

The Conquering Republic.

AN

ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES

OF THE

CITY OF BOSTON,

JULY 4, 1849.

—“THE CHIEF
AMONG THE NATIONS, SEEING THOU ART FREE.”—*Cotter.*

BY WILLIAM W. GREENOUGH.

BOSTON:
1849.

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M. P. W. 3 Aug. '09

CITY OF BOSTON.

In Common Council, July 5th, 1849.

Resolved, That the thanks of the City Council be presented to Wm. W. Greenough, Esq., for the able, eloquent and appropriate Oration, delivered by him before the Municipal Authorities of the City, at the recent Anniversary of the Declaration of the Independence of the United States of America; and that he be requested to furnish a copy of the same for the press.

Passed by unanimous vote.

Sent up for concurrence.

BENJAMIN SEAVER, *President.*

In the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, July 6th, 1849.

Read and concurred.

JOHN P. BIGELOW, *Mayor.*

A true Copy.

Attest :

S. F. McCLEARY, *City Clerk.*

——“THE CHIEF
AMONG THE NATIONS, SEEING THOU ART FREE.”— *Cowper.*

ORATION.

FELLOW CITIZENS:

MORE than threescore years and ten have elapsed since this republic unfolded before the world the chart of her liberties. It seems as yesterday that she was young and weak, although her frame was that of a giant. To-day, she ranks among the oldest, most stable, and most powerful governments of the earth. She has passed safely through the dangerous paths of her earlier days, and arrived at the prime of her maturity. Years have not chilled the warm blood of her youth, nor diminished the energies of her age. Time has written no wrinkles on her brow. With a conscious and a just pride she finds that the foundations of her government have outlasted all the constitutions of civilized Europe, save that of Russia. In the life-time of these United States, the development of liberal principles has demanded and obtained concessions from the ruling powers of every country in Europe

with the exception of her greatest military despotism. Political systems without number have undergone revisions and amendments suited to the spirit of the age. In these changes, the framework of society has either received its share of improvement, or is now waiting the refusal of the elements of order. But the platform of a constitution erected by our ancestors has required no further constructions to elevate or support it. Nothing has been added to it, and nothing taken away. We are no freer than our fathers were. The amount of liberty which satisfied them has been found sufficient for our happiness and prosperity. Is it not then cause of just gratulation, amid the continuous revolutions that have overturned the older governments of the earth, that the freest institutions should have proved the most secure and successful ?

This day is not and should never be one of unalloyed jubilee. Its annual recurrence furnishes us with fit occasion for sober reflection. It is the appropriate season to examine our progress as a nation—to consider the influence of our example—to extend our sympathies to other races engaged in the same struggles successfully overcome by us—and above all, to rekindle upon the altars of a common patriotism such torches as have grown dim or been extinguished amid party contest or threatened civil disunion.

In examining the history of this country, there is no fact more striking than its peculiar preparation for

an untried system of settlement and organization. The hand of Providence seems to have plainly indicated that some great problem was to be worked out here. Separated from the old world by a wide ocean—with a large sea-coast—with navigable rivers—with a soil and climate capable of sustaining in plenty and in health an immense population. The colonization of the country was appropriate to its character. Nature had prepared for man a field of wonderful productive power, and he adapted himself at once to his new labors. Settled in different portions by people of different lineage, each section in fit time developed its own resources. The population of the various parts of the country coincides with the natural advantages. Hardy, frugal and enterprising at the North, with a sterile soil, and a temperate climate; impulsive and luxurious at the South, with a rich soil, and a tropical climate. The dictum of the philosophic Frenchman, that man is the expression of the soil, finds here its fullest support. Those almost mythical races, whose bones whiten the eminences of Western New York, and are found through the great vallies of the Ohio and Mississippi to the borders of the Gulf of Mexico and far westward, have left monuments enough to indicate the nature of their pursuits. The teeming soil of our present agricultural states was improved by the ancient inhabitants for the same purposes that it is cultivated now. What then were the centres of popu-

lation are now the more densely settled sections of those great Western vallies. Nature has isolated us for great ends. Beyond the reach of external influences, to solve the problem of free institutions—to invent and to apply the only safe formula of civil, political, and religious liberty, yet exhibited for the examination and approval of the world.

