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ADDRESS

Delivered at Cedarville at the celebration on the 4th inst.

BY DR. E. BATEMAN.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

I AM aware that apologies ought often to be little regarded, inasmuch as they are many times attached to an elaborate performance, and intended to make an undue impression in favor of the performer.

On this occasion, however, I consider it no more than justice to myself to state, that since it became my duty to prepare for this service, my time has been largely occupied by other pressing concerns, and the opportunities I have found to devote to it, have consisted of small intervals of time at detached periods, and almost invariably under the influence of that lassitude of body and mind consequent to fatigue, and oppressively warm weather.—I mention these facts in excuse for the desultory manner of my address.

Most of you, fellow citizens, have frequently heard, and often read orations delivered in honor of this, the proudest day in our annals; indeed so much has been said, and in such a variety of forms, that I altogether despair of entertaining you with any thing new. And why should I attempt it? The events which this day ought to call to mind are of so important a character, so intimately connected with our origin, political condition and prospects, that like the privileges and duties of a Christian we need often to be put in remembrance of them; and therefore a brief historical recapitulation of what you have already learned, will not, I hope, be considered useless or altogether uninteresting.

America was not discovered until long after the other three quarters of the earth, Europe, Asia, and Africa, were peopled, or frequently visited by civilized men.

This vast continent was unknown to the inhabitants on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean until the year 1492 (three hundred and twenty-six years ago) when the adventurous Columbus impressed with the belief that in this direction lay another continent, and being inflamed with an ardent desire of searching for it, obtained at length the patronage and assistance of Ferdinand, and Isabella of Spain in the undertaking.—He was successful;—after a voyage of considerable length, in which he had to combat the mutinous disposition of his men, as well as other serious difficulties, he discovered the long wished for object. A later navigator, Americus Vesputius, visited these shores and made further discoveries, and unfortunately succeeded in robbing the original discoverer of the honor which was justly his of giving name to the new world. It is honorable, however, to the North American teachers, poets, and statesmen, that they have always cherished a reverence for the name and memory of Christopher Columbus, the recollection of whom is infinitely more precious to our youth than that of his successor.

Like most new countries, the early settlements were subjected to great privations and distresses; many of the colonists at this period were cut off by the natives or perished by disease; more than 100 years elapsed before much progress had been made, and it was not till nearly twice that period, that the number of European settlers, or the regularity of the government of the colonies, acquired much interest.

After about the close of the 16th century, they began to flourish, and had it not been for the religious disputes and persecutions which disgraced a period of their history, during the early part of the seventeenth century, the spectacle would have been exhibited of a people possessing the high sense of liberty for which the English nation was at that time so conspicuous, quietly and rapidly advancing in agriculture, navigation, and improvements in civil society. As time progressed, old superstitions gave way, and a more rational estimate of ecclesiastical as well as political liberty succeeded. The prosperity of the colonies began to attract not only the attention, but the jealousy of the mother country; the consequence of which was the adoption of various measures on her part, calculated to repress their rising greatness. Instead of the fostering care and kind attention which they had a natural right to expect, the colonies found that they were destined to encounter a series of encroachments on their unalienable

privileges, and repeated inroads upon those principles of freedom which they had imbibed from their ancestors, and which they could not but cherish with the most scrupulous vigilance. The consequence was, discontents ensued, and collisions arose. The colonists, however, conducted with more prudence and moderation than could have been expected. Humble petitions, and remonstrances, couched in respectful language, and fraught with protestations of unshaken loyalty, were the means, and the only ones to which they resorted to obtain redress of the black catalogue of grievances under which they labored; a recital of which you have just heard. These peaceable efforts were nevertheless unavailing; a short-sighted and impolitic ministry, deaf alike to the appeals of reason, or the demands of public law, continued their course of measures; oppression was added to unkindness, and a determination on their part became every day more apparent to rule this land with a rod of iron, until at length, in the year 1773, an undisguised attempt was made by the introduction of a large quantity of tea charged with a duty levied by the British parliament; which it was attempted forcibly to collect. The colonies had always denied the right of the Mother Country to tax them without their consent, a sentiment with which the government was well acquainted; this measure was therefore regarded as evincive of a fixed determination to enforce the requisition.—It was met by the colonists with indignation; and a steady and firm resolution to resist the execution of the purpose.

