cannot be inappropriate to this occasion,—the duties and dangers of freemen?

And, first of all, it may be asked, who are freemen? What is this liberty, of which we hear so much? Is it merely the absence of restraint? if so, then is the savage our superior, and the lion indeed the lord of creation. Is it opposed to government? then its interest must be promoted by the overthrow of government. But it is no such answer, which comes from the graves of the settlers of New England. It

was neither to free themselves from restraint, nor to subvert government, that the pilgrims came. The liberty which they worshipped, was not exemption from control,—for that is lawlessness, the freedom of the highwayman and the pirate,—but it was deliverance from external force, and the substitution in its place, of the principle of self government. It is the substitution of this principle of self government, in the place of outward force, that is the true characteristic, and only support of rational liberty. Release from the bondage of a foreign power merely, is not freedom, but anarchy, if no controlling principle is substituted in its place. It is only when the principle of self control is seated upon the throne, from which the despot has been hurled, that true liberty can be said to exist. Indeed, there is no such thing in the plan of the universe, as the absence of government. Wherever there is a soul, from the highest archangel to the humblest mortal, there is intended to be government, restraint. And the real distinction between slavery and freedom, is not that the one is subject to government, and the other not,—but that the one is awed and controled by a force, external to itself, whilst the other is awed and controled indeed, but only by an inward sense and principle of duty. And, therefore the question with our fathers was not, whether they should be governed, but how they should be governed. They may not, in the outset, have fully comprehended this great idea of self government. But truth never flashes into brightness at once. It breaks like the morning, first the faint streak, then the purpled horizon, and then the sun's broad disk. And so it was with the genuine liberty, founded upon the basis of self government, which it was the final object of our ancestors to establish here.

Clouds may have obscured its perilous dawn ; but it rose at last, never, we trust, to set on earth.

And this principle of self government, whose existence and action are indispensable to the life of true liberty, is not a matter of state, or of prerogative or succession, in one ruler or many, but is the inborn principle of each individual. In this consists its chief distinction and importance, as the foundation of a free community, that it is laid in the heart of every human being. Despotism has its single throne, in its solitary palace, apart from its subjects ; but the principle of self government on which liberty rests, has its home in the bosom of every citizen. That only is genuine freedom, which results from the operation of a controlling principle of duty, in every man's own breast ; and it is their tendency to develop this, which gives their chief interest and value, to all the achievements of our past, from the embarking at Leyden, to the adoption of the Constitution. I am aware, that the actual existence of this real liberty, requires what has not yet been, and perhaps never may be seen on the earth, the perfect operation of this individual self government. It is sadly true, that this has been but imperfectly developed, and therefore it is, that the sun of freedom lingers so far to the eastward of the meridian. But still I believe, that it is the only foundation, on which a free government can stand. I think the fact can be read, even in the imperfect characters, in which it is written upon human things. But I see it clearer, as I am permitted to look upwards. Perfect liberty is as yet only with the sons of God ; and if we are asked for the model of a perfect kingdom, we must point, with reverence indeed, but with confidence, to those shining realms, where all unhallowed passions are hushed,—where

purity has mounted to perfection, and where self control has vanquished every foe.

Perfect liberty, then, implies not the absence, but the perfection of government,—not the removal of restraint, but the substitution of individual self control for external force. A freeman, accordingly, is not he, who acknowledges no controlling power, but he, in whom the principle within is so perfect in its operation, that he needs not another's arm, or a flaming sword to maintain his fidelity to every form of duty. And he is the freest, who so completely governs himself, that he least requires the power of magistrates or human laws.