Yet the idea of liberty had no new elements in it. It was understood in its physical and political relations by the Greeks and Romans as it is at the present day. The lights of antiquity, the philosophers, are full of definitions of a natural freedom. What is liberty, said Cicero, but the power of living as you will? The Romans considered that they had achieved their liberty when they had ejected their last king. In the history of the middle ages, new applications of power and new forms of tyranny produced other results. In the rise and progress of the Romish Church, another element was infused into the idea of liberty, that of toleration, of religious liberty. From the same church also was derived the doctrine that it was lawful to kill the sovereign under certain contingencies. From these things a spirit and an influence had grown up which the time-worn institutions could not safely afford opportunity of expansion. A series of events had prepared the New World for the experiment, and you have just heard repeated the first proclamation of the rights and principles of freedom as understood by men who had

weighed calmly the wide bearings of their positions; and who were willing to make known to the world that those who could enunciate such truths were prepared, if need be, to withstand the trial of suffering, or to meet the horrors of war.

As we now contemplate that Declaration of Independence, it is difficult fully to comprehend the magnitude of the step. At the distance of nearly three quarters of a century, the results have in some respects been unfolded, but the depths of injustice which immediately produced it can never be accurately sounded. Those who have never felt the evils of absolute power, who have no experience of injured rights, who know tyranny only by hearsay, cannot realize or appreciate the happiness of their social existence. The inheritors of a great property are slow to perceive the privations by which it was earned. The quiet of possession is apt to produce the carelessness and the ease of luxury. Let no enjoyment of present blessings prevent this nation from acknowledging the value of its inheritance, or lead it to withhold the avowal of gratitude to those who built and set in order these pleasant mansions.

What then, is that liberty which our fathers transmitted to us? What its value? What did our fathers more than their ancestors to deserve or achieve it? Was it a plant of slow growth? Or did their hands fashion into a useful and comely form, new principles

and new manifestations of power? Were their ideas valuable only to themselves and to their immediate posterity? Or were they of general application, and to be embraced by other races in other lands?

According to the received notions of mankind, liberty was the power of doing and forbearing, according to the will. In a social state, man was to be bound only by laws made for the common utility. As a closer examination is made, it is found that, in the progress of history, the signification of the term became so widely extended as to compel the addition of other phrases, in order to characterize particularly, the various sorts of freedom, of which the germ is contained in the one word, liberty. There is a natural, a civil, a political, and a religious liberty. Under these again, there is freedom of conscience, and freedom of the press, implying the power of independent thought and of unchecked utterance. All these phrases were simple, had been thoroughly discussed, and were well understood. They had been introduced into the formation of various political institutions, but uniformly with ill success. There was wanting a practical idea which should unite the different kinds of freedom safely and durably under one government. This new principle, and new element was furnished by the colonies of North America.

It is obvious that this development could not have taken place without some previous preparation. There

was something in the condition of the time which fitted it for the reception of the new truths promulgated in the Declaration of Independence. Certain steps had been taken to prepare the Colonies for a united government. In 1744, Governor Shirley had planned the expedition to Louisbourg. He invited the other colonies to share in the dangers and in the expense; they acceded; and the joint working was successful. Ten years after, in 1754, a convention of seven colonies was held at Albany, for the purpose of holding a conference with the Indian tribes of the Six Nations. Among the delegates, came Franklin. In the recesses of his mind, a great scheme had been brooding for years, and he now seized the opportunity to propose it. He boldly advocated the union of the colonies, under a general system, each colony retaining its own peculiar constitution. Without giving further details of the plan here, it is only necessary to say, that, after discussion, it was rejected by the convention, because one section of the delegates thought that it gave too much power to the representatives of the King, and the other section contended that it gave too much power to the representatives of the people. It is to be noted here, that the day that Franklin signed the project of union in Albany, was big with events for North America. On the same day, the 4th of July, Col. Washington capitulated at Fort Necessity, and on the recurrence of the twenty-second anniversary of that day,

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independence was declared at Philadelphia. Eleven years after the Albany Convention, in 1765, nine colonies met and remonstrated through their delegates, against the obnoxious Stamp Act—and still later, in 1774, eleven colonies met in convention. In the space of thirty years, the colonies are thus found confederated for various purposes — for carrying on a war with the enemies of England, for a treaty of peace and amity with the Indians, and for remonstrance and united action under the oppressive legislation of the mother country. The performance of the functions, belonging to the powers of a general government, was delegated to the nearest approach to such a government as the nature of things would at the time admit, viz., to a convention in which each colony bound itself by its delegates, to respect the decisions of the whole body. Thus, the idea of union was not new in 1776, but from peculiar circumstances, it received force and a new direction. In the assertion of rights and principles, there came forth a great truth. Simple, yet comprehensive, it pronounced that *the powers of government are derived from the consent of the governed*. This was the key-stone of the union. This was the idea of germination and progress. This was applicable to all times and all nations. This was the spell that called up the new republic. Having successfully developed this great idea, having proved its practicability, having framed institutions under it, and having prospered by their exten-

sion, no power upon earth could delay or prevent its further application.