With the events that immediately followed, you are familiar; in the harbour of Boston a quantity of this obnoxious tea was thrown into the water by the exasperated inhabitants; the Boston Port Act was passed, by which that town was deprived of the privileges of a port, by the removal of the Custom-House to Salem. The breach rapidly widened, a general moving among the colonies was observed, and plans were concerted for a confederate opposition to the pretensions of which they complained; a Congress, composed of delegates from the colonies, was convened, and every preparation made to meet any or every consequence that might result from the pertinacious adherence of Great Britain to the policy which she had chosen to adopt. No accommodation of differences was attained, and actual hostilities commenced at Lexington, near Boston, on the 19th of April, 1775.—A party of Provincial Militia were then and there fired on, and several killed, by a body of British regulars under Major Pitcairn. The Rubicon was now passed. The manner in which the controversy was to be settled, was ascertained. Now came on the tug of war; a war as unprovoked by the colonies, as it was sedulously avoided by them; nothing short of a compromise of the natural and inherent rights of freemen would have been deemed too great a sacrifice for the preservation of peace. It could not be maintained on these terms. Despotism was unrelenting, and the colonists, relying on the justice of their cause, and confiding in the God of Battles for protection and support, with an enthusiasm rarely equalled, prepared to encounter the perils, hardships, privations, and sufferings incident, inseparably incident to a state of warfare.

The conflict which ensued was long, arduous, and bloody. In the early part of it, no more seems to have been aimed at by the colonies, than a redress of grievances and a return to their allegiance, and loyalty to the mother country; and it was not until the 4th of July, 1776, more than two years after the commencement of hostilities, that the far-famed Declaration of Independence was promulgated to the world. This event produced a new era in the contest, and added nerve and perseverance to those patriotic warriors, who were now not only fighting for the restoration of invaded rights, but for the establishment of that independence which they had boldly ventured to proclaim. Every thing was now emphatically big with the fate of empire. On the one side was arrayed hardy veterans, inured to arms, and skilled in the science of war;—on the other, regulars hastily collected, and militia badly disciplined. In this view, the event seemed almost hopeless for the struggling colonists—but in another respect they had vastly the advantage;—they had an immense prize at stake; they were contending for the birth-right of freedom, the privilege of self-government. These motives were of the most exhilarating character, and induced them to meet trials and difficulties, wounds and death, with a firmness, and with an alacrity to which their mercenary enemies were strangers. To recount the many instances of heroism and bravery displayed by the American troops, or to enumerate the phalanx of gallant commanders who operated under the orders of the great and revered Washington, is not my intention;—time would fail me for the purpose—suffice it to say, that after many years hard fighting, a period of time, chequered with successes and reverses, it pleased the Great Disposer of Events to cause our enemies to be at peace with us. That Guardian Providence which had mercifully vouchsafed to guarantee emancipation from the thralldom of trans-Atlantic oppression, with unsleeping vigilance,

watched over our agonizing land, and in his own time put a period to the combat, by granting to the oppressed that freedom for which they panted.

Provisional articles of peace between Great Britain and the United States, were signed on the 30th of November, 1782—by which the independence of the States was acknowledged in its fullest extent. From this period until 1789, the U. States were governed by the articles of confederation which had kept them together during the war. And this mode of government being, upon trial, found inconvenient, it was superseded by the adoption of the constitution, under the benign auspices of which we have ever since remained. This constitution being the supreme law of the land, and paramount to all other laws or regulations, ought of course to be studied, and well understood by every citizen. The excellencies of it are numerous and striking; it is framed on the broad, yet correct principle, that all men are born equals; it therefore recognizes no hereditary distinction, admits no order of nobility. It subjects all to the operation of the law, and extends protection equally to every citizen. It guarantees the right of trial by jury, and the benefit of the writ of habeas corpus. It subordinates the military to the civil authority; permits the citizen to keep and bear arms; gives ample latitude to the right of suffrage; provides for periodical and frequent elections, and secures the freedom of them.—It confers the freedom of speech and of the press; subject to corrections for wanton attacks on individuals; and what is more; it confirms to every inhabitant of the land free toleration of religion. It gives to all the privilege of worshipping their Creator in the way most agreeable to their consciences, and no one is permitted to molest or make afraid.

These are some of the leading traits in the federal constitution, which have occurred to my mind, without referring to the instrument. Many other important stipulations might be enumerated; but I forbear.

The contrast between our form of government and those in vogue elsewhere, is palpably great; and the advantage in favor of the former is unquestionable, so much so, that every individual has a deep interest in preserving it free from infraction or abuse. From the period of the ratification of this constitution, until the declaration of the late war, with the exception of two or three short intervals, the principal powers of Europe were engaged in sanguinary and devastating wars. It was the duty, and obviously the interest of the United States to assume, and if possible maintain neutral ground. The contending powers, in their inveterate hostility, little regarded the right of neutrals, and we found our peace assailed, and acts of indignity and injustice practised towards us by the most conspicuous of those powers, particularly England and France.—We, agreeable to the principles which we had avowed, endeavoured to obtain redress by remonstrance and negotiation.—We were but partially successful. Great Britain, by her practice of impressment of our seamen, her principles of blockade, and other unfriendly deportment towards us, had long tried our patience, and wearied our forbearance.—We had expostulated and negotiated, till any further attempts at the settlement of differences in that way, seemed not only to promise no success, but was likely to establish for us as a nation the character of a pusillanimous and timid people, who could not even be "kick'd into a war;" and in this way the reputation and efficiency of a republican government was in danger of falling into disrepute. Considering the violent agitation that prevailed in Europe, for a long time previous to 1812, and the unlawful exercise of power by the issue and execution of orders in council, decrees, &c. having an injurious and unrighteous operation on the United States; together with the cruel and altogether indefensible practice of impressment of our seamen by Great Britain, it is more matter of surprise that we avoided a state of war so long; than that we should be involved in it at last.

