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ORATION,

PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE

REPUBLICAN CITIZENS OF CHARLESTOWN,

ON THE

THIRTY-SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

OF OUR

NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE,

MONDAY, JULY 5, 1813.

BY BENJAMIN GLEASON.

Ense petit placidam, sub Libertate, quietem.

Motto of Massachusetts' Arms.

E pluribus Unum. Motto of United States' Arms.

Peace, Union, Liberty, we hold most dear,
And hold the "Cherub" Sword for their DEFENCE.

Translation of '76.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY JAMES SCOTT, NO. 10. STATE-STREET,
THUE & ROWE, PRINTER4.

1813.

At a numerous meeting of the Republican Citizens, in Middlesex Hall, Charlestown, July 5th, 1913---

Voted Unanimously, That their thanks, and those of the "Charlestown Light Infantry," be presented Mr. Benjamin Gleason, for his excellent Oration delivered this day, at the Universal Meeting House, and request of him a Copy for the Press.

JOHN TAPLEY,
ANDREW ROULSTONE,
JOSIAH HARRIS,
JAMES K. FROTHINGHAM,

Mr. BENJAMIN GLEASON.

Charlestown, July 5, 1813.

Gentlemen--With pride and pleasure, I accept and reciprocate your friendship—With pride, that we agree in the same undeviating and laudable sentiments of Patriotism, and with pleasure, that this production of a few hours—the last of many public testimonials (within your recollection) in the cause of Liberty, and for my Country, should receive Your unanimous and condial approbation.

For nearly twelve years, having been the public Preceptor and friend of your Children, and thus devoting my best services to my Country's welfare; your friendship thus continued is, indeed, estimable; in leaving you for more useful, because more extensive, employments abroad, you will accept the Copy solicited, as the memento of a heart ever devoted to the PUBLIC GOOD: and in bidding you adieu, Fellow-Citizens, I subscribe myself, with affectionate esteem, most respectfully, yours, &c.

BENJAMIN GLEASON.

Mr. JOHN TAPLEY,
Capts. Andrew Roulstone,
Josiah Harris,
James K. Frothingham,
Committee.

ORATION, &c.

FELLOW-CITIZENS!

Is there, throughout all civilized Europe, a Nation, which can boast a DAY like this? It is the birth-day of your liberty—your jubilee—the celebration of your INDEPENDENCE.

Where is the Nation, throughout either of the two great Continents, including "the most Colossal Power the world ever witnessed, whose dominion extends from the rising to the setting sun," that has erected Empire, and institued Government, on such high and honorable ground? If None—are you not then supremely exalted? and if there be one, or many—are you not first in pre-eminence and honor, like a herald guardian angel, leading the way, to the emancipation of oppressed humanity!

It is a Day commemorative of the glorious achievements of your Fathers—May they never be forgotten. When the eye of the immortal Washington lightened along the embattled legionary ranks,† it was the glow of inspiration, excited by the ardor—the enterprize—the glorious heroism of those Patriots, who, during one hundred lunations of the "Orb of Night," and eight annual revolutions of the World, struggled in a magnanimous conflict, for the Rights of Man—sought their Peace, at the point of the Bayonet—their Honor, at the Cannon's mouth—and their Magna Charta of Liberty, in the alchymy of Blood.‡ As the aged warrior leans over the tomb of these departed heroes, he recounts their exploits, recites their

^{*}See Mr. Lloyd's Speech in Congress.

Wid. President Maxey's Address.

[¡]See Ramsay's History of American Revolution, &c

deeds of valor, pourtrays the dangers, the trials, the exertions—and their afflictive anxieties, in the dread contest—till rapt in an enthusiasm for *Liberty*, he recalls their kindred spirits around him, and breathes his blessing on their illustrious names.

JULY THE FOURTH, 1776.

The consecrated Day, which announced you "free, sovereign and independent," and States united, in constellated glory. You now possess this legacy of Freedom—preserve it, sacred and dear, as the life-blood of your hearts: it is an inheritance most valuable; worthy of your ancestors; and in all the pride and virtue of honorable citizenship, should descend unsullied to your posterity. May the corrosive fangs and canker toom of Faction never be able to destroy, even a germe, evolving from this noble Tree of Liberty—which, in its growth, upon a firm trunk, indurating with years, spreads its expansive and luxuriant branches, towards every clime; exhaling a fragrance and imparting fruits, grateful to all; and to which all nations look, as to the "vines and fig trees," where they shall fear nought; as to the tree of life, their final political salvation.