Before passing to the effects of this idea upon Europe, the results, as manifested in other parts of the new world, demand notice. There were some points of resemblance in all the colonies — their geographical position, their separation from the governing power, their governments framed upon the will of their founders. It was impossible to prevent a trial of the new system in the various settlements of France, of Spain, and of other nations upon the western continent. It could not, then, be considered that the power of building up was as necessary as that of tearing down. The perfection of a government based upon the new principle, must depend upon the intelligence of the governed; and upon their fitness for the institutions which they created. Under the sympathies of our citizens great numbers of theoretic constitutions were framed. Mexico and South America furnished their quota of finely wrought paper constructions. All true definitions of liberty, all just practical applications were scattered to the winds. Political liberty must be based upon personal freedom, and personal freedom is worth nothing without a moral, religious, and intellectual culture. It must always be borne in mind, that the highest degree of civilization develops the greatest capacity for the enjoyment of liberty, and a low state of national intelligence

and morality prevents the power of a right use of freedom. History is full of examples of this principle. In tracing the progress of the conquering republic, new instances of its truth will continually arise.

Why do I call this the conquering republic? Is there not something of disgrace attaching to the phrase *conquering*? Does it not imply possessions acquired by brute force? Does it not convey the idea of the subjection of the weaker by the stronger power? Do we not understand by a conquering republic, a nation whose warlike tastes have grown by what they have fed upon, whose youth are trained to arms, whose visions are of plunder, whose riches and territory are increased by rapine and violence, and whose strength and progress depend upon the successful cultivation of the arts of war? By the military skill and valor of its army, this nation has just passed brilliantly through a war, which has added an immense territory and untold wealth to its already gigantic possessions. The rulers of Europe would, even now, see here a people akin to the ancient republics of Greece and Rome—a people with an insuppressible thirst for conquest. Our ruin and decay, like that of the ancient exemplars, are predicted from the consuming fire of warlike passions. Yes! this is the conquering republic! We accept the title! But its future conquests shall be conquests of peace. It has conquered and will conquer, by the force of the great

ideas which are the basis of its constitution ; in the peaceful and steady development of its vast resources ; in the invincible system of framing governments on the intelligence of the governed, by educating, civilizing and perfecting the repositories of all power, the people. It is true, that such a system is at war with the old institutions of Europe and Asia. It is, this day, sapping their foundations. In the progress, on the other side of the Atlantic, of the great doctrines originated here, are now to be traced the footsteps of the conqueror. Yet a partial understanding of the obligations of liberty will not make the people of Europe victorious and free. Battles must yet be fought in the great arenas of opinion and of morals, no less than in those of mere physical power.

If there are any who doubt the connection between North American liberty and European revolution, let them open a page in the history of France. In the great city of Paris, on the 25th of June, 1791, was witnessed a wonderful spectacle. On the evening of that day, there entered the capital of France, surrounded by an armed and infuriated populace, the royal family, arrested at Varennes by order of the National Assembly. The unfortunate Louis XVI. was returning in humiliation and bondage, to a city and a people transmitted as a property, by his ancestors. As the carriages approached the Tuileries amid the execrations of the tumultuous mob, there rode forward to

meet the escort, at the head of a brilliant suite, a young man upon a white charger, the commander of the National Guard, at that time the real head of the nation. Simple and unostentatious in his habits, the sincerity of his republicanism had attracted the confidence of all parties in the State. Still young, his services in either hemisphere, had purchased for him the experience and the weight of age. Through him had the electric fire of freedom been communicated to the inhabitants of his native country. The friend and companion of Washington, he had unflinchingly borne his part in the arduous labors of the war of American independence, and had been an active participant in its triumphant termination. His return to France had imparted to its political stagnation new ideas of practical value. To the long borne oppression of the people, to the Utopian projects of the philosophers, and to the strong will of the determined reformers, his brilliant success seemed to have given form and coherency. The universal sympathy which accompanies bold enterprises, admiration for the results which he had assisted to produce, these gave to his opinions and his plans an interest and a weight suited to the emergencies of the country, and to the designs of the republican party. A mighty harvest was to be gathered. It had grown to its full maturity under every obstacle which could impede its progress. The gross ignorance of centuries, the dim perceptions of a twilight knowledge, the useless

theorems of philosophers, the unbending formulæ of the Church — these storms and calms of the moral and intellectual heavens had delayed its growth, and affected the soundness of its roots. But the reaper and his sickle were come. The harvesting was begun in hope and ended in despair. From that harvest field, Europe is still gleaning.