Our first great duty, then is with the very principle of freedom,—that we view it aright, as the absence of external restraint most surely, but only upon the eternal condition that its place is supplied by that within each individual, which equally controls, whilst at the same time, it ennobles him. And the greatest danger which besets our liberty, is from the neglect of this individual self government, on which it depends. There is comparatively little fear, that we fall again under a despotism, excepting that most galling one, which, from the absolute necessity of some government, must certainly follow the abandonment of the only principle upon which a free one rests. A foreign despot is not the only, nor the chief foe, that freedom has to dread. Let one of these attempt to put but the weight of a finger upon her sacred temple, and I doubt not, that the sword of every American would leap from its scabbard, and either preserve that shrine inviolate, or build around it a rampart of the dead. But there may be another enemy within the very sanctuary. For what is despotism? It is the sacrifice of liberty, to what the

despot calls order. But there is another spirit, not known indeed, by the same name, that would sacrifice order, to what it calls liberty. The processes of the two are reverse, but their end is the same. The order of the first, is slavery outright; the liberty of the last, is anarchy at first, whose immediate successor is slavery too. It is of the latter spirit, which, jealous enough of the external force, yet forgets or abandons the individual restraint, that we have most need to beware.

We extend our fortifications, and enlarge our navy, and it is well. But how is it with the real citadels of that which we would defend, the principles and hearts of each citizen? A love of order,—a respect for right,—honesty, political, as well as private,—contentment with the inevitable inequalities of temporal condition, which Providence has ordained,—an honest endeavor to improve our situation, but coupled always with the feeling, that as republican citizens, we are measured, not by its elevation, but by the fidelity with which we fill it, whatever it be,—a regard for the law, which considers the necessity for a military police, whether permanent or temporary, as the next dreadful thing to the invasion of a foreign foe,—an enlarged patriotism,—individual self control,—these are the cheap, yet priceless defences of our nation's freedom, and without which, forts and armies and navies are idler than the winds. But are these the things, which mark our times? Is the internal fortress of freedom, which each citizen has in charge, guarded as it should be? Is there no crimson upon our cheek, as we commune with the past, in the solemnities of this day? It was the possession of these only supports of freedom, and the wonderful development of the principle of individual self government,

which sustained our fathers, in their heroic enterprise, bound them to it, and to each other, when there was no other earthly government, which they acknowledged, and enabled them to stand forth to posterity, in the noble attitude of genuine freemen. This is the key to their whole history. In simplicity, in purity, in a sense of individual responsibility, they planted the tree of liberty. The thin soil of the rocky mountains was its only nurture, but behold its majesty. We may have transplanted it to the deep soil, which prosperity has enriched, but where is its vigor? Its sap may be more abundant, but where is its purity? It may be more comely to the eye, but how wrestles it with the storm?

It was upon the basis of this liberty, thus founded upon individual fidelity, that, when the conflict was over, our republican government was established. Its founders, as wise in the council, as they had been valiant in the field, though they acknowledged and obeyed the true principle of freedom, were aware that the time had not come, when it was to be trusted alone,—that there would yet be employment for magistrates and laws,—and that accordingly, an outward government was still indispensable. But what kind of government? Their answer was ready,—a government, that recognizing and based upon the true notion of liberty, as resting, in fact, upon the principle of individual obligation, should, in its form and operation, tend to the development and perfection of this principle, whilst at the same time, it possessed an external power sufficient, in all cases, to supply its want or perversion;—or, in briefer language, a government, that should give every citizen an opportunity of being a good one, from his own true idea of freedom, if he would, but compel him to be one, if he

would not. This is the theory of our government; and in this provision for the development of the individual self government, on which liberty rests, consists the distinction between a republican government, and a despotic one. The mere outward object of both, is the same, to govern the people, and to preserve order. The difference is in the means, and in the consequent effect upon individual character. And this is a mighty difference. I seek no other consideration, to give unspeakable value to our republican institutions, than this their characteristic,—their basis upon, and tendency to develop, the true foundation of rational freedom. Submission to external, visible force, on which the despot relies, is in its nature degrading; but obedience to the inward, unseen monitor, to which a free government appeals, is always exalting. Despotism is a self-perpetuating curse. In all its forms, it makes and keeps its subjects fit only for its iron rod. But the government that is based upon the self government of each citizen, has an upward tendency; and if they who live under it, will but give it free play, and not cramp or pervert it, it will carry them up with it.