On this sacred Day your REPUBLIC broke the inchaining fetters and galling shackles of subjugation;—the fragments of which, scattered among your oppressors, like the broken "molten, golden calf," fashioned, in profanation, by the "spiritual head of the church,"† and destroyed by the leader of Israel—gave them for arrogance, abasement; for high-handed insolence, extreme humiliation!

The God of Armies fought your battles: and your Washington, Gates, Green, Montgomery, Putnam, Warren, and a long list of illustrious worthies, whose names are emblazoned on the pages of history; the memories of whom, in ample display, appear in every niche of the Temple of Liberty; They, under the Eagled banners of your Nation, with a brave and fearless

^{*} Declaration of Independence.

[†] See English Constitution—Titles of the Royal Family—Also, read Exodus, chap. 32.

Yeomanry, on the ensanguined field of earnage, in the terrific glare and very front of battle, danger and death, achieved your Independence. The British Lion was laid low; despoiled of his royal trappings; and within the recesses of his own imperial den, roared his astonishment; and as victory triumphant perched upon the standard of our Country, this huge "Colossal Power" bowed submission and acknowledged your supremacy. Reflect on this, and with festive delight and grateful cheer, celebrate The Day which gave you Freedom.

It is a Day to be hallowed throughout your generations-

With joys convivial and sublime,
Mid all the blessings given;
Throughout the world, and thro' all time,
Devote this day to Heaven—
To Heaven, in every grateful sense;
And FREEDOM be your recompense.

In memory of our Fathers' patriotism and distinguished glory, we should relume, and extend, and brighten the patriotic flame; let it glow upon the altars of our Devotion, and with emotions, most generous and exalted, inspire and invigorate our hearts, to deeds and duties worthy of us—

"While Memory holds its mental seat,"

and while as the heirs of their fame, we possess their virtues and affections, transmitted, in pious benediction, to their children.

But examples of bravery and excellence are not wanting;—witness the heroes, Decatur, Somers, Israel, Wadsworth, who gallantly fell before the walls of Tripoli.*—How fell the heroic Pike, in the arms of victory, covered with glory, in defence of his country's Rights! And how fell your gallant Lawrence, glorious in death! Who, while victory is yet doubtful, gives his last command,—

"CONQUER OR DIE,"

FOR

"SAILORS RIGHTS AND FREE TRADE."

*In honor of these brave sons of Columbia, a Monument, superbly elegant, is creeted by subscription, at the Navy-Yard, Washington-City.

Examples, which an Enemy beholds with respect and veneration;—applauds and admires as superior instances of worth, deserving the commiserating tear of the Brave, and everlasting Fame. In addition to these, to produce the resplendent names of Hull, Decatur, Bainbridge, Jones, Porter and Rodgers*, with their peers and auxiliaries; the true patriot, in an honest sympathy of sentiment, for the Public Good, and the honor of our common country, must rejoice, in the recital of their honorary transactions, and swell loud the trump of Fame, to proclaim their glorious deeds, throughout the world.

It is painful to notice, in contrast, the unjustifiable conduct—circumventions—infamy and baseness of our Enemy, toward our captured Brethren;—an Enemy, emphatically styled somewhere, in some strong declamation,—" The Bulwark of our Religion;"—but should such notice be anticipated; be it remembered—their Barbarity i a tarnish on the Trident, and a stain upon the colors of that imperious nation—most indelibre!—The gaols and prisons of New-York, that great, commercial and opulent city; and the bleached bones of our coun-

*August 10, 1812, lat 41, N. long. 55, W. the Constitution [commanded by Capt. Isaac Hull,] captured the Guerriere, [Capt. James R. Dacres,] after a close action of 10 minutes—completely dismasted and burnt.

August 13, off Newfoundland, the Essex, [Capt. David Porter,] captured the Alert, [T. L. P. Langhorne] after 8 minutes firing—much cut to pieces; sent in and arrived at New-York.