Terrible as were the crimes of the first French revolution, its lessons have not been without permanent value to the whole human race. As it is a truth of science, that the globe itself reveals, at every phase of its existence, the mystery of its former conditions, so every step in the progress of revolution disclosed, that the new could not be constructed without drawing from the old; that a disorganized society could not be remodelled without a portion of its former machinery; that new laws and a new administration must have much reference to ancient customs and landmarks; and that the new possession of liberty was dependent for preservation upon many safeguards which, in its first adoption, had been rejected as useless. The awful sequel of the French experiment made the deepest impression upon all friends of liberty. It was seen that more preparation than France had been able to afford, was necessary to retain and enjoy, after force of arms had acquired, popular freedom. The crudest notions of liberty, scattered broadcast among an irreligious and uneducated people, could not fail to

produce disorder and license. For the security of life and property, a law of force, exacting obedience from all classes, became the supreme law of the land. The immediate result of the first revolution was a government resting on bayonets—and such also was the termination of the second revolution. The three days of July, 1830, brought in with the new government the same law of force, founded on distrust of the capacities of citizens. But from both these revolutions, France gained immeasurably. Property was more equally distributed; no classes enjoyed peculiar privileges; all citizens bore fit proportion of the burdens of the state. Neither of the revolutions, however, seem to have taught her the true foundation of successful republican institutions. If she has learned that the establishment of a government should depend upon the consent of the governed, she has also to learn that its duration and prosperity depend upon a deep sense of order and a respect for the law throughout the whole population, upon a system of education, suited to all classes of the community, and above all, upon a pervading conviction of the duties imposed by morality and religion. To the third French revolution, now in process of accomplishment, the same general principles will apply. If France was prepared for free institutions, they will stand. If she was not prepared, the last experiment will end, as those tried before, in a military despotism. In faith and hope, but with fear and trembling, we await the result.

The direct effects of the American and of the first French revolutions were not confined to France. England has reaped more substantial benefits from the progress of just ideas than any country of the old world. Since the revolution of 1688, sufficient civil, political, and religious freedom had existed to secure to the great majority of the population a large proportion of their natural rights. Many improvements in the political system had been made without any intervention of arms. It was not incumbent upon other colonies of Great Britain to attempt resistance to her laws, as her whole colonial policy had been altered, from experience of the errors through which she had lost the most valuable of her possessions beyond the seas. No further extension of freedom was purchased by the effusion of blood. But through public discussion, by the will of the people, expressed through their representatives in Parliament, and by the wise moderation of the House of Lords, constitutional changes have been effected, which have materially increased the privileges of Englishmen. To their civil liberties, little or no addition could be made. But the repeal of the Test and Corporation acts, Catholic emancipation, and the passage of the Reform Bill, have largely extended political and religious liberty. What other changes may be necessary will be unfolded by time. From what the world knows of her character and resources, it seems probable that further improvements will not depend upon violent catastrophes.

In the other countries of Europe, liberty made small progress in changes of government until that wonderful year of revolutions, 1848. Among the great body of reformers, scattered over the continent, much discussion had taken place upon the different forms of institutions as suited to the happiness and welfare of nations. The investigations of political economy had proved the rottenness of financial systems based upon enormous National debts, and fettered commercial relations. Among all thinking men, there was a manifest disbelief in the duration of existing governments. The discoveries of science, the more speedy methods of intercommunication afforded by the steamboat, the rail car, and the electric telegraph, the progress of civilization, the united action of large classes in favor of temperance, prison discipline, and other moral reforms, increased attention to the claims of education, all clearly indicated that the systems of government under which men lived, could alone undergo no change. Nor were such expectations disappointed. Within the space of a brief year, the predicted political earthquake shook Europe to its foundations. England, thanks to her free institutions, was beyond the reach of the movement. Sweden, Denmark, Holland and the Netherlands, constitutional monarchies, into the government of which the popular will entered, received but little disturbance. Russia, that despotism which overshadows a large portion of two continents, and has

a foothold on a third, could receive no impressions from without. The vibrations of the movement were first felt in Italy. Rome, once the mistress of the world, the city of ancient civilization, and for more than a thousand years the seat of the papal hierarchy, from whence had been fulminated the terrors of the church against all reforms, moral, political or religious, was the appropriate centre of the new order of things. The sincere and zealous occupant of the chair of St. Peter, Pius IX., led the great movement. But the elements of freedom, once loosed, were too mighty to be controlled by mortal hand. The destructive forces then extended to France, and were afterwards communicated in irregular succession to Germany, Prussia, Austria, Bavaria, Naples, Sicily, Northern Italy, and Hungary.

