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NEW SERIES

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LIBERIA HERALD.

An oration delivered on the 26th of July 1849 at the second anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Liberia,

By R. L. STRYKER, Esq.

Concluded.

Fellow Citizens and my Countrymen.

And now, my fellow country men, as it devolves on you to be the hopes of the present generation, in establishing this government on a solid base: so will it devolve on generations coming after; in an increasing degree, to carry on the superstructure, to its completion.

In feeling the weight of responsibility, that rests with you; let that band of union be cemented in your affections for the general good, that characterized the Pilgrim Fathers.—Let your faults be of the head and not of the heart.—For had you not the example of your ancestors, and moderns before you speaking with sepulchral tones beware that around you lie the demons of jealousy and ambition, telling you in awful echo's of your greatness,—you might find means of an excuse for the many petty faults, which lead them far away from justice and equity.

But relying implicitly upon your integrity as men, and seeing around you already the blessings of a free people, I can but feel sanguine of your success. Moreover recollect that great nations live in the light of great characters. They, who sway the power and principles of minds with ability; lend stability to their enterprises and ensures success to all undertakings for the public good.

Recollect that the qualities of commanders, and statesman, show varegated traits of patriotism.—That some is for popular applause, the aggrandizement of wealth, and the power to rule, while others court the academic shades, or seek other sources of pleasure to their taste and nobleness of soul; to bestow great and blessings upon mankind in general.

Fellow citizens, I would not be so ungallant by forgeting a nobler past of God's works, in these important matters; though you are entitled to be, the "Lords of creation."—I mean the fair sex.

Be assured that in these important matters, afore mentioned you will not be alone. Women, will cheer and comfort you in distress and difficulty, in the road to wealth, and fame, she will bid you hope. She will lighten you of every little load of discontent, and dissatisfaction, by her example of fortitude, and fire your soul with eternal purpose to live or die, in the cause of your country, and for her, your bosom friend.

As all great and good men trace their successes in life, from the teachings of the nursery, from the advice and counsels of her who watched their infant years: so all men when crowned with the honors of the world cannot bestow them in a safter place, or with a better one than her, who gave him being or if perchance, she be not, when that hour comes, let him cast in the sister's lap the unsullied wreath of fame, as she gather's some jewelled flower for her brow of beauty.

My Fellow citizens, my fellow countrymen. It is impossible to look back upon the events just past without marking that unseen Hand, which guides the destiny of empires, and the fate of kings.

How wonderful, and signal has been his ways to you. How truly thankful might you be to be to him, for his mercies and for this day, which bring joys to the bosom of every Liberia, and be one at home or on some other shore, he feels the inexpressible feeling stealing over his nature, that he is a *man*, and dare be *free*. And in taking a retrospective view of the past year, I am forced to exclaim, "Behold the Lord is our salvation," "the Lord is our Help,"

Yes, another year has rolled over our political existence, and over many events of moment, have we to rejoice and mourn. For scarcely had our rejoicings past on the annual celebration of the ever memorable first of December, before one veteran soldier past from the things of earth, to those rejoicing of brotherhood in that region where the tear of agony comes not, and the parting embrace is never given. The next event was an occasion of rejoicing over the "acknowledgement of your Independence" granted to you by two or three of the sovereign powers of Europe, and the fact lightened in interest, by being brought by your minister, the Executive himself. Furthermore, the presentation of a vessel that arrived here not long since; and means to prosecute some cheerished objects, namely, the extinction of the slave trade along your coast, and the protection of your revenue. These form within the inner veil objects of deep interest to the true lover of Liberia. After this event, there followed the removal of the Demon of slavery, from within your territory, by the force of arms, which I am happy to add, was done without scarce a loss to yourselves. And the closing event, which I am about to mention came quickly after,—it was like the blast of disappointed hopes, long cheerished—the news of the sad truth fell upon the ear,—and reality awoke to consciousness only to know and sink deeper in gloom. Yes! amid the joy which surrounds you, the triumphant victory of your arms, which crown you. I have sorrowingly to add, the best of the patriots is dead.

He fell not on the field of strife, nor amid the friend and foe. He saw not his fondest hopes waning, nor the "Lone Star" again forsaking its orbit. He saw not the enemies of his country, possessing its fairest portions on which he toiled and offered his life a sacrifice. Nor did he hear the exulting cry of Demons, come to bear way his race; for which he labored long to save. No none these he heard, but like the golden grain ready for the sickle, he in peace, was "gathered to "His Fathers."

And now, my fellow countrymen, the link that connected you to the past, is forever broken; no more shall this eye witness of the "mighty past," come and speak to YOU in mighty tones go foward! No! that eye is forever closed in the icy chill of death, and that tongue is forever mute to the impulses of a heart, that never knew a fear.—To-day I see not that hoary man of years among this vast assembly, Near the seat we all were wont to give him on accasions like this filled by that stately form. To-day in vain I have looked for that venerable form coming in you entrance, in vain I wait to hear that footstep falling on the ear, as one from the spirit land—and yet he comes not. O! is it possible! is it reality! that he has gone forever from my view? O! my father! my father! wither, hast thou gone from me! Zephyrs! tell me, whence have ye bore the sing, though perhaps some iron hand hath robbed me! Yet tell me, that his spirit now hovers o'er me! But ah! alas! memory tells me that he *rests*—that far away in yonder plain, his body is ashes to ashes, and dust to dust, and his spirit with its God. And there methinks I see a greeting. What venerable shades with stately grandure, are welcoming one, to that spirit land of bliss, aye! it is he! it is he and his compatrions, happy in that re-union there, which on earth, did make them great and noble.

