EASTON GAZETTE.

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ADDRESS OF DANIEL WEBSTER,

AT THE BUNKER HILL MONUMENT CELEBRATION, June 17, 1843.

ORATION.

A duty has been performed. A work of gratitde and patriotism is completed. This structure, having its foundations in soil, which drank deep of early revolutionary blood, has at length reached its destined height, and now lifts its summit to the skies

We have assembled to celebrate the accomplishment of this undertaking, & to indulge afresh, in the recollection of the great event, which it is designed to commemorate. Eighteen years more than half the ordinary duration of a generation of mankind have elapsed, since the corner stone of his monument was laid. The hopes of its projectors rested on voluntary contributions, private munificence, and the general favor of the public These hopes have not been disappointed. Donations have been made by individuals, in some cases of large amount, and smaller sums contributed by thousands All who regard the object itself as important and its accomplishment, therefore, as a good attained, will entertain sincere respect and gratitude for the unwearied efforts of the successive Presidents Boards of Directors, and Committees of the Association which has had the general control of the work. The Architect, equally entitled to our thanks and commendation will find; other reward, also, for his labor and skill, in the beauty and elegance of the obelisk itself, and the distinction which, as a work of art, it confers on him.

At a period when the prospects of further progress in the undertaking were gloomy and discouraging, the Machanic Association, by a most praiseworthy and vigorous effort, raised new funds for carrying it forward, and saw them applied with fidelity, economy and skill. It is a grateful duty to make public acknowledgements of such timely & efficient aid

The last effort, and the last contribution were from a different source. Garlands of grace and elegance were destined to crown a work, which had its commencement in manly patriotism. The winning power of the sex addressed itself to the public, and all that was needed to carry the monument to its proposed height and give to it its finish, was promptly supplied. The mothers and the daughters of the land contributed thus most successfully, to what ever of beauty is in the obelisk itself, or whatever of utility and public benefit and gratification in its completion.

Of those with whom the plan of erecting on this spot a monument, worthy of the event to be commemorated originated many are now present; but others, alas! have themselves become subjects of monumental inscription. William Tudor, an accomplished scholar, a distinguished writer, a most amiable man, allied, both by birth and sentiment, to the patriots of the Revolution, died, while on public service abroad, and now lies buried in a foreign land. William Sullivan, a name fragrant of Revolutionary merit, and of public service and of public virtue, who himself partook in a high degree, of the respect and confidence of the community, and yet was always most loved where best known has also been gathered to his fathers. And last, George Blake, a lawyer of learning and eloquence, a man of wit and of talent of social qualities the most agreeable and fascinating, and of gifts which enabled him to exercise large sway over public assemblies, has closed his human career. I know that in the crowds before me, there are those, from whose eyes copious tears will flow, at the mention of these names. But such mention is due to their general character, their public and private virtues, and especially on this occasion to the spirit and zeal, with which they entered into the undertaking, which is now completed.

I have spoken only of those who are now numbered with the living. But a long life now drawing towards its close, always distinguished by acts of public spirit, humanity, and charity, forming a character which has already become historical, and sanctified by public regard, and by the affection of friends, may confer, even on the living, the proper immunity of the dead, and be the fit subject of honorable mention, and warm commendation. Of the early projectors of the design of this monument, one of the most prominent, the most zealous, and the most efficient, is Thomas H. Perkins. It was beneath his ever hospitable roof that those whom I have mentioned, and others yet living and now present, having assembled for the purpose, adopted the first step towards erecting a monument on Bunker Hill. Long may he remain, with unimpaired faculties, in the wide field of his usefulness. His charities have distilled, like the dews of heaven; he has fed the hungry, and clothed the naked; he has given sight to the blind; and for such virtue there is a reward on high, of which all human memorials, all language of brass and stone, are but humble types and attempted imitations.