At the short period of time since these events have elapsed, and while the great struggle is in part in progress, it would not befit this occasion to attempt conjecture upon the precise issue of events. It may well be left to that Great Power who "rides on the whirlwind and directs the storm." His Providence will bring good out of evil, and light out of darkness. So closely allied are perfect truth and perfect freedom, that none may despair of the final result.

To an American, the scene can never be without striking points of interest. Resting, as were the more powerful governments of Europe upon the arm of

military power, with a system of fortifications perfected by science, with armies disconnected by pursuits from the great body of the people, with officers strongly attached to the existing order of things, with a state patronage tending to strengthen the central power, it is surprising with what ease revolutions were accomplished. In one great city, the dregs of a Faubourg overturned the monarchy. In another, the unruly students of a university demolished in a few days the self-styled succession of the Cæsars. In a third, the tumultuous outbreak of a small portion of the population obtained the amplest concessions. Immeasurable must have been the weakness which dissolved, like a mist, before such manifestations of popular displeasure.

It has already been shown that the success of free institutions depends upon a proper knowledge of the signification of Liberty. Freedom is a specious phrase, and often not rightly understood. As an untried blessing, it is believed to be whatever desire or caprice dictates. It assumes the color of the popular want untrammelled by any restrictions. To an ignorant or demoralized community, freedom implies license. Excesses are committed and defended under its shadow. Where order and justice have been administered by the strong hand of power, liberty is a forbidden word, suggestive of attacks upon property, of rapine and anarchy. It is hard to close the eye of the victim of tyranny to the bright vision of personal freedom. It

would be cruel indeed to tell him that freedom is no blessing without the capacity to rightly enjoy it; that he has no right to grasp it at once as a rich possession. No wonder that he kindles at the thought of breaking all former ties—

Nor guides, nor rules his sovereign choice control,
 His body independent as his soul—
 Loosed to the world's wide range—enjoined no aim,
 Prescribed no duty, and assigned no name;
 Nature's unbounded son, he stands alone,
 His heart unbiassed, and his mind his own.

When this feeling animates the mass, the result is revolution. Whatever may be the issue—whether the votary of liberty may be worthy of, or prove recreant to, his high calling, the lesson is never without value for future guidance and warning. In all the manifold forms in which this restless spirit displays itself, it must never be forgotten that the face of Freedom, like that of truth, is not the less fair for all the counterfeit visors that have been put upon it.

But fears have arisen in the minds of timid observers from other causes. It is a law marking the growth of nations, that great men, as it were by the hand of Providence, are raised at once to meet great emergencies. The most attractive points of history are composed of the biographies of such governing minds. While lesser events escape the memory of the school-boy, he never forgets the exploits of such heroes as Alexander, Cæsar, Cromwell, Napoleon or Washing-

ton. Although the destinies of these men were fulfilled in widely different spheres, the impression of their characters and their deeds is strongly defined upon the history of their country and their age. So deep seated is the feeling among mankind, that a great man is inseparable from a great movement, that the success of new undertakings is always predicated upon the development of new talent. In the huge revolutionary upheavings of continental Europe, the eye of the observer has yet in vain sought for the controlling power indicating the men of might, by whose agency the commotion should be stilled. Such despondency forgets that the raven went 'to and fro' from the ark, before the dove 'found rest for the sole of her foot.' The deluge is too recent—the waters of anarchy are still on the face of Europe. When the hour of subsidence approaches, great men will surely indicate it by their appearance, and by their recognized sway. Let no lover of liberty fear on this account. New talent has already been brought into action. The great problem will not be solved without the advent of a new Cromwell, Napoleon or Washington. Order will be resumed, though its day may be distant. Fortunate will it be for the human race, if the new institutions shall rise and endure under the wisdom and foresight of a second Washington!

Failure is also predicted from the want of skill adequate to secure the results of a revolution in the

construction of a suitable constitution. After the first tumultuary movement has ejected the possessors of power, a revolution is not considered to have been accomplished until a new constitution has been framed. The new order of things requires a new writing of the laws. The people, having recently learned the advantages of power, with no experience of their wants beyond that afforded by the infringements of the abolished tyranny, meet together and establish theoretic institutions. Without knowledge or gradual preparation in the law-makers, what marvel if the new code is proved to be unsuited to the habits and necessities of the citizens. If this should occur, the experiment of the revolution is said to have failed. But though a paper constitution may stand but a day, its results are not utterly lost, when its laws are inoperative. It is so much added to the general fund of wisdom for future service. Constitution-making is comparatively a harmless operation. That a free constitution does not necessarily establish freedom may be shown from the present political systems of Austria and Prussia. A revolution does not therefore imply entirely new institutions. Modifications and alterations may be all the required changes. No surer test of the finished work can be found than the fact that its restraints, limitations and concessions are based upon a knowledge which secures a successful trial. Let no country newly free be disheartened because its new construc-

tions are not permanently useful. Improvements may be made as experience is acquired. In the end, success will be found. Nevertheless, a perfect constitution is the most wonderful machine yet contrived by the ingenuity of man.