We have great duties, then, towards the free institutions of government, which have been here established. The labor of creation, indeed, is not ours. That has been nobly done by those, who have received from their country, the last offering she could make them, a peaceful resting place in her bosom. But no, not the last; for to preserve what they established, is the truest honor that can be paid them, and this work is for us. The solemnity of this trust is impressed upon us, by a thousand considerations. I can glance at but one, which seems to me the highest.

If a free government cannot be sustained here, it can be no where, for there is no longer an unknown continent to be discovered, on which another experiment can be made. How great is the necessity of a new country, to the establishment of a genuine republic, and especially of that, which, by being the first, is to be the model for imitation, a moment's reflection upon history, will convince us. It was not on these shores, that the first blow for liberty was struck. The whole history of man, is that of struggles for freedom. But these had always before been made, in the ancient seats of despotism. Liberty was an outcast, skulking in caverns. Her opposers had all the advantage of long continued possession. They had arguments, whose foundation was in the glorious history, and cherished associations of those, to whom, and even against whom, they were urged. They had weapons for the warfare, whose edge the blood of subjugated nations had whetted, and whose hilts the hands of a victorious and revered ancestry had made sacred. And the result was natural. Amid old associations and fastened habits, there was no soil for the growth of that individual self government, on which liberty rests, and therefore it withered in an hour.

How striking an illustration of the truth of this, is the history of France. She began the work of building a republic upon the ruins of a despotism. Before her was our struggle, which she had helped to make successful. The patriots of our revolution were intimate with her leaders, and, endeavored to pay back in counsel and encouragement, the debt of gratitude we owed her. With every advantage, as it seemed, she determined, that the establishment of a republic in the old world, cost what it might, should no longer be deemed impossible. And what was the sequel? She was years pulling down the old fabric, shedding

blood, cutting throats, and decking the city with human heads, and lo, the republic rising from the ruins. But the spirit of liberty was not in the enterprise. There was no Plymouth on her shores, and no pilgrims in her councils. The wise republicans which her soil produced, were an infuriated mob,—republican, so far as to cast off the old government, and wise, as they thought, so far as to reject any other. The existence of her republic is measured by days. A master despot touched but with his finger, the right chord, and the boasted republicans, covered with the blood, which they had shed for liberty, became his slaves.

Here, then, if any where, where freedom has her home, where patriotism is on her side,—on the virgin soil of the continent, which was reserved by Providence, till “the fulness of time,” and discovered at last, for the very purpose of the experiment,—here, if any where, can a free government live. If it fails here, it fails forever. I throw out of sight, therefore, all selfish considerations, as motives for fidelity to that which has been bequeathed us. I say not a word of our own happiness and honor, if we are true,—or of our misery and deep degradation, if we are false. I would rest, this day, upon the single, yet absorbing thought, that the destiny of freedom, in all times and places, is entrusted to us. I would write it, if I could, in letters of startling light, that if a free government fails here, it fails forever. Harken, sons of the pilgrims, hearken to the voice, which comes not from your posterity only, but from your race, imploring you to be faithful.

The solemn duty of preserving our free institutions is, then, on us. And what inquiry can be more interesting, than how we shall discharge it? The general answer is obvious from what has been said,

and may be expressed in few words,—by never losing sight of, but constantly and in all relations, acting upon and strengthening, that principle of individual self government; which being the basis of freedom, is thereby the very corner stone of a true republic. To follow out this inquiry, as its importance deserves, and to the various forms, in which a government, thus based upon individual responsibility; yet provided with an external power, to remedy its neglect; is affected by individual action, and by the exercise of that power, is more suitable for a treatise, than an address. From the very idea of a republic, which has been suggested, the particular political duties of its citizens are as various as their positions. But the grand principle, which lies at the bottom of all, explains all, brings order out of chaos, sheds light over darkness, smooths inequalities, reconciles apparent inconsistencies, and raises each citizen to the only real level, is that of the personal responsibility, independent of all rank, station, or condition, on which the government relies. The most general divisions into which we are separated, are sufficient to illustrate this, and they are all that can properly be referred to on this occasion.