October 13, lat. 37, N. lon 65, W. the Wasp, [Capt. Jacob Jones,] captured the Frolic, [Capt. Winyates,] after a close action of 42 minutes—recaptured two hours after by the Poictiers of 74 guns.

October 25, lat. 39, N. long. 29, W. the United States, [Com. Stephen De-eatur,] captured the Macedonian, [John S. Carden, commander,] after a spirited action of one hour and a half--sent in and arrived at New-York.

December 29, lat. 12, S. long. 38 W. the Constitution [Com. Wm. Bain-bridge,] captured the Java, [Capt. Henry Lambert,] after a very warm engagement of one hour and 55 min.--was made a complete wreck and blown up.

February 13, 1813, off Surinam, the Hornet, sloop of war of 16 guns [commanded by Capt. James Lawrence,] engaged and conquered the Peacock of 19 guns and 134 men, [Capt. Wm. Peake, commander] after 15 minutes close action, and much cut to pieces—the Peacock sunk.

Ossiry, a monument of one great sacrifice to Liberty, and an eternal disgrace to their murderers;* the Chesapeake insult from the Leopard, and surrender to the Shannon; the sufferers by blockading squadrons and tenders; and the victims, to excited savage ferocity, on our frontiers; all testify to the disgrace, and to England's dishonor. With the vindictive wrath of Achilles, they would not be content, with the death of the brave Hector, they would drag the mangled corse, in semi-barbarism, with a specious triumph, three times round the walls of the city, at the chariot wheels of the conqueror.

But how do these deep hues and direful shades, in the escutcheon of England's glory, brighten the Stripes and Stars of our American Republic!—Look at HER victorious colors; they are glorious indeed; unreproached, unstained, untarnished, with a single blood-speck of inhumanity.

May an honest and fervid Patriotism warm our hearts mutually; and be it our ambition and glory to revenge all daring insults, in usurpation, upon our most sacred RIGHTS: as we have received them unprofaned, unsoiled, from our fathers, so may we transfer them to our descendants, as the fairest jewels, in the diadem of Columbia; the brightest plumes, in the Cap of Liberty; a pledge, in trust, to remember the worth and virtues of their veteran predecessors. With this Pledge, and the solemn instructive advice of their great warrior and statesman, justly called the "Father of his People," they will "frown indignant"† upon those, who would sever their Union, who would fracture their political peace, by sedition, calumny, misrepresentation, treachery or Resolves; and would scourge, with severe correction, the Demagogue aspiring to be the most mischievous, although of Senatorial distinction, assuming the

^{*}Upwards of ELEVEN THOUSAND victims to ill usage, abuse, contempt and British malevolence, died on board the Jersey Prison Ship; and in other prisons, with other insults, thousands more!

[†]Read Washington's Farewell Address.

full title of "Your Grace," by a conge d'elire, and the consequence of an angel of light.

How honorable is that Patriotism, which, independent of Party, can look with a steady eye to the common-wealth and the country's good; can go, with generous enthusiasm, into all the social and joyous delights, in celebration of her hely-day; can triumph, in her deserved honors, and regret, with deep Resentment, her wrongs, her impositions, and her oppressions.

Such were those, in the days of HANCOCK and ADAMS, to whom, an outrage insufferable and an unpardonable offence was offered, by their Exactors, in the shapeless form of "threepence a pound upon Tea;" after the repeal of a hideous Stamp-Act passed, during the administration of Mr. Grenville, in 1765, predicated on the same innovating and oppressive principle: this small demand was then an offending of such magnitude, that a few of those sincere patriots, nursed in the "Cradle of American Liberty," volunteered their services, and in the disguise of aboriginals, on a cold December's night of '73, dislodged the contents of three ships, laden with this offensive article, and scattered it profusely on the surface of Neptune's domain. † It was a memorable act of bravery, and proves the laudable spirit and patriotism of the times. The Boston Post Bill following, (March 31, 1774,) was an aggravation of the grievances.

You will not forget the little band of Patriots, in the Metropolis of a Sister State,‡ who paraded, in solemn form through their streets, bearing the hearse and pall of *Liberty*; on the Coffin's lid, written, "Liberty, Æt. 145;"—crowds of spectators witnessing the scene—in gloom, and "awe profound;"—

*Title of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; a metropolitan distinction, in subordination to which, rank all Bishops, Prebendaries, Deacons, Rectors, Vicars, and Curates, and reversed, reach upward to his royal Majesty.