A new plea has recently been set up by the supporters of arbitrary power in Europe. It is said that the wars of 1848 and '49 are merely wars of language and of race. This position excludes all higher questions of principle, and is intended to prevent sympathy and interference on the part of free countries. This is the plea of Russia. This would conceal the fact that the settlement of each national question now at issue is an affair of much consequence to the whole civilized world. The causes of the great conflict now in progress lie far beneath language or race. It is not a struggle to decide which of two parties in each state shall be uppermost. Such may have been its appearance at the beginning; but the real motive powers are now visible. The free people of England and of France may well watch with interest and anxiety for the results of each battle-field. The struggle is between the people and arbitrary power. A few years will decide whether the western barriers of despotism shall be the Rhine and the North Sea, or whether the arm of freedom shall drive back the myrmidons of tyranny to the frozen regions of the North.

In all this war of principles, we, too, on this side of

the Atlantic, have a direct interest. If the experiment of free institutions had been unsuccessful here, it would have deferred for a long period the strivings after liberty which have already found practical results in other quarters of the world. The example and the influence of the United States have quietly produced great effects, of which the causes were not clearly perceptible. For the failure of other revolutions, declaredly based upon our model, we are in no degree responsible. The painter of a glorious picture whose merits are admitted by the world is never held accountable for the bad drawing or wretched coloring of any imitator however ambitious. No one claims that our institutions are perfect. It is sufficient for all useful purposes, that under their protecting powers every blessing can be enjoyed that is needful for the happiness of man in this lower world. As every successful essay is a direct incitement to human nature to go and do likewise, the position of this country is especially traceable in the revolutions of Europe. Every new constitution borrows to a greater or less extent from our own, according to the tastes of legislators. The great ideas, which, in a good sense, constitute this the conquering republic, transfuse themselves into every popular movement. That no government may exist without the consent of the governed has proved a fearful principle when brought into collision with another principle, consecrated by the

tacit consent of a thousand years, the divine right of kings, the doctrine of absolute sovereignty. Who can doubt which of the two will ultimately come forth superior from the conflict? The strife is no longer equal. It is a struggle between a human fallacy, and a superhuman truth.

The commercial relations established between this country and Europe suggest other considerations of importance. Our prosperity is intimately connected with the success of free institutions abroad. With governments constructed for the greatest good of the greatest number, industry will flourish, restrictions will be removed, and free intercourse will be allowed. If Central Europe overcomes absolutism, the system now foreshadowed, will open new channels to our enterprise, and new markets to our products.

In view of these things, there is no question of the duties of this republic. Let no undue sympathy, no improper assumption of another's quarrel, no provoking assertion of superiority, no morbid sensitiveness of false honor, lead us to forget the advice of the founders of our institutions. Peace with all — Entangling alliances with none.

In observing our condition at home, a further reason is found for the application of the phrase, conquering republic. It is based upon the opinion that there would seem to be no just limits to the desire of this republic to increase its territories. As in the mechanism of

the heavens, attraction seems to be solely determined by the quantity of matter, so it is said, we would make the tendency to freedom dependent upon the continued enlargement of its domain. This is a grave accusation, and demands sober examination. It involves the whole question of the successful application of our system at home. Is the machinery of our constitution equal to its vast requirements? Is it strong enough to hold, and large enough to embrace the results of future annexation? Has the American nation increased so fast as to outgrow its political experience? Is it even now unable to govern or restrain its own huge physical power?

In looking back to such events in our history, as give cause for these general inquiries, the attention is at once drawn to the last war in which this government was engaged. To the propriety or good policy of the Mexican war, it would be foreign to this occasion to allude. Different parties in the state honestly differed in relation to it. But the effects of the contest upon the habits, the aspirations and the character of this people are a fit subject of remark. So far as New England is concerned, our conquest has provoked no thirst for further acquisition at a similar expense of suffering and of blood. It has infused no warlike tastes into the community. No young man, on this account, has taken up the profession of arms. No classes have grown rich by its spoils; none cry out

for subsistence to be gained from rapine and plunder ; none long for or delight in the excesses of war. This section of the country is strongly enlisted in upholding such doctrines of peace as practically develop the best methods of industry, and a healthful progress in those arts which constitute the greatness of a nation. The same remarks which apply to New England in this connection, are also generally true of other sections of the United States. There may be portions of the Union and parties in the several States which earnestly desire to annex Canada and Cuba, but they are not coveted at the price of blood and crime.