We are divided in name, into rulers and ruled, the majority and minority; and fierce warfare is waged, to the detriment of freedom. But how would its violence be turned into manly and healthful rivalry, if the true principle of liberty animated each division, and the real nature of a republic were never overlooked. The strife for power, for influence, for control, that absorbing strife, to which all things “in heaven above, and the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth,” are made to minister, how changed would be its aspect, if that in which the true value of the prize consists, were rightly comprehended, and

even the very language that is used were properly understood.

We hear much in this connexion, of every man being a part of the government, of equal importance, and entitled to rule. And this is a noble truth, a republican sentiment ; but not in the sense, in which it is often uttered. Every citizen of a republic is, indeed, a part of the government, and is every moment, affecting its administration, giving it a character, strengthening or undermining it ; not, however, in the selfish and grovelling sense, that he may be a candidate for office, and divide the spoils, nor yet only in the higher sense, that by his vote, he can influence the elections of others. There is a nearer contact of each citizen with his country. By his individual character,—by his fidelity to the principle within himself, on which that country depends, he touches it in a vital part. It is a wrong idea for a republican, for it is a relic of despotism, that they only are the rulers, who sit in the seats of magistrates and legislators ; and it is a poor and dangerous pride for a republic, the pride of outward office. They who are entrusted with the external power of government, hold, indeed, an important post, and one full of responsibilities: but, after all, that power is but a subordinate one in dignity, being only the substitute in need, for that far loftier instrument of self government, which each citizen wields. In this is the full meaning of the sentiment, that a free government opens its bosom to every citizen and class,—not that it assigns the same outward station to all, but that it acknowledges fidelity to the principle on which it is based, as equally important in the humblest and most favored. If we mean that ours shall be a true republic, let it never be supposed, that magistrates and the gifted, are the only ones who act upon the govern-

ment. Let not the poorest, the humblest, the most unlettered individual here, despise himself or be despised, as thereby a useless citizen. Nor let him, on his part, make the sad mistake, that he has no influence upon his country, unless he holds a commission, or can command an election. By being a citizen of a republic, he is also an officer, charged with a most important trust, the government of himself; and herein is the great level on which all meet. By fidelity to this, he is serving his country, in a far higher sphere, than all visible makers and administrators of laws. They, as such, have charge of the out works only,—he is a keeper of the citadel of freedom. The magistrate's work, is to punish her foes,—the high trust of a faithful citizen, is to exterminate them.

And party spirit, that minister of evil, which counts nations amongst its victims, what a deathblow would be given to its fatal influence, if the individual principle on which freedom depends, were appreciated as it deserves. There must be parties, I know. So long as an outward power of government is required, there will be honest differences of opinion as to its administration. But if the true subordination of the outward to the inward seat of power, were felt,—if republicanism were oftener a reality, than merely a cloak for the spirit of despotism,—if a good citizen were esteemed, as he is, higher than the highest mere magistrate,—our ship would move onward through the waves, wafted by favoring gales, instead of floundering amidst eternal hurricanes, like a shattered wreck. Let there be found in the republic, a true republican party, and though there might at times, be clouds in her horizon, they would be only those breaking and softened ones, on which the rainbow sleeps, bright harbinger of a purer air and a cloudless sky.

