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AN EULOGY

ON

JOHN ADAMS,

AND

THOMAS JEFFERSON;

PRONOUNCED BY REQUEST

OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF ALBANY,

AT THE

PUBLIC COMMEMORATION OF THEIR DEATHS,

HELD IN THAT CITY,

ON MONDAY THE 31st OF JULY, 1826.

BY WILLIAM ALEXANDER DUER.

ALBANY:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL OBSERVER.

.....
1826

IN COMMON COUNCIL, }
ALBANY, 31st July, 1826. }

Resolved, unanimously, That the thanks of this board be presented to his honour WILLIAM A. DUER, for the excellent eulogiac Oration on the occasion of the death of the Patriots, JOHN ADAMS and THOMAS JEFFERSON, delivered by him this day at the request of the Common Council ; and that the Committee of Arrangements wait upon him with this resolution, and solicit a copy for publication.

[Extract from the minutes.]

P. HOCHSTRASSER, *Clerk.*

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AN EULOGY, &c.

NEVER, Americans, since we became a people, has any portion of our countrymen convened on an occasion more impressive and interesting than the present. But a few weeks ago, we united with our fellow-citizens from one end of this vast continent to the other, to celebrate in our respective spheres, the jubilee of our freedom; and whilst in the temple of the living God, we poured forth our thanks to him for the blessing; or at the festive board, recalled the names, and recounted the deeds, of the men most instrumental in producing it; the two veteran statesmen, the most eminent amongst the surviving patriarchs of the Revolution; who, next to Washington, had in succession held the highest station in the government; each, in his turn, like him, receiving it, as the best reward

the people could bestow ; both these illustrious patriots, on the same day, within a few hours of each other, and at the completion of the fiftieth year, since they had together signed that declaration, from which their country dates its independence ; both in extreme old age, (as if their lives had been preserved to consecrate that day,) were, by the gentlest and most similar transitions, removed from this earthly scene, and with equal tranquility, each yielded his immortal spirit to the HAND that gave it.

In this splendid coincidence of events, my countrymen ; in this unparalleled concurrence of stupendous circumstances ; what candid and enlightened mind, what grateful and ingenuous heart, hesitates to acknowledge an omniscient and benignant Providence ? Or, who fails to perceive, from the position or prospects of his own, or of some other country, a purpose worthy the interposition of a superintending Deity ? Had either of these great and venerable men been summoned to the world of spirits, on the day that both departed ; or had they, on any other day, expired together ; it would, in either case, have seemed sufficient to excite our wonder. By some, it would have been hailed as an omen of good fortune ; and received by others, as a demonstration of divine regard. But is there one amongst us, who, when he heard it rumoured that the two most conspicuous of the three remaining signers of the Declaration of

Independence, and the last survivors of those deputed to prepare it ; that Adams and Jefferson had both died on the jubilee anniversary of the day that declaration issued : Is there one, I ask, who did not distrust the rumour as too marvellous to be true ? And when the report was in every minute particular confirmed, is there one here, who believed these combined occurrences to be the effect of chance ? No ! fellow-citizens ! There is not one ; there are none such here, or elsewhere to be found. The coldest sceptic must have ceased to doubt, and the daring infidel must have begun to fear, that there is an eternal, self-existent God, who, with wisdom inscrutable, and immeasurable power, controuls the fate of individuals, and overrules the destiny of nations.

Under the influence of such feelings, friends and fellow-countrymen, have we assembled in this sacred place ; not to lament, but to commemorate our dead ; to contemplate the example of their lives ; and to expatiate on the sublime moral their lives and deaths have both afforded us.

No true American, capable of reflection, can meditate upon the events of the last half century, without feeling that his country has enjoyed the peculiar favor of the Supreme Governor of the World. At the commencement of that period, our immediate ancestors began to reap the fruits of that constancy and perseverance by

which their fathers "in the old time before them," had been induced to seek, in the wilds of this newly discovered continent, an asylum from religious and political intolerance.

They had subdued the forest in the vicinity of the shores where their forefathers had landed. They had explored the rivers piercing the interminable hills which seemed ranged as barriers against their progress to the west. They had penetrated to the fertile plains beyond the sources of those rivers, and had discovered others emptying into inland seas connected with each other, skirting the northern borders, and stretching to the western confines of the land; and they had visited the mighty cataract, where the accumulated waters have overthrown the mountain wall, and forced their passage to the ocean.

Apprised thus of the natural benefits of their situation, they had not merely become reconciled to their lot, but rejoiced that their fathers had taken refuge in this land of promise. Even the good old pilgrims of the former race, had confessed that their "lines had fallen in pleasant places," and had ceased to regret the comforts and refinements of European civilization. Their sons had never known their sacrifices or their privations; and Time, the great peacemaker, had obliterated the remembrance of their fathers' wrongs. For themselves, they enjoyed a complete toleration in all matters of religion,

and the essentials of political and civil liberty had in practice been allowed to them.