Time and nature have had their course in diminishing the number of those whom we met here on the 17th of June, 1825. Most of the revolutionary characters then present have since deceased, and Lafayette sleeps in his native land. Yet the name and blood of Warren are with us; the kindred of Putnam are also here; and near me, universally beloved for his character and his virtues, and now venerable for his years, sits the son of the noble hearted and daring Prescott —Gideon Foster of Danvers, Enos Reynolds of Boxford, Phineas Johnson, Robert Andrews; Elijah Dresser, Josiah Cleveland, Jesse Smith, Philip Bagley, Needham Maynard' Roger Plaisted, Joseph Stephens, Nehemiah Porter, and James Harvey who bore arms for their country, either at Concord and Lexington, on the 19th of April, or on Bunker Hill, all now far advanced in age have come here to day, to look once more on the field of the exercise of their valor, and to receive a hearty outpouring of our respect.

They have long outlived the troubles and dangers of the Revolution, they have outlived the evils arising from the want of a united and efficient Government; they have outlived the pendency of imminent dangers to the public liberty, they have outlived nearly all their contemporaries; but they have not outlived—they cannot outlive—the affectionate gratitude of their country. Heaven has not allotted to this generation an opportunity of rendering high services, and manifesting strong personal devotion, such as they rendered and manifested and in such a cause as roused the patriotic fires of their youthful breasts, and nerved the strength of their arms. But we may praise what we cannot equal, and celebrate actions which we were not born to perform. *Pulchrum est benefacere reipublicæ, etiam bene vicere haud.*

The Bunker Hill Monument is finished. Here it stands Fortunate in the natural eminence on which it is placed—higher, infinitely higher in its objects and purposes, it rises over the land, and over the sea, and visible, at their homes, to three hundred thousand citizens of Massachusetts—it stands, a memorial of the last, and a monitor to the present and all succeeding generations. I have spoken of the loftiness of its purpose It it had been without any other design than the creation of a work of art, the grace of which it is composed, would have stept in its native bed. It has a purpose, and that purpose gives it character That purpose enrobes it with dignity and moral grandeur. That well known purpose it is, which causes us to look up with a feeling of awe. It is itself the orator of this occasion, it is not from my lips, it is not from any human lips, that the strain of eloquence is this day to flow, most competent to move and excite the vast multitudes around. The potent speaker stands motionless before them. It is a plain shaft It bears no inscriptions, fronting to the rising sun, from which the future antiquarian shall wipe the dust. Nor does the rising sun cause tones of music to issue from its summit. But at the rising of the sun, and at the setting of the sun, in the blaze of noon day, and beneath the milder effulgence of lunar night, it looks, it speaks, it acts to the full comprehension of every American mind, and the awakening of glowing enthusiasm in every American heart. Its silent, but awful utterance; its deep pathos, as it brings to our contemplation the 17th of June, 1775 and the consequence which have resulted to us, to our country, and to the world, from the events of that day, and which we know must continue to rain influence on the destinies of mankind, to the end of time; the elevation with which it raises us high above the ordinary feelings of life, surpass all that the study of the closet, or even the inspiration of genius can produce. To day it speaks to us. Its future auditories will be through successive generations of men as they rise up before it, and gather round it. Its speech will be of patriotism and courage; of civil and religious liberty; of free government; of the moral improvement and elevation of mankind; and of the immortal memory of those who with heroic devotion have sacrificed their lives for their country.

In the older world, numerous fabrics still exist, reared by human hands, but whose object has been lost in the darkness of ages. They are now monuments of nothing but the labor and skill, which constructed them.