In the success of the constitution of this republic, there is nothing mysterious or wonderful. There has been great good fortune in its continuous application to new states and territories, but no success has attended it which was not owing to the principles upon which it was originally based. The plain explanation is to be found in the fact, that in no other country of the world are the powers of government so directly derived from the people. The United States do not consist of a league of independent nations ; but in a union of states, constituting one nation. Every citizen has a double duty to perform ; on his shoulders rests a double responsibility ; for he is a citizen of the state whose local laws protect him, and in whose prosperity his interests are bound up, and he is also a citizen of the United States, and in-

dividually a partaker in the powers and duties of this relation. The population within a certain territorial limit, has a community of interest; it becomes a state by the action of its citizens under the laws of the general government; it makes such laws for itself as are needful for the development of its resources, and are suited to its character. Become a state, the citizens at once take part in the general plan, and share in the obligations of the central government, which also ministers to their wants and affects their welfare no less than the state government. In this simple system, are to be found the elements of our strength and union. No two civilized countries could have had less community of interest than Louisiana and Massachusetts. Their inhabitants separated by more than a thousand miles, and speaking different tongues; their institutions modelled upon widely different principles — the one Catholic, its laws administered upon the practice of France, two hundred years ago — the other Protestant, and with laws based upon English precedents. In the one a warm climate and rich soil brought to easy maturity the luxurious productions of the tropics, and the inhabitants derived from exportation and exchange, furniture for their houses, clothing for their bodies, and nourishment for their minds. In the other, a sterile soil barely sufficed for the sustenance of its own cultivators; and the population obtained its support from

the industrial pursuits of all classes, from manufactures and from commerce. For all purposes these two States were as utterly distinct and uncongenial, as habits and tastes, language and literature, laws and religion could well make them. Yet they are now two concordant members of that great family, into which both sought admission. They both constructed their state institutions upon a basis adapted to their wants, and they both found advantage in the protecting shield of the general government. Both were willing to submit to such arrangements as were required for the general good. So far, then, as a union of most opposite materials, so far as a harmonious action of discordant elements are concerned, the constitution has been found equal to its vast requirements.

If this question as to past results, admits of a favorable answer, the next inquiry turns to the future, and to its unknown or untold demands. In the advance of the union, the constitution has been able to keep pace with the necessities developed by new relations. In the march onward, the anxious eye may well look forward and strive to perceive the direction of the dim way before us. The huge machine has gone on in safety over the even roads of the sea-board, it has crossed the rivers, plains and mountains of the interior, and arrived on the border of new lands. It may well be asked, whether all is safe and in good order, before entering upon the trackless paths of a tempting but untried desert.

There is a favorite phrase, of frequent use in popular addresses — manifest destiny. It is said to be the manifest destiny of this race to spread over this whole continent, carrying with it its laws, institutions and enterprise. The expression is unfortunate, and requires qualification. In process of time, the whole of North America may possibly be covered by our population, and may be governed by our laws ; but there is nothing in the nature of things whereby this may be accomplished without our own direct action. Destiny implies a tendency to a fixed end without the power of any agent to prevent. On the contrary, the advantages of this republic will not be coveted by surrounding nations without having first been made apparent by the prosperity depending on the intelligence and good conduct of its citizens. Nor is it a part of our system to seek for the accomplishment of any fate requiring extension of territory by force of arms. No exigencies of our own creation can demand further annexation by war. If Canada, or the other British provinces, at some future period, shall desire admission into our confederacy, this result will be based on precisely the same principle that has continuously applied to the formation of each state and territory, within our own geographical limits. Setting aside all questions of policy, as improper to be discussed here, there is nothing in the condition of our northern neighbors to unfit them for coming as much within the scope

of our institutions, as Florida, Louisiana, Texas, or California. There never has been a constitution or government, which admitted such an indefinite and unlimited extension of territory or population, as our own — nay, more, which so required extension for success. To this people applies with peculiar force, the observation of Humboldt: “It is with nations as with nature which knows no pause in progress and development, and attaches her curse on all inaction.” There may be emergencies in the future which will overturn our republic, but the imagination can with difficulty conceive of any forms of trial more severe than those through which it has triumphantly passed. So far, then, as future annexation is concerned, the errors of the past teach that little is to be feared. It is not from this quarter that danger is imminent.