Rapidly increasing in numbers, they were already strong enough to defend themselves against the hostile tribes still lurking within their territories; and to repel the invasions of more civilized enemies, from a bordering province. They had acquired experience in war. At home, they had secured peace; and were steadily advancing in agriculture and all the useful arts of civil and domestic life. Abroad, they had pursued a commerce, which, though restricted by the jealous spirit of colonial monopoly, was the more profitable from their freer intercourse with their sister colonies in the islands, and from their almost exclusive possession of the great fisheries on their own coasts.

To improve these advantages, they were blessed with industry, frugality, enterprise, and intelligence; and with equal probity and skill, they availed themselves of all their physical and moral resources, to acquire wealth and honor, prosperity and happiness. Nor were their efforts fruitless; for they had already become rich and powerful enough to excite the cupidity, and alarm the jealousy of the mother country. A revenue was attempted to be drawn from them, by the paramount authority of a British Parliament. But though well disposed to bear their fair proportion of the public burdens, when constitutionally required, the future founders of the

American Republic were as resolute to withhold the contribution even of a nominal sum, when exacted by a legislature in which they were not represented. It was the principle for which they contended. The inseparable connection between taxation and representation, was maintained by them as a fundamental axiom; and sooner than compromise their unalienable right to the enjoyment of their private property without surrendering the smallest portion of it for public purposes, except by their own consent; the descendants of Hampden, of Russell, and of Sidney, and the disciples of Milton, of Harrington, and of Locke, were prepared to stake all they possessed on the issue of resistance. The great Charter of English liberty they claimed as their birth-right; its immortal vindicators, as their ancestors; and notwithstanding their affection for the land to which they owed their origin and laws; notwithstanding their attachment to the nation with whom they claimed a common language and descent; they deliberately resolved, rather than submit to usurpation, to sever the ties which held them in allegiance to a parent government, and connected them in friendship with a kindred people.

In the struggle which ensued, it was soon apparent upon whom the mantles of the great Apostles of English liberty had fallen; for in the American Congress were collected individuals, not only worthy of the blood of the martyrs

from which they had sprung, but whose wisdom and fortitude, whose virtue and eloquence would have shed a lustre on the brightest days of Greece or Rome. So true is it, that great occasions produce the talents equal to their exigencies; or, rather, so true is it, my countrymen, that the all-bounteous Ruler of the Universe, whenever he purposes to exalt a nation, calls forth the faculties of his intellectual creatures, in correspondence with the great design.

In this august assembly, Adams and Jefferson were amongst the most conspicuous. They came as the respective delegates of the two Provinces at that time the most important in the Confederacy; and the most forward and resolute in the assertion of their rights. Hand in hand they had approached the contest; and hand in hand, and in the foremost rank, appeared their chosen sons, worthy and fit to represent them. The one descended from intrepid sufferers for conscience' sake; the other sprung from a gayer and chivalric race of bold adventurers for fame and freedom. Both were in "the prime and vigor of their manhood," and each was distinguished for natural endowments, as well as for extensive acquirements; for strength of understanding, solidity of judgment, firmness of principle, liberality of sentiment, and rectitude of intention and of conduct. They met on high, but equal ground; and seem to have been drawn together by sympathy of character as well as of

opinions. They were members of the same profession, and had pursued it in that liberal and honorable spirit, by which the study and practice of the law tend to enlarge the capacity of the mind, as well as to sharpen and invigorate its faculties. From principle, both were inflexible, devoted patriots ; by intuition, if not by education, statesmen. The one was an orator ; the other a philosopher : and if Adams had attained more celebrity for eloquence, Jefferson was more highly estimated for the written productions of his genius. If the former possessed greater practical knowledge of affairs, the latter was richer in the resources of speculative wisdom ; and whatsoever quality or acquisition appeared deficient in the one, was to be found in the character or talents of the other ; so that between them, they combined every requisite which, at the impending crisis, could render their services so useful, so inestimable to their country.

And most auspiciously were those services united on that momentous occasion, when Congress, having drawn the sword, determined to throw away the scabbard, and were about to resolve, that "the United Colonies" were, "and of right ought to be, free and independent States." Then it was, that Jefferson and Adams were associated with Franklin, Sherman, and Livingston, to prepare a solemn declaration, announcing and justifying that determination to

the world. The two former were deputed by their colleagues, to perform the office ; and an amicable contest ensued between them, in which each pressed upon the other, the honorable task of drawing up the document. Adams finally prevailed ; and thus the duty of composing it, devolved on Jefferson.