The mighty pyramid itself, half buried in the sands of Africa, has nothing to bring down and report to us, but the power of kings and the servitude of the people. If it had any other purpose beyond that of a mausoleum, such purposes has perished from history, and from tradition. If asked for its moral object, its admonition, its sentiment, its instruction to mankind, or any high end in its erection, it is silent—silent as the millions which lie in the dust at its base, and in the catacombs which surround it. Without a just moral object, therefore made known to man, though raised against the skies, it excites only conviction of power, mixed with strange wonder. But if the civilization of the present race of men, founded as it is, in solid science, the true knowledge of nature, and vast discoveries in art, and which is stimulated and purified by moral sentiment, and by the truths of Christianity, be not destined to destruction, before the final termination of human existence on earth, the object and purpose of this edifice will be known, till that hour shall come. And even if civilization should be subverted, and the truths of the Christian Religion obscured by new deluge of barbarism, the memory of Bunker Hill and the American Revolution will still be elements and parts of the knowledge, which shall be posessed by the last man, to whom the light of civilization and Christianity shall be extended.

This celebration is honered by the presence of the Chief Executive Magistrate of the Union. An occasion so National in its object and character, and so much connected with that Revolution, from which the Government sprang, at the head of which he is placed, may well receive from him this mark of attention and respect. Well acquainted with Yorktown, the scene of the last great military struggle of the Revolution his eye now surveys the field of Bunker Hill, the theatre of the first of these important conflicts. He sees where Warren fell, where Putnam, and Prescott, and Stark, and Knowlton, and Brooks fought. He beholds the spot, were a thousand trained soldiers of England were smitten to the earth, in the first effort of Revolutionary war, by the arm of a bold and determined yeomanry, contending for liberty and their country. And while all assembled here entertain towards him sincere personal good wishes, and the high respect due to his elevated office and station, it is not to be doubted, that he enters with true American feeling, into the patriotic enthusiasm, kindled by the occasion, which animates the millions which surround him.

His Excellency, the Governor of the Commonwealth the Governor of Rhode Island, and the other distinguished public men, whom we have the honor to receive as visitors and guests, to day will cordially unite in a celebration connected with the great event of the Revolutionary war.

No name in the history of 1775 and 1776 is more distinguished than that of an ex-President of the United States, whom we expected to see here, but whose ill health prevents his attendance. Whenever popular rights were to be asserted an Adams was present, and when the time came for the formal Declaration of independence 'it was the voice of an Adams, that shook the Halls of Congress We wish we could have welcomed to us, this day, the inheritor of Revolutionary blood, and the just and worthy Representative of high Revolutionary names, merit and services.

Banners and badges, processions and flags, announce to us, that amidst this uncounted multitude are thousands of natives of New England, now resident in other States. Welcome, ye kindred names with kindred blood! From the broad savannahs of the South, from the newer regions of the West, from amidst the hundreds of thousands of men of Eastern origin who cultivate the rich valley of the Genesee, or live along the chain of the Lakes, from the mountains of Pennsylvania, and the thronged cities of the coast, welcome welcome! Wherever else you may be strangers, here you are all at home. You assemble at this shrine of liberty, near the family altars, at which your earliest devotions were paid to Heaven; near to the temples of worship, first entered by you, and near to the schools and colleges, in which your education was received. You come hither with a glorious ancestry of Liberty. You bring names, which are on the rolls of Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill. You come, some of you, once more to be embraced by an aged Revolutionary father, or to receive another, perhaps a last blessing, bestowed in love and tears, by a mother, yet surviving to witness, and to enjoy, your prosperity and happiness.

But if family associations and the recollections of the past, bring you hither with greater alacrity, and mingle with your greeting much of local attachment, and private affection, greeting also be given, free and hearty greeting, to every American citizen, who treads this sacred soil, with patriotic feeling, and respires with pleasure, in an atmosphere fragrant with the recollections of 1775. This occasion is respectable—nay, it is grand, it is sublime, by the nationality of its sentiment. In the seventeen millions of happy people, who form the American community, there is not one, who has not an interest in this Monument, as there is not one, that has not a deep and abiding interest in that which it commemorates.