†No human being was harmed, in this extraordinary undertaking; nor a single Tory of those times, in the secret of the Expedition.

[‡]Portsmouth, N. H. 1765-see Belknap's History. &c.

minute guns firing—the bells of every sanctuary tolling, and the procession of true patriot citizens, in dead march, following Liberty to the grave!—But mark the sequel:—signs of life are discovered, Liberty resuscitates; she revives!—She lives!—She is immortal!—The scene is instantly changed; all hearts rejoice, and shouts triumphant rend the air; the bells strike up a cheerful key; the cannons roar to Heaven is joy; and cheers, reiterated cheers and hilarity conclude the prophetic scene.*

Such are those patriots, in the days of Madison and Gerry, who resent their country's wrongs—the impositions and privations no longer bearable, which, though grounded on a similar principle of usurpation, exercised, not toward a Colony, but toward a sovereign Nation, are more insolent and more injurious; because more deeply aggravated with guilt.† We are now in arms,‡ against a Government ever hostile to our Rights, Liberties, and Independence. It is considered a just war; and will no doubt continue, through the alternate scenes of calamity and success, till AN HONORABLE PEACE can be obtained. To the question: Why is the war thus in duration? We answer—because our Enemy still insists upon the right of 'search and seizure; with all their orders-decrees-schemes and projects of crippling, annoying, and destroying our national By their claims and outrages—hundreds, nay prosperity. thousands of our native seamen, have been wantonly dragged within their wooden walls; and on board their fleets, severed from all they hold dear, have been obliged, for years, to the most severe discipline, and servile duty; the literal "hewers of wood, and drawers of water"-to gratify the rapacity and insolence of a haughty Power, determined to quench the flame of Liberty and Patriotism, in every American heart, susceptible of their torporific poisons.

^{*}See History of New-England. †See various Public Documents.

[#]War declared against Great Britain, June 18, 1/12.

Thank Heaven, we are not yet so torpid, so dead to all life's rights, to all national virtue, and our nature's sensibilities, but we can, and we will buckle on the armour, in defence of our Country and our "Domiciles," against all innovation;—in defence of our wives, children and friends, and the Government which protects them;—in defence of our invaluable Freedom, and all the privileges we hold, as an independent Nation, based on the Constitution of our Republic.

Hence it was said of the British marauders firing the little villages, along the shores of the Chesapeake to Havre de Grace,*—" when they knocked at Commodore Rodgers' house, they knew he was not at home!"—And thus formerly of the same distinguished character, in the affair of the "Little Belt," (a compliment generally applicable to our naval commanders,)

Suaviter in modo--fortiter in re.

Even the lofty pioneer plumes of Party inveteracy have nodded, with a most gracious complacency and respect, to the superior conduct of our veteran Hull and his brave Crew, who gave assurance to "the world's last hope" of a Defence, which warrants a prolongation and perpetuity of our Independence: hence it was said, "they fight like dragons in justification of their known Rights; the memory of their fathers is honored, in the spirit of their sons."

The spirit of Parriotism, like the spirit of Liberty, sleeps not in the tomb. Her mansions are numerous and aggrandized with honor. Her sons and daughters, enriched with increasing improvements, with a sincere and generous attachment, occupy all the different departments, throughout her habitation. Her daughters, like the Carthagenian ladies,‡ would furnish their gold and even their costly jewels, to supply the munitions of War. Her sons, like the good Cincinnatus,‡ would leave the plough in the hour of danger, to defend and protect her exten-

^{*}Com. Rodgers' birth-place, and the residence of his connections.

Rendered, in the plural---"Gentlemen in manners, in action Heroes."

See Ancient History---Rollin, Millot, &c.

they may dispute her right of possession, and even her existence: let them come to her temples of devotion;—they will find her enthroned, amid the triumphal honors and affections of a great People; her sons and daughters not absent from their Duty, nor forgetful of her Claims: her altars are crowded with votaries, and her doctrines the common sense of every human mind.