Never was public trust more ably or satisfactorily performed. The declaration thus produced, established the lasting fame of its author, as a scholar, a statesman, and a patriot : for its principles were sound and enlightened ; its statements forcible and clear ; its style animated, nervous, and impressive ; its tone calm, dignified and firm ; and above all, it responded in language and sentiment to the voice and feelings of the nation. As a public measure, its immediate effects were decisive ; and its beneficial consequences are not yet to be estimated. It disarmed the treacherous ; it rallied the faithful and the bold ; it encouraged the timid, confirmed the dubious ; and it pledged the lives and fortunes, and the sacred honor of the people, as well as of their representatives, to maintain the rights and principles it had asserted. It secured our own freedom ; and offered to the oppressed of other nations, and of other times, an example, as well as precepts, which never will be lost on them. It gave the first impulse to the protracted struggle for liberty in France. Its spirit once animated

the patriots of Spain ; and will awaken them again. It still lives in their descendants in our southern continent, and cheers the last lingering hopes of Greece ; and will yet revive them ! Yes, fellow-countrymen ! the principles proclaimed in the Declaration of American Independence, have not only produced their fruits on this wide continent, and been disseminated on the wastes of Europe ; but before the revolution of another jubilee, they will take root and flourish in every soil and climate under heaven ! The march of Light, of Knowledge, and of Truth is irresistible, and Freedom follows in their train ! Well, then, did your Adams, at the time, predict the rising glories of the day it issued ; and well did your Jefferson, on his bed of death, pray but to witness once more its recurrence, and with his latest sigh, breathe forth his gratitude for the unexampled blessing !

Such, fellow-citizens, is the imperfect sketch the occasion permits, of the connected services of Jefferson and Adams, at the era of Independence ; and such the transient view that time allows, of the effects and promise of their joint exertions. Although afterwards transferred to different scenes, their separate efforts were in proportion honorable to themselves as individuals, advantageous to their country, and important to mankind. For the residue of the war, Adams was employed as the representative of the infant Republic, at various European courts ;

in negotiating loans to provide sustenance for its armies, and in forming alliances to aid the cause in which they were engaged. In both these objects he was successful ; nor were his labors intermitted until he had co-operated in concluding that treaty by which the independence of this country was finally acknowledged by Great Britain ; and the two nations, who had been declared "enemies in war," had "in peace" become "friends."

During this interval, Jefferson had returned to his native State ; and after having been engaged by public authority, in revising and digesting its laws, and conforming their provisions to the liberal spirit of the new government, he was, at a most critical period, elected its chief magistrate. Having successfully co-operated with our national friend, and late national guest La Fayette, in delivering his State from invasion, he returned at the expiration of his executive office, once more to its legislature ; and devoted what leisure the intermission of his public duties allowed him, to the composition of his "Notes on Virginia ;" that work on which his reputation in literature and science is principally founded. It was not long, however, before he was again delegated to the Continental Congress ; and that body, with its characteristic discernment, soon resolved to engage the talents of Jefferson as well as of Adams, in the diplomatic service of their country.

By another of those remarkable coincidences which have distinguished their public lives, both were named in the commission to negotiate the peace with Great Britain ; and Jefferson was only prevented by an accidental detention, from uniting with Adams in the signature of the Treaty. They were, however, subsequently joined in arranging terms of commercial intercourse, with the maritime powers of Europe ; and were ultimately settled as resident plenipotentiaries, at its two principal courts ; Adams at London, and Jefferson in France.

In those respective stations they remained, until, upon the adoption of the present Constitution, they were both recalled from Europe. The one to occupy, under Washington, the second office in the national government ; and the other to superintend the important department of its foreign affairs. During his residence in England, Adams had published his "Defence of the American Constitutions," in answer to the attacks of certain British writers, on those of the states severally, and upon the old confederation. From some of the doctrines advanced in this work, Jefferson was supposed to dissent ; but as the new Constitution had been formed in their absence, they had neither of them taken part in the public discussions to which it had given rise, and which had not yet subsided. Their personal feelings, therefore, had never been implicated in that controversy ; although it was well under-

stood that they entertained different views in regard to the new Confederation: and subsequent events rendered it more clearly manifest, that, whilst the Vice-President fully approved of the federal system as it had gone into operation, that scheme of government was not, in every respect, conformable to the opinions of the Secretary of State. The latter, nevertheless, as well as the former, gave a fair and efficient support to the administration of Washington; and the official correspondence, which he conducted upon the most embarrassing and delicate questions which arose under it, afforded the complete vindication of its most important and most contested measures. Apprehensive, however, of future disagreement with his colleagues, Jefferson honourably withdrew from his office before Washington had left the government; and carried with him into a retirement which he long had coveted, the undiminished confidence of the Father of his Country, the unbounded attachment of his friends, and the universal respect and esteem of his fellow-citizens. Nor was he drawn from his retreat, until called to the chair which Adams had left vacant, upon his elevation to the seat of Washington.