Woe betide the man, who brings to this day's worship feeling less than wholly American! Woe betide the man, who can stand here with the fires of local resentments burning, or the purpose of fomenting local jealousies, and the strifes of local interests, festering and rankling in his heart. Union founded in justice, in patriotism, and the most plain and obvious common interest; union, founded on the same love of liberty, cemented by blood shed in the same common cause; union has been the source of all our glory and greatness thus far, and is the ground of all our highest hopes. This column stands on Union. I know not that it might not keep its position, if the American Union, in the mad conflict of human passions, and in the strife of parties and factions, should be broken up and destroyed. I know not that it would totter and fall to the earth, and mingle its fragments with the fragments of Liberty and the Constitution, when State should be separated from State, and faction and dismemberment obliterate forever all the hopes of the founders of the Republic, and the great inheritance of their children. It might stand. But who, from beneath the weight of mortification and shame, that would oppress him could look up to behold it? For my part, should I live to such a time, I shall avert my eyes from it forever.

It is not as a mere military encounter of hostile armies, that the battle of Bunker Hill founds its principal claim to attention. Yet, even as a mere battle, there were circumstances attending it, extraordinary in character and entitling it to peculiar distinction.—It was fought on this eminence; in the neighborhood of yonder city; in the presence of more spectators than there were combatants in the conflict. Men, women and children, from every commanding position, were gazing at the battle and looking for its result with all the eagerness natural to those who knew that the issue was fraught with the deepest consequences to them. Yet, on the sixteenth of June 1775, there was nothing around this hill but verdure and culture. There was, indeed, the note of awful preparation in Boston. There was the provincial army at Cambridge with its right flank resting on Dorchester, and its left on Chelsea. But here all was peace. Tranquility reigned around.

On the seventeenth, every thing was changed. On yonder height had arisen, in the night, a redoubt in which Prescott commanded. Perceived by the enemy at dawn, it was immediately cannonaded from the floating batteries in the river, and the opposite shore. And then ensued the hurry of preparation in Boston, and soon the troops of Britain embarked in the attempt to dislodge the colonists.

I suppose it would be difficult, in a military point of view, to ascribe to the leaders on either side, any just motive for the conflict which followed On the one hand it could not have been very important to the Americans to attempt to hem the British within the town by advancing one single post a quarter of a mile; while on the other hand if the British found it essential to dislodge the American troops, they had it in their power at no expense of life. By moving up their ships and batteries, they could have completely cut off all communication with the main land over the neck, and forces in the redoubt would have been reduced to a state of famine in forty eight hours.

But that was not the day for any such considerations on either side! Both parties were anxious to try the strength of their arms. The pride of England would not permit the rebels, as she termed them, to defy her to the teeth, and without for a moment calculating the cost, the British general determined to destroy the fort immediately. On the other side, Prescott and his gallant followers longed and thirsted for a conflict. They wished it, and wished it at once And this is the true secret of the movements on this hill.

I will not attempt to describe the battle. The cannonading; the landing of the British—their advance—the coolness with which the charge was met—the repulse—the second attack—the second repulse—the burning of Charlestown—and finally the closeing assault, and the slow retreat of the Americans—the history of all these is familiar.

But the consequences of the battle of Bunker Hill are greater than those of any conflict between the hostile armies of European powers. It was the first great battle of the Revolution; and not only the first blow but the blow which determined the contest. It did not, indeed, put an end to the war, but in the then existing hostile state of feeling, the difficulties could only be referred to the arbitration of the sword. And one thing is certain; that after the New England troops had shown themselves able to face and repulse the regulars, it was decided that peace never could be established but upon the basis of the Independence of the colonies. When the sun of that day went down, the event of independence was certain! When Washington heard of the battle he inquired if the militia had stood the fire of the regulars? And when told that they had not only stood that fire, but reserved their own till the enemy was within eight rods, and then poured it in with tremendous effect—"then," exclaimed he, "the liberties of the country are safe!'

The consequences of this battle were just of the same importance as the Revolution itself.

If there was nothing of value in the principles of the American Revolution, then there is nothing valuable in the battle of Bunker Hill and its consequences But if the Revolution was an era in the history of man favorable to human happiness—if it was an event which marked the progress of man, all over the world, from despotism to liberty—then this monument is not raised without cause. Then the battle of Bunker Hill is not an event undeserving celebrations, commemorations and rejoicings.