The Earl of Chatham once plead her cause, before the Commons of Great Britain.* "This infant (said he with fervor,) will soon arrive to powerful manhood, and resist your cruelties and aggressions: you cannot conquer nature: it is the etherial, divine and invincible spirit of Liberty, which animates, and will finally give a splendid triumph and pre-eminence, to the American People: they contend only for Right, and Rights are sacred." But the prophetic warnings of Chatham were lost, by a large majority, in the assured certainty of a conquest, over her then infant Colonies: nor was it, till lord Lonsdale afterward, with the most ample convictions, confirmed his prophetic words, that a new order of things took place: then, did our country take a rank among the nations of the earth, and Patriotism was the watch-word of her safety.†

For Thirty-seven years has the bond of Union, and the golden chain of our Independence been brightening, with industry, prosperity, and national virtue; and for nearly Thirty years, has PEACE,—

-----with joys and blessings affluent,

with all her delighted train of attendants, patroled your consecrated mounds—yes, and "Bunker's aweful mound," whose fame is everlasting: where died your WARREN,—when in sheets of rapid flame, Charlestown was swept in ruins!—Where sleep the warrior soldiers—the illustrious dead; where

^{*}See Parliamentary debates, at the commencement of Amer. Revolution.

[†]See the writings of the venerable John Adams, Gen. Washington's letters, Marshall's "Life of Washington," &c.

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stands the monument of their renowned deeds—pointing to Heaven, indicative of sure Reward*

The smiling cherubs of Peace have visited your abodes of Happiness. Under their fostering patronage, the Arts and Sciences have become the superior glory of your Nation. They have witnessed your mechanical improvements, and your unparalleled prosperity; have traversed your agricultural fields crowded with endless variety, and blooming, by Industry, in super-abundant munificence; and in sublimer vision, they have borne your whitened canvass, on every ocean, through every climate, with remotest nations, enshrining the name of your Republic, in effulgent splendor.

But now the tocsin of War sounds the alarm; and Peace, in sweet benignity, no longer cheers the scenes of life. Life is thus subject to vicissitude. Yet amid the dread commotions of the Day, forget not the Duties owed to your country: as the offspring of an affectionate parent, you will dring closer to the bosom, which nourishes you, in the times of peril and impending danger. Forget not that Patriotism, which characterizes the houest man, the good citizen, and the exalted hero. Preserve your Constitution, as the ark of your safety, and your superior Government, as you would the choicest hopes of future life, founded on the Christian Religion: above all guard most faithfully the—

UNION OF THE STATES.

In their Confederacy is strength—in their dissolution is destruction!

As one example take the history of England and Scotland, from the twelfth Century onward to James I. and contrast their present "colossal power," in the "United Kingdom," with the dreadful anarchy, horrible calamities, and merciless slaughter, which, in dis-union—wasted cities, by fire and

*On this monument is inscribed, in the memorable language of Gen. Warren---" None but those who set a just value on the blessings of Liberty, are worthy to enjoy her: in vain we toiled---in vain we fought---we bled in vain, if you, our offspring, want valor to repel the assaults of her INVADERS."

sword—"rolled garments in blood," and continually jeopardized all national welfare.* The ancient history of Republics—especially Greece, will furnish more dread examples.

Beware of Discord and Dis-union. You are Brethren. Your interests are one. Your honor and your felicity the same:—therefore be united. He who advocates a "Separation of the States," is the avowed enemy of his country: his efforts are infamy most abhorrent: his voice is that of Faction—a bleareyed monster, rushing from his dark and loathsome caverns, to spread his contagious and inveterate poisons—jealousy and hatred—"fire-brands, arrows and death," throughout society.

Faction is a many-headed hydra, that would glut, to an ecstacy, his vigilant and revengeful eyes, in the prostration of your Rights, virtues, blessings, happiness, and all social community, to the Demon of Discord-mailed, like Mars, and "up to his ears in blood"! But it would indirectly accomplish this great Moloch sacrifice:—first by gradual disaffections—then teaching the benefits of a permanent Aristocracy—because forsucth, Democracy is going out of fashion, it being the poor man's blessing and every man's blessing, the individual losses his distinction and consequence, with the multitude, and knows himself-but merely happy with the million: with duplicity, teaching the necessity of a permanent Executive, because Democracy has too much sway—the multitude ill-judge—and must be kept, like slaves, in strict and unmitigated subjection: it then teaches the advantages of absolute power-divisions-Anarchy, and every thing-but Democracy, which is the most honorable and powerful quantum, in the combined and ballanced principles of our Republic: for-Our Government towers like a majestic pyramid, its ornamented vertex, crowned with the Eagle, is the limited, though elevated Executive power, while the base and body of it are the Representation of the People, which is Democracy. Democracy is, in fact, the People's Rights, and these the hateful monster Faction would wish to

^{• *}Bigland's View of the World .--- Hume's Eng. etc.

have, with a "mighty mill-stone," deep within Ocean's bounds, as the Java and the Guerriere, and probably, in chain-sweep, half way between their present quiet settlements.