The former colleagues and associates had now become rivals, and were claimed as the respective heads of the two great parties into which their country was divided. The relative

strength and numbers of these parties were nearly balanced ; their confidence was equal ; their zeal unabated ; and though Adams had prevailed in the first general contest between them, Jefferson was successful in the last. A complete transfer of political power was the consequence. But notwithstanding the warfare between the parties had seemed to threaten the peace of the nation, no violent change of measures, or of system followed, to put to hazard its permanent welfare : And those who had apprehended this result, if not blinded by fear or prejudice, were soon persuaded that neither the existence of the government was to be endangered, the security it afforded impaired, nor its essential principles of administration altered.

So far as the prevailing differences of opinion had arisen from a contrariety of views in regard to the federal Constitution, so far indeed were they founded in a difference of principle. But much of this original discord had been harmonized by compromises in the frame and structure of the government itself, by the spirit in which it was administered, or by actual changes of sentiment wrought by the convictions of experience ; whilst the more violent and direct conflict of political sentiment bore reference to the war existing at the time in Europe, and being thus temporary in its nature, subsided with the cause in which

it had originated. Before the close of Jefferson's administration, Adams had expressed his approbation of the course of policy pursued by his successful competitor ; and the disciples and successors of Jefferson recurred to those measures of his predecessor, of which experience had demonstrated the wisdom or the necessity. Between the venerable chiefs themselves, a mutual confidence was re-established ; and from their respective retirements they maintained at intervals a friendly correspondence, terminating only with their lives.

Thus these illustrious Statesmen not only survived the causes by which they had been so long and widely separated ; but lived to revive the sympathies, and realize the hopes, which had united them in early life ; to witness the triumph of those principles for which they had mutually contended ; and to enjoy in the reputation, prosperity, and union of their country, the reward of those services, which, whether in concert or apart, they both had rendered it. And when they died, as if Heaven had deigned to approve those services, and hallow that reward, they died together ! How mysterious ! yet how merciful the event ! And what an instructive spectacle do not we, my countrymen, present, who are here with one accord assembled, to pay the last sad tribute to their worth ! We, who participated in the exasperated passions and

fierce contentions by which they were once separated and estranged ; who were arrayed under their respective banners, friend against friend, and brother against brother, now here united heart and voice, to solemnize with equal rites, their common obsequies !

Such deaths as theirs, indeed, we cannot mourn ;but come to celebrate, in joy, for the mercy they reveal, in thankfulness for the admonition they impart. The commemoration of events like these ; the contemplation of a scene like this, elevate our thoughts from Earth to Heaven, lead us to look more reverently on the ways of Providence, and point us to the source of every temporal good. They serve to endear the more to us our public institutions, and to assure us of their excellence and stability. They inculcate lessons of forbearance and moderation to regulate our own future conduct, and enforce those precepts of good will and charity to others, which bear the impress of divine authority. Nor are they intended for ourselves alone : The events we celebrate, the spectacle we here present, will have their influence in another land, and swell the bosoms of another People. If these signal coincidences in the lives and deaths of our departed sages ; if the prolonged existence of their sole remaining colleague ; of him who hazarded the richest venture on our independence, and still survives its living monü-

ment ; if these be deemed to indicate a divine approval of the cause of freedom, they hold forth a beacon of encouragement to deserted Greece, sufficient to rouse her from despair ; and though abandoned by surrounding Christendom, the descendants of the warriors of Constantine, will discern afar off in the west, a sign as palpably revealed from Heaven, as that which led their ancestors to victory.

But while we indulge these fervent wishes for the success of others, let us not foster a presumptuous hope, my countrymen, in favour of ourselves. Let us never forget, that in proportion to the benefits bestowed on us, are our obligations and responsibility increased ; and let us endeavor to avoid the dangers incident to too strong a confidence of security. Let us resolve to convert every benignant dispensation to its obvious ends of practical improvement ; and whilst we draw a veil over the frailties of the dead, and cherish the remembrance of their virtues, let us frequently recur to the examples of their lives, and advert to the union of their souls in death. Should the institutions of our country be assailed by intestine violence, or their existence threatened by local jealousies and geographical distinctions, let us revert to the national principles and catholic feelings of the two great chieftains of the North and South ; and remember the auspicious day that blended,

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as we hope, their kindred spirits in their flight
to Heaven. And whilst thus studious to repress
the germs of rising animosities, let the remem-
brance of our past dissensions be buried in the
graves of ADAMS and of JEFFERSON.



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