What then is the true and peculiar principle of the American Revolution, and of the systems of government which it has confirmed and established? Now the truth is, that the American Revolution was not caused by the instantaneous discovery of principles of government before unheard of, or the practicable adoption of political ideas, such as had never before entered into the minds of men. It was but the full developement of principles of government, forms of society, and political sentiments, the origin of all which lay back two centuries in English and American history.

The discovery of America, its colonization by the nations of Europe, the history and progress of the colonies, from their establishment to the time when the principal of them threw off their alligiance to the respective States which had planted them, and founded governments of their own, constitute one of the most interesting trains of events in human annals. These events occupied three hundred years; during which period civilization and knowledge made steady progress in the old world: so that Europe, at the commencement of the nineteenth century had become greatly changed from that Europe which began the colonization of America at the commencement of the fifteenth. And what is most material to my present purpose is, that in the progress of the first of these centuries, that is to say, from the discovery of America to the settlements of Virginia and Massachusetts, political and religious events took place, which most materially affected the state of society, and the sentiments of mankind, especially in England and in parts of Continental Europe. After a few feeble and unsuccessful efforts by England, under Henry the Seventh, to plant colonies in America, no designs of that kind were prosecuted for a long period, either by the English Government or any of its subjects. Without inquiring into the cause of this long delay, its consequences are sufficiently clear and striking. England in this lapse of a century, unknown to herself but under the Providence of God, and the influence of events was fitting herself for the work of colonizing North America, on such principles, and by such men, as should spread the English name and English blood, in time over a great portion of the Western hemisphere. The commercial spirit was greatly encouraged by several laws passed in Henry the Seventh's reign; and in the same reign encouragement was given to arts and manufactures in Eastern countries, and some not unimportant modifications of the Feudal system, by allowing the breaking of entails. These and other measures, and other occurrences, were making way for a new class of society to emerge, and show itself in a military and feudal age. A middle class, neither Barons nor great landholders on the one side, nor the mere retainers of the Crown, nor Barons nor mere agricultural laborers on the other. With the rise and growth of this new class of society, not only did commerce and the arts increase, but better education, a greater degree of knowledge, juster notions of the true ends of government, and sentiments favorable to civil liberty, began to spread abroad, and become more and more common. But the plants springing from these seeds, were of slow growth. The character of English society had indeed begun to undergo a change, but changes of national character are ordinarily the work of time. Operative causes were, however, evidently in existence, and sure to produce, ultimately, their proper effect. From the accession of Henry 7th, to the breaking out of the civil wars, England enjoyed much more exemption from war, foreign and domestic, than for a long period before, and during the controversy between the houses of York and Lancaster, These years of peace were favorable to commerce and the arts. Commerce and the arts augmented general and individual knowledge; and knowledge is the only first fountain, both of the love, and the principles of human liberty. Other powerful causes soon came into active play. The reformation of Luther broke out, kindling up the minds of men afresh, leading to new habits of thought, and awakening in individuals energies before unknown, even to themselves. The religious controversies of this period changed society as well as religion; indeed, it would be easy to prove, if this occasion were proper for it, that they changed society to a considerable extent, where they did not change the religion of the State The spirit of commercial and foreign adventure, therefore, on the one hand, which had gained so much strength and influence, since the time of the discovery of America, and on the other, the assertion and the maintenance of religious liberty, having their source indeed in the Reformation, but continued, diversified & continually strengthened by the subsequent divisions of sentiment & opinion among the reformers themselves & this love of religious liberty drawing after them, or bringing along with them, as they always do, an ardent devotion to the principle of civil liberty also, were the powerful influences, under which character was formed and men trained for the great work of introducing English civilization, English law, and what is more than all, Anglo Saxon blood, into the wilderness of North America. Raleigh and his companions may be considered as the creatures, principally, of the first of these causes.—High-spirited, full of the love of personal adventure, excited too, in some degree, by the hopes of sudden riches from the discovery of mines of the precious metals, and not unwilling to diversify the labors of settling a colony with occasional cruising against the Spaniards in the West Indian seas, they crossed and recrossed the ocean, with a frequency which surprises us when we consider the state of navigation, and which evinces a most darring spirit. The other cause peopled New England. The May Flower sought our shores under no high wrought spirit of commercial adventure, no love of gold, no mixture of purpose, warlike or hostile, to any humain being. Like the dove from the ark, she had put forth only to find rest. Solemn prayers from the shores of the sea in Holland had invoked for her, at her departure, the blessings of Providence. The stars which guided her were the unobscured constellations of civil and religious liberty. Her deck was the altar of the living God.—Fervent prayers from bended knees, mingled morning and evening, with the voices of ocean, and the sighing of the wind in her shrouds. Every prosperous breeze, which gently swelling her sails, helped the Pilgrims onward in their course, awoke new anthems of praise; and when the elements were wrought into fury, neither the tempest, tossing their fragile bark like a feather, nor the darkness and howling of the midnight storm, ever disturbed, in man or woman, the firm and settled purpose of their souls, to undergo all and to do all that the meekest patience, the boldest resolution, and the highest trust in God, could enable human beings to suffer or to perform.