No example can be produced of a nation possessing the same moral power, and entertaining a regard for its known and general character, that ever made greater efforts to maintain their honour and good name, without an occurrence to this resort, than did the United States. The nation had so long enjoyed peace, that the habits and pursuits of the people were identified with such a condition; and though it was afterwards abundantly proven, that we possessed the best materials in the world, whereof to compose an active and efficient military and naval force, yet we lacked experience—a large majority of the gallant officers and men who had seen service and distinguished themselves in the revolution, had already descended to the tomb of their ancestors; most of the comparatively few that remained were too old for active duty; and but few of the younger part of our population had ever enjoyed an opportunity of becoming proficient in the science of arms.—The consequence was, that the early part of the contest on the land was not characterized by that skill and celerity of operation, which was manifested afterwards. In courage, chivalric bravery, we were never deficient; but this quality, unless judiciously direct-

ed, is not of itself sufficient to insure success. As the war progressed, however, many brave and consummate commanders were brought into view. Your own recollections will point them out; for my part, to avoid a charge of invidiousness, I shall not stop to particularize. This war, like most others with which history makes us familiar, was diversified in its progress with favourable and discouraging events. We achieved many glorious victories, and sustained some defeats. In addition to the difficulty of procuring good officers, which was soon obviated, we had to contend, through the whole course of it, with an embarrassed treasury, and I am sorry to add, an unreasonable, and in some instances, almost treasonable opposition to the prosecution of it, by too many of our own citizens. This opposition, engendered in the effervescence of party spirit, which since been unequivocally censured even by those who were instrumental in fomenting it. I mention not this circumstance with a view to recrimination; far be it from me to disturb the harmony that so happily prevails. I only wish to erect a beacon on Charybdis, that the danger may be more readily avoided in future. Notwithstanding all these forbidding circumstances, our land forces, by their decisive strokes on the north and north-western frontier, at Baltimore, New Orleans, and other places, made such an impression on the enemy as to sicken him of the contest. And the many redoubtable deeds of our gallant navy, inflicted such deadly wounds on the pride and naval haughtiness of that power, who had arrogated to herself the appellation of "Mistress of the Ocean," that it was impossible for her (however adroitly she made the attempt) to disguise the chagrin and extreme mortification that she experienced. To have been out-done at all, would have been sufficiently distressing; but to be repeatedly beaten in fair and open combat, by those "fir-built frigates" and "cock-boats," with the striped bunting" at their mast-heads, which she had often affected to deride, was almost insupportable.

But peace has been restored—the same Almighty Providence, which had in former days delivered us out of much tribulation, again interposed, and terminated the conflict in a manner honourable and advantageous to the United States. The valuable results have been to inspire confidence (under God) in our own strength, and resources;—to establish a national character for bravery and skill; to make the name of North America respected in every part of the world, to add reputation to our form of government; (an important result);—to extinguish, in a remarkable degree, the prevalence and heat of party spirit;—to teach the mutual dependence that exists between our navigation and agricultural, and every other occupation and interest; to strengthen the bond of union among the States; by the destruction of local jealousies and selfish policy; to have dissipated any remaining hostility to a moderate naval force; to have introduced, and put in possession of the nation, to be reserved for other emergencies, a large stock of military science and experience; and to have rendered us more secure for the future from the injustice of other powers.

But so many advantages could not be expected to accrue without some concomitant evils; and among these must be reckoned, as the most serious, the loss of many valuable lives, and the consequent multiplication of widows and orphans; the accumulation of the public debt, and possibly, in some degree, a deterioration of the public morals; of this, however, to any great extent, I doubt. If it must be admitted, of which I demand proof, that a soldier leaves the army with less virtue than he enters it; yet so few are they in number, compared with the entire population, and so dispersed over this extensive country, that their influence on the mass of society must be limited.