But it is not to the private citizen only, that the

spirit of the past this day addresses itself. They who are called to the duties of external office have, in the view which has been suggested of the government they administer, peculiar obligations. Who is a republican magistrate? He who seeing that the government is based upon individual self government, and seeks to develop it,—and that the office which he holds, and the laws he administers, were created, never to destroy, but only, in emergencies, to supply the want of that individual principle, exercises his power solely to that end. He feels that he is a watchman, rather than a soldier,—set aloft to oversee the operation of self government, and never to put forth his own arm, but where that principle fails. He grasps at no power, and interferes with no interests, that have not been entrusted to him, for that would be to mar the very plan of the republic. He holds out to the citizens no inducements, either by rewards or threats, to swerve from the great principle of individual freedom and independence, for that would be to make them in reality slaves. He feels that office is an honor surely, but a trust, and not a possession, and so to be used, that no false notions of its importance and end shall be encouraged. His public career is marked by that order, contentment and peace, which must always attend the faithful administration of the freest government. Private example seconds public conduct. The great cause of freedom is advanced by his influence; and when he retires from duty, or sinks into the grave, the tears and blessings of a grateful people attend him, as those of children a departing parent. That there have been such magistrates, the same bright record of the past attests. Let us pray that benignant nature may not break the mould, in which she made them.

But I am occupying more time, than is my privilege

on this occasion. Let the importance of the theme be my excuse. There are many imperfections in the operation of our government, as we all know, yet reform is a familiar word. Let the reform of government, be a real act. Does this seem a mighty thing, intangible, beyond reach? Let not republicans be deceived by words. What is our country, but the aggregate of its citizens? What is the character of a republican government, but the result of the combined characters of those who live under it? It is a great error, and not a speculative one merely, but a great practical error, this personification of government, state, as something distinct from an assemblage of individuals. It has led to vast consequences of misery and crime. It has induced the belief, that public men are not bound by the morality, which is obligatory upon them, as individuals, and has thus poisoned the very fountains of right and justice. Reasons of state have countenanced, what humanity revolted at; and under the notion, that a minister was not a man, religion and virtue have been stabbed by their loudest professors. Let not this monstrous error be transplanted to these shores. Reformers of the government, eye revolutionists, all should be, for that is the lesson of history and the order of nature; but only in the right way, by laboring at the individual foundations, on which government stands. The great motto of a republic should be—Every ruler is a citizen, and every citizen a ruler. Here again, let us not be deceived by words. He is not the greatest reformer, by any means, who makes the most and the longest speeches,—is oftenest absent from his business and home, or is loudest and noisiest in the public assembly; but he, in every class, who acts upon the good old republican maxim, that “he who ruleth his own spirit, is better than he that taketh a city.”

'The call of the past is to every individual; and it says, in thrilling accents to each,—‘remember the Republic,—honor the Republic,—perpetuate the Republic.’ In her behalf the highest and humblest may unite. There are bright geniuses, intellectual giants in the land, and I invoke them to the cause. Let them scorn, as they ought, the strife and dust of the gladiator’s arena, and not “give up to party, what was meant for mankind.” By so doing they will fulfil their destiny, and be saving, instead of deceptive lights, on the watch-towers of the country. If my feeble voice can but awaken one of our distinguished minds, to speak and act above party, and to the establishment in every individual, of the true principles and habits upon which alone our government can stand,—it will have accomplished much. To this end, that the distinguished may aid the cause, as well as to the cause itself, I speak; for so long as genius is selfish, and talent time-serving, the course of our country must be downward.

But this is not all our trust. As I stand in this sacred place, I cannot but remember and be impressed, that there is a God of nations. Genuine liberty, as it is founded upon individual self government, is but a part of Christianity, and, therefore, its cause is his cause. I cannot but feel, with gladdening confidence, that he who originated, will uphold;—and that the same Providence, that was so manifestly with the fathers, in acquiring, will continue with the children, in preserving, the union and blessings of our common country. Let us, fellow citizens, but do our duty, our whole duty of individual and united action and forbearance, and be assured, that he will still command his sun of harmony and peace, to shine upon, illumine and bless our land.