Countrymen, could ye weep!—it were manly, for the heart shall never give a greater tribute to departed worth. Though the most imperishable monument of fame, may be rised to perpetuate his memory yet in the bosom of this nation shall live the undying memory, of the last of the patriots.

Countrymen, list ye! would ye know that mighty host of warriors whose arm did wield such awful thunder midsts the fierce and cruel savage? Then cast thine eye along the list of fame, and read the names of Benson, James, Carey, Newport, Brander, and last the lamented Johnson, are they not great! I ask are they not noble! It were perhaps possible for you to say this. But your own deeds blazened on the escutcheon of fame, glares in the eyes of this generation, and will not permit you to view them from an elevation so little above your own; with as clear a perception as those father off can do.

For distance lends our optic visions beauties.

So I shall appeal elswhare. But to whom if not to you! The appeal shall be to this "Lone Star" not after ages of wondering but when long centered in its orbit its ray of light been shed on millions, and posterity has brough its invigorating beams to bear on every son of "*Ham*."

And may that life giving motto "The Love of Liberty Brought us Here," be ever the circlet of your homes—be eternally the anthem of your songs and enduralsly the seal of your hearts, untill distant and future generations shall cry aloud it is the "Love of Liberty Keeps us Here."

My fellow citizens, the past is gone, the present is before you, and the future I know not of. Perhaps posterity will speak of some now in this vast assembly, with unmeasured praise, when the echo of their tread beneath this roof shall be no longer heard. Perhaps when other feet shall tread this hallowed place some deeds of the "mighty past" shall be recounted, that shall make these walls echo and re-echo again and again, untill the bursting effusions of the soul shall be no longer heard among the throng.

For the *Liberia Herald*.

Messrs Editors:—Sirs, my pen has lost its accustomed gayety, and weeping paints the sad bereftment of Liberia's sons, while in contemplation of the ruins of her ancient bulwarks.

For hark! Heard ye not that sound: It was the voice of wailing.—As the noise of many waters, troubled with ponderous heave from their deep abyss.

Heardest thou not the cadences, as wafted on the breeze in the distance of the bold St. Paul's? Methinks it brought sad tidings. For behold—as it swept across Monrovia hills and dale, hard on its footsteps, deep gloom and sadness hovers round—and all Liberia bears the badge of mourning.

Lively choresters of the shady dales with the murmuring coolness of the silvery rill' seems to have lost the wanton melody of their notes, in exchange for tones of pensiveness and wo—as though some oft frequented bougher had been by cruel hand removed, and nature's accostomed beauty irreparably stricken out.

Need I devine to thee, the seighing of the passing breeze?

Didest thou not see the falling of that metior, and the ominous confusion of our blest constellation! And heard ye not that mighty crash, when the fatal *axe* of time's grim executioner, gave the finishing stoke to the most ancient of Liberia's oaks; and brought its hoary head, prostrate to its mother earth, causing a universal groan, as though her very ribs were crushed—shewing the extent of mental agony that reigned within.

While he with fiendish exultation deep, proudly survey the work of his own doings, and yell with ostentatious triumph.

Hark!—List ye to the cadence of yon herald's woful notes.

The ormen of death is in the land.

Too true, alas! its even so—the last of that noble band of patriotic heroes has resigned that charge, so long and honorably maintained: to retire to rest and sweet repose; as one whose work is noble done.

Behold, the invincible Johnson dies.—The terror of his name has ceased, and Liberia's sons no more hover under the power of his protecting arm.

Yea, her enemies may rejoice for a little season, but let the tribes hear, and the heathen mark it will—Elijah's Mantle has fallen, and covers the sons of his beloved country.

To attempt ulogy on this great and noble man we cannot. In asmuch as no degree of pranigeric, could add aught to the halo of glory, which has encircled for many long years, his time honered brow.

The immortal Johnson is the last of that spartan band which braved the dangers of the deep, the barbarous wildman of the forest, with the deadly pestilence which walketh at noon day.

Denying themselves the comforts and endearments of home and friends, to seek an assylum, and prepare the way for their oppressed brethern in their native land.

He stands first on the list distinguished for bravery, fortitude and generosity.

In '22, when envyroned on every hand, by a ferocious foe, discharging from all sides missies of death, Johnson was ever found cool and determined with steady aim to the purpose of his mission.

"For the love of Liberty brought him here."

And in all his subsequent days, his constant care and aim have been for the benefit of his race.

His highest ambition, the happiness and prosperity of Liberia, and his greatest care, her unshaken security and permanent foundation.