Some differences may, doubtless be traced at this day, between the descendants of the early colonists of Virginia and those of New England, owing to the different influences and different circumstances under which the respective settlements were made. But only enough to create a pleasing variety in the midst of a general resemblence.

"——*facies, non omnibrs una.*
Nec diversa tamen, qualem decit esse sororem.

But the habits, sentiments, and objects of both, soon became modified by local causes growing out of their condition in the New World; and as this condition was essentially alike in both, and as both at once adopted the same general rules and principles of English jurisprudence, these differences gradually diminished. They gradually disappeared by the progress of time, and the influence of intercourse. The necessity of some degree of union and co-opperation to defend themselves against the savage tribes, tended to excite in them mutual respect and regard — They fought together in the wars against France. The great and common cause of the Revolution bound them together by new links of brotherhood; and finally, fortunately, happily and gloriously, the present form of government united them to form the Great Republic of the World and bound up their interest and fortunes till the whole earth sees that there is now for them, in present possession, as well as future hope, only 'One Country, One Constitution, and One Destiny.'

The colinization of the tropical region, and the whole of the Southern parts of the Continent, by Spain and Portugal, was conducted on other principles, under the influence of other motives, and followed by far different consequences. From the time of its discovery, the Spanish Government pushed forward its settlements in America, not only with vigor, but with eagerness; so that long before the first permanent English settlement had been accomplished, in what is now the United States, Spain had conquered Mexico, Peru, and Chili; and stretched her power over nearly all the territory she ever acquired in this continent. The rapidity of these conquests is to be ascribed in a great degree, to the eagerness, not to say the rapacity of those numerous bands of adventurers who were stimulated to subdue immense regions, and take possession of them in the name of the crown of Spain. The mines of gold and silver were the excitements to these efforts, and accordingly settlements were generally made, and Spanish authority established on the immediate eve of the subjugation of territory that the native population might be set to work by their new Spanish masters, in the mines. From these facts the love of gold—gold not porduced by industry, nor accumulated by commerce—but gold dug from its native bed in the bowels of the earth, and that earth ravished from its rightful possessors by every possible degree of enormity, cruelty and crime, was long the governing passion in Spanish wars, and Spanish settlements in America. Even Columbus himself did not wholly escape the influence of this base motive. In his early voyages we find him passing from island to island, inquiring every where for gold as if God had opened the new world to the knowledge of the old only to gratify a passion equally senseless and sordid; and to offer up millions of an unoffending race of men to the destruction of the sword, sharpened both by cruelty and rapacity. And yet Columbus was far above his age and country. Enthusiastic, indeed, but sober religious and magnanimous; born to great

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