The next query is of a more general character. It would imply that the nation has increased so fast as to outgrow its political experience. This conclusion is founded upon observations of political institutions elsewhere, and might be true of this republic if it had been constructed upon any foreign model. It would be inferred from this that the causes of our rapid growth were unsound, and that its results are, therefore, unstable. The history of the past century furnishes full refutation of this point; its every page gives proof to the contrary. But there is one fact too

remarkable and too weighty in its consequences to be passed over. The effects of emigration have already been great, and promise to be momentous. Every nation of western Europe has contributed to our population. This country has quietly absorbed, and is continuing to absorb a large amount of foreigners, who, for the most part, arrive upon our shores without any wise perception of their duties, and without adequate preparation to appreciate the blessings of freedom. These wayfarers from other lands, and their descendants, now form a large numerical proportion of the inhabitants of many states of this Union. If the intellectual strength of this people has not kept pace with its physical growth, it is attributable to this cause alone. But so far, on examination, no change is found to have been made in those principles which have hitherto been successfully applied. A greater field for education has imparted renewed activity to those who watch over the interests of the common schools, colleges and other seminaries of learning. Within reach of these influences, the children of the alien must come; for provisions for popular culture are to be found in every State. So far, this country has prospered greatly from its accessions in foreign population, but there is obviously a point at which safety ends. The disturbances in Europe will continue to send large masses across the Atlantic. It is a problem for future legislators to determine, how far this may be allowed to proceed

without interference. Aside from this, there is nothing in history to show that our political experience has not equalled the emergencies to which it has been applied.

The domestic outbreaks produced by local causes in former periods of the history of Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, nullification in South Carolina, disputes of neighboring states in relation to boundaries, the train of events which separated Texas from Mexico, the unjustifiable intervention of American citizens in the Canadian rebellion, the Rhode Island conflict, Lynch-law, the mobs which at different times have disgraced our larger cities, with other disorders of minor importance, have given rise to the imputation that this republic is unable to restrain its own physical power. It would be strange indeed if any country could go on for three-quarters of a century, in prosperity and in adversity, through peace and war, without occasion of discontent or tumult in some portion of its citizens. No polity ever framed has given equal power to all members of a community. No institutions can make men perfect. The severest laws, the minutest subdivisions of police have been utterly unable to prevent frequent expressions of popular passion under despotic governments. In such cases the laws have been sustained by a profuse outpouring of blood, and by filling the prisons with state criminals. How then can eternal quiet prevail, where no such control is desired

or attempted? In this country, no similar disorder has occurred which has not at once felt the indignant reproof of the great majority of the citizens. No illegal or violent assertions of assumed rights have been for a moment tolerated. Where the arm of force has been deemed necessary to sustain the laws, it has always been found ready. The final result of each instance before mentioned has been favorable to the general cause of law and order. Instead of suggesting new methods of violence, the issue of each event has taught a lesson of warning and avoidance. The spirit of our institutions does not admit of a meddling interference in the privileges of our citizens. A good government is only felt when it restrains for the public benefit. The success of this government proves that it has exercised and can exercise every suitable restraint upon its citizens.

Having thus briefly passed in review such facts and principles in the history of this republic as have induced the transmission of its influences to other nations, and have entitled it, in a good sense, to the appellation of the conquering republic—having considered some of its positions at home, and a few of its relations to foreign revolutions, there remains to me but one other portion of the duties of this occasion.

Citizens of Boston! the path of your duty lies clearly defined before you. You have received a

birthright of freedom to which no exertions of your own can make addition. You have also been entrusted with the institutions whereby it may be preserved. Continue to support those public foundations which maintain the intelligence and mental activity of your population. Let the startling fact that more than one fourth of your people are foreigners or the children of foreigners, stimulate you to the necessary extension of your public schools—henceforward the nurseries of an enlightened freedom. Security of property, respect for the law, reverence for morality, and confidence among men, depend in no measurable degree, upon the future training of your youth. Yet forget not the claims of the past in the necessities of the present. The heritage of the good name of your fathers, you are bound by every sacred obligation to keep alive and to carefully transmit to your children. Let no modern ingenuity, let no microscopic vision, let no unpatriotic envy, detract from the just fame of him whose virtues found no parallel in the eighteen hundred years that went before him. Let no fanatical ambition for impossible perfection, no obscure transcendental generalities, no unjust comparison with false standards, attempt to show that his greatness was merely that of a day, and that he lived but for one generation! As year after year rolls away, and the countless inhabitants of a free confederacy extending from ocean to ocean, come up to the shrines of their fathers

to invoke the memories of the past, tell me if the name which will first spontaneously rise on their lips, so long as virtue is loved and patriotism cherished, will not be that of the founder of the conquering republic, of the peerless Washington!