Some have apprehended that the late war would have the effect of exciting a troublesome spirit of military ambition, and thirst for "deeds in arms," incompatible with the true interests of the nation, which are on all hands acknowledged to be the cultivation of peace and amity with every power. Of this I have no fear, being more inclined to adopt the sentiment of the venerable John Adams, that we have and are likely to have too little, rather than too much, of that spirit which would readily prompt us "to assert our rights or avenge our wrongs." All experience proves that we who are essentially an agricultural people, who have ample domains, and can quietly repose under our own "vines and fig-trees," stand less in need of the curb than the spur. It has always been my greatest apprehension, notwithstanding we have been called a nation of politicians, that we should be too much inclined to "settle down on our lees," grow remiss in the exercise of our political duties, and undervalue our political privileges.

Another effect which grew out of the war, was an unsettled and diseased condition of the circulating medium of the country. The banks closed their vaults, and specie disappeared. This for a while, and during the struggle, was deemed sound policy in order to prevent the draw that was constantly making upon the precious metals; resident among us.

Upon the return of Peace, however,

specie payments ought to have been immediately resumed by the banks.

This was the right course it was expected, and they had the ability to do it, unless they had unjustifiably overdealt at a time when they were irresponsible. This the banks, from motives of interest, declined doing, and thus prepared the way for the establishment of the bank of the United States, which otherwise would not have been chartered.—This large monied institution, admitted into the heart of the union, and connected with government, has been viewed with jealousy as a Mammoth machine, which might, and probably would, at some future day, be converted to improper purposes.

I am not conversant with the correctness of the proceedings of that institution; already complaints have been urged, whether well founded, I know not. That the State Banks whose name ought to be "Legion," and whose craft has been disturbed by this, in their estimation, intruder, should complain, is not wonderful; it was a circumstance to be calculated, and it ought always to be remembered, that the mercenary disposition of the State Banks procured these things for them, and if they are now reaping the fruit of their folly, every one knows to whose account it must be ascribed.—The inordinate rage for banking which has taken possession of the people of the United States, I am compelled to consider as a national calamity. The sea has its bounds beyond which it cannot pass; but where this all-pervading spirit will find a resting place, seems altogether problematical. At the rate of increase which has been witnessed for the last few years, no one can foresee what will be the result. At this time the notes of many of the banks are below par value, at a short distance from their own vicinity. An individual in this predicament would be expected soon to surrender for the benefit of his creditors, and I shall be mistaken if that will not be the case with some of these trading companies. The utility, and if you please, the necessity of a banking capital of moderate extent in this country is conceded, but he that would at the era of the adoption of the constitution of the United States have predicted, that in less than thirty years there would be in operation within its limits some three or four hundred chartered banks, would have been esteemed as visionary, as he who declares the Earth to be hollow and proposes to explore the cavity. These banks from the facility which they afford of procuring money, have induced in many instances, ill-advised speculations; abandonment of regular business for the enchanting charms of trade, and the delusive hope of acquiring fortunes with little trouble or labour. A wide door has been opened, and I know not who will be able to shut it; many have entered in thereat; and have travelled, and are travelling the broad and wayward road to temporal destruction.

In addition to the proceeds of the different taxes, government were under the necessity, during the war, of borrowing money for the purpose of prosecuting it. This was generally obtained at a high premium and the payments were put forward several years for a considerable portion of it; whilst the length and expense of the contest was unknown, it was prudent to obtain if practicable, a long credit; but no one at that time dreamed that in so short a period after the conclusion of the war, the public funded debt not due for years to come, would command a high premium on the other side of the question;—yet such is the fact; in one year great difficulty in obtaining loans on reasonable terms, in the next, a great price demanded for the privilege of redeeming these very loans. Government were not disposed to gratify the cupidity of the holders of stock, and therefore dispersed with a portion of their revenue, by the repeal of all the internal taxes. So abundant have been the receipts into the public treasury within the last three years; that we have been enabled to defray the ordinary expenses of the government in all its branches; to take up the floating debt as fast as it has been ascertained; to pay the interest on all, and the principal of the funded debt as soon as due; to gradually increase the navy; to reconstruct the public edifices, which the late enemy had, contrary to the usages of civilized warfare, destroyed;—to embellish the capital;—to provide in a most liberal manner for the surviving officers and soldiers of the Revolution, whose circumstances are not sufficiently comfortable—to relieve by pensions the widows and orphans created by the late war; and to chastise a few restive tribes of Indians on our southern border; and yet have a surplus of money remaining.—A fact which speaks more than volumes would do in favour of the enviable standing which this nation has acquired; and when contrasted with the exhausted condition of the European powers, whose finances are in such a dilapidated condition, and whose governments are so overwhelmed with accumulation of debt, which they are wholly unable to redeem, even after pressing from their wretched subjects taxes in every imaginable shape, and to an amount limited only by the capacity of payment, is a source of honest national pride.

It must not be concealed, however, that whilst the public coffers have been replen-