Be United, and no power on earth can subdue you. Your resources are infinite; and your country is one grand field of display, for the hero and the statesman; for all the Arts, and for every Science; and for Virtues peerless as your Religion.

Be United, and Faction, "with its whole accursed train, will hide its hideous head, in confusion, shame and despair."*

Be United, and the Sun, in the firmament of Heaven, could not shine more clear and brilliant, on a lovely summer's day, than would glow, in effulgent beauty, lustre and glory, the charms of your resplendent Empire—the name of your preeminent, and perpetual Republic.

Too much praise cannot be rendered those, especially our Western brethren and citizens, who have volunteered in the service of their country, and fight her battles, in defiance of her enemy. Queenstown heights, Fort George, Niegara, and Sacket's Harbor, even now spread terror to the grand fortress of Quebec:—the Plains of Abraham may hereafter testify to the bravery and valor of our countrymen, and from the walls of the Canadian garrison, be displayed in triumph, the colors of a free Republican People. May their names, in the archives of our nation, be inscribed with everlasting honor.

And those, (worthy of grateful remembrance,) whose Loans and official duties supply the Government with advantageous "ways and means": Loans, (in these times of discordant sentiment) great and honorable; and all giving a fixed permanency, to our National Credit.

Nor less to those, whose public acts and writings, interesting and important, in this crisis of our affairs, enrich their country, and sway the public mind, to Unanimity—to co-operative exer-

^{*}Read the partriotic Oration, delivered at Boston, March 5, 1772, by Dr. Joseph Warren, in commemoration of the Massacre, on the evening of March 5, 1770.

tion—and to efforts, which redound in honor, and result in general Good.

The Grand Result will be UNION, among ourselves; ample satisfaction, from abroad; and Empire undivided and glorious, in the estimation of all Nations. Our gallant Navy will yet triumphant ride the ocean! And Peace will soon enwreathe her Olive-Branch anew, with festooned Laurels, garlands of Victory and HONORS imperishable, as the Volume of Ages.

SOLDIERS.*

Are you not more immediately interested, in these doctrines of Patriotism? you are in arms—yet in the presence of your loved citizens, surrounded, on every hand, as in the embraces of their friendship.

You are their strong and invulnerable DEFENCE—their Life-Guard, and their dependence in the hour of danger. It is your pride, as it is true soldier glory; hence your constant attention to military tactics; your brilliant displays in martial evolution; your majestic movements in the cheerful and well-timed march; your pride of honor; and your Colors, unfurled in the centre, with every sword ready to meet your assailants, on the flanks, the rear, or the van, in defence of the Rights, you claim, as free-men, and are resolved, at every hazard, with the last throb of life, to preserve.

"Firm and united may you be, "Rallying round your Liberty."

You are not the partizans of Frenchmen, or Englishmen; of Swedes, or Germans; Russians, or Turks: What is Bonuparte, or George III. to you, or you to them? The one a Despot, ravaging the world; the other, in dotage, stung with Wasps and Hornets—to a Frenzy!!

*The "Charlestown Light Infantry," under the command of Capt. Jame. K. Frothingham, performed the escort duties of the Day, in a style of superior military education, highly respectable and worthy of particular notice.

Look to your country's good—the common Weal; respect your Liberties; cultivate Union; protect your Rights; preserve your Republic; and immortal Honor brighten your path, to fame and endless glory.

Imitate your much-loved, venerated WASHINGTON.—Should the Eagle of our Republic cower;—new fledge her wings, with patriotic plumage, from the radiant Cap of Liberty, and sublimely exalted, she will rise, in an etherial nature, towering to Heaven.

FINIS.