And he lived blessed patriot to see fulfilled his most sanguine expectations. Yea he lived to behold the standard for which his great soul for more than a quarter cenutry struggled; float with ease and grace, high on old ocean's bosom, while his listning ear caught the booming of distant cannon of great and powerful nations; indeclination of the natural right of Liberia's lonely star to revolve with equal grace and freedom in its *orbit*.

Then might the veteran hero of '22 have been heard to exclaim like simeon. Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes hath beheld salvation.

Johnson wielded not the sword of steel, with less detriment to his countries foes, when herds of fierce barbarians like impetuous torrents rushing like monsters from the grim shades of their native forests, then did he the spirits sword in honor of the great *I am*, the acknowleded Supreme alone, to whom he ever bowed the knee.

Dangers never detered him, nor perils make him quail. For his bouyant and expansive soul, rose ever with decission and determined zeal, to more than equal every emergancy.

Before the enemies of his country, himself was a host.

The name of Johnson would strike terror and dismay to the heart of his superstitions foes.—For they verily believed him superhuman in battle.

He was among the first of our councellors—a man of penetration deep, and judgment sound, loving mercy; but strictly just. Beloved by all, and universally deplored.

First at his countries call and last at his post.

In his latter days, as bending with declining years tortering over his supporting staff, his venerable form might be seen gliding onward subserviant to duties every call, with visage calm and eyes dim with age; yet ever and anon kindling with the fire of earlier days; he meeted out council to the gay, and instuction to the young. While he benignly smiled on the sporting urchins who arrested his progress, to enquire of his health, or bounding grasp with glee the proffered hand.

For all the juvinile band hailed him as their common friend.

But now alas those days are ended. No more shall they gather round to hear his words, and in mimic form mock the fight of by gone days, while he cheered them to the charge.

We are persuaded to console ourselves, when we behold him bow, with holy resignation to his summon, while to the friends that crowded round his couch he spoke but feedly, yet assured them of his firm allegiance to the court of heaven.

And when he liad made an end of speaking, like Jacob of old he gathered up his feet into the bed and yielding up the ghost, was gathered unto his people."

H. J. R.

Monrovia. 12th, Sept, 1849.

For the Liberia Herald.

"DATA."

Messrs; Editors.—I beg leave to make a few remarks through your pages in reply to Data. It seems that in all ages, and in all countries, that men have their enemies, either private or public. No sooner does a man begin to advance in the world than he is beset with clouds and puffs of wind. Let us look at our goverment and see how affairs stand at present. We find all our elections over, and those who the people thought fit to elect was elected, and every body it was supposed, was satisfied. But up comes one gentleman by the name of "Data," like the golden calf among the Israelites to disturb the peace of the people. But we will, like Moses, show the people which is the golden rule. Data has said that there was fraud in the last election; and that it was done by some of the judges. Let us look and see what was dishonestly done by the judges, let us compare Data's exposition with the exposition of our judges, and see how they stand. "Data" says, the votes of all elections held in the Republic are sealed up in a box and sent to the Secretary of State and there counted out, and then the Secretary notifying those who are elected. But what does our law say on the subject; look at page 20, section 1st, it reads, it shall be the daty of the judge to take the supervision of the election and count the tickets and see that they are properly registered, and also to see that the election is conducted according to the provisions of the constitution, and the clerks of elections will register the votes under the direction of the judges. Well Data now will that go? I think you are like the unjust judge was by former about the ox, for when he thought that his bull had killed the farmer's ox, he said he would see about it, but when his ox was dead; he soon began to demand pay. So with Data; when he found himself behind, he began to mutter and cry out ignorant, unjust judges; but they had sense enough before. I wish to know who made these wise magistrates, was they not appointed by honorable men who knew them as well as "Data" do? Data you seem to be very ignorant of the law. I think it becomes all ignorant men, and Data also, to set down and study law before they talk about unjust judges. Poor Data you will have to try it again and see if you can come it. Sir you seem to speak as though you thought our election was to be run over again for the accommodation of one smart man. But we have no monarchal government here—no one man's power like ancient Rome, which if a man got into office who the nobles did not like, he was either belied and banished or poisoned to death—but blessed be God we have passed over that barbarous age, and mode of govrement, and as republicans, we cant call our honest elected members from the house to accommodate one poorp pitiful soul. I never yet found pride in a noble nature nor humility in an unworthy mind. Of all the trees I observe that God choose the vine a low plant that creeps helpless upon a wall—of all the beasts, the soft and patient lamb—of all the fowls, the mild and guileless dove. When God appeared to Moses it was not in a lofty cedar nor in the study oak, nor in the spreading palm, but, in a bush, an humble slender object bush, as if he would by such selections check the arrogance of man. Nothing procureth love like humility—nothing hate like pride.

"AGAIN."

A factory proprietor posted up the following notice:

'I will admit no segars nor good looking men within these walls. One sets a flame among the cotton, and the other among the gals.'

"It is inconceivable," says a German writer, "what a power God has given to the human voice, when rightly employed, and poured forth in a simple and sustained flow."

Maryland Historical Society

The Maryland State Colonization Society Papers

XII. Newspapers
B. Liberia Herald

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