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DELIVERED IN THE HALL OF REPRESENTATIVES

ON THE

EIGHTH OF JANUARY, 1845.

BEFORE

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AND CITIZENS.

BY JOHN I. CAMPBELL,

OF MARION.

JAMES LUSK, PRINTER.

MDCCCXLV.



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A D D R E S S .

FELLOW CITIZENS—

It is no less our duty than our interest to meet on occasions like the present, and cherish as we may deem best, the events which adorn the pages of our country's history. For such a purpose we are here to-day : here the storm and strife of party warfare should not be seen ; here the spirit of discord may not enter ; but dropping for this day those differences of feeling and opinion which always attend the energies and actions of freemen in the pursuit of happiness, and the adoption of the means to secure it ; we gather around our country's altar, and lay our gifts upon it with the deep emotions of patriotism and gratitude which fill the heart as we contemplate some deed of valor, or some signal blessing bestowed upon us. It is well for us that we can with little effort link ourselves with the past, move in its scenes, catch its soul-stirring animations, bring around us its toils, its dangers, and its triumphs : and with equal ease can we reach in fancy the dark unrevealed future, and combining the lessons and spirit of the one, with the anticipations of the other, cause them all to bear upon the present with many practical results. To-day, we seem connected with the past in feeling, suffering, and sympathy, and with the future, by the influence which our actions must have upon it. All that is good in our institutions—all that has been built up by the wisdom of our fathers—all that has been won by their valor, is committed to our care, and the love we bear our country, the firmness and fidelity with which we cherish and preserve the sa-

ered trust, will tell with fearful interest upon the destinies of those who shall succeed us.

This trust is one of mighty magnitude. Over other governments the wave of revolution may roll with desolating and destructive influence, and the result may be, the transfer of the jewelled crown from the head of one prince, or tyrant, to that of another, whilst the condition of the people may be the same, the fetters as strong, and the practical elevation and freedom of the mass be as little and as nominal as before the revolution commenced. But with us this cannot be; our land is already the home of the free, our government is the practical and successful experiment of man's capability to govern himself. We hold out the light, that like the pillar of fire, guides the friends of freedom in every land. By the kindness and direction of an overruling Providence every circumstance that would tend to raise man to his highest dignity, and promote his highest happiness, may be seen by him who attentively reads the history of these States.

It may be well for us to look back, and briefly allude to some of the great leading causes which led to the establishment of our Union, and the secret of that success which followed the efforts of our ancestors. And first, those men whose influence was most sensibly felt by the colonies, had been schooled in adversity, had suffered under oppression in almost every form—had been forced to sever every tie that bound them to their native land, to leave home, kindred, country, and friends, to enjoy the unquestionable right of conscience. There was in them no hatred to a well regulated government; no settled disregard of law; no want of respect for the rights of others—but an ardent love of freedom leading them almost certainly to the maintenance of free institutions. With these feelings, principles, and desires; with this character some of them left their native land, and trusting themselves in their frail bark to a stormy sea, sought a home in our land. But more than this, they were deeply versed in the purest morality, eminent for ardent piety, lovers of learning, and anxious to promote the best interests of man.

The moment they touched our soil they bound themselves in a solemn compact to secure equal rights and laws—freedom of

speech and conscience, and every right that belongs to independent man. Active in the dissemination of knowledge—the basis of all good and free institutions—they erected school houses, reared up temples, cultivated the arts, and commenced the formation of that character and those habits which alone fit a people for the blessings of freedom.

The influence of such a people may be seen as we trace still further down the history of these colonies, we shall find that step by step, as they increased in wealth, power, and numbers, were the undeniable blessings of a well regulated government, fostered by those who were wise enough to understand them, virtuous enough to appreciate them, and bold enough to defend them.

The influence of these Pilgrims was greatly felt by all who then formed the colonies; and when at a yet later period, the oppression of the mother country, forced them into the movements which preceded the Revolution, we find the full power of such a people as I have described. We see not the wild outbreaks of anarchy; not the hasty movements of an ill regulated lawless multitude, but the cautious arrangements of the wise in council, the patriotic in heart, of men who had tasted the blessings of liberty.

At this trying hour, the freedom of the people depended greatly upon the steps then taken, the measures then adopted. We needed just then, men pure, disinterested, unambitious of any fame other than that which had for its base the freedom of their country; and such we found—unlike the leaders of other revolutions—wisely and prudently, yet fearlessly, did they move onward until the eventful struggle commenced. They entered it weak in all the resources of war, but the kindled ardor of a freeman's heart. Soon there arose one among them, unlike the heroes of other days, and fully prepared to lead on such a people as then formed the colonies—ono, whose fame is graven upon every patriot heart, in whom valor and wisdom, virtue, integrity, and patriotism blended their highest excellence. Placing himself at the head of our armies, he led them on to a glorious triumph.

To whom in the long annals of history was ever given such

immense power, as was given to Washington, and the gift not made a curse to those who gave it.

The Revolution past, the nation free—the character—the peculiar character of our people, was thoroughly tested in subsequent events. The independence we had won would avail us little unless some government could be formed which would secure its blessings. The tented field was deserted, and the council chamber filled. The same people to which I have called your attention were there. There was no grasping after emoluments and honors; those who had nobly won the first, and well deserved the latter, placed them upon the altar of their country. Here was no sectional, narrow feeling that looked to the interest of party, at the expense of the whole; but forgetting self, and acting for the interest—the highest interest—of all the colonies, they formed the confederation.

Let us follow these noble men further, and witness still further developments of their peculiar fitness to raise up and sustain the glorious institutions which to-day are ours. As time passed on and the country began to realize, more and more, the pressure produced by the revolution, and the true condition and interests of the colonies, it was thought best by these watchful patriots to draw yet closer the ties of our union, by forming a new constitution. And here see once more, and more strikingly, perhaps, than ever, the effect of all the causes favorable to our country, about which I have before spoken. Here were assembled Washington, Madison, Franklin, and a host of others, tried in the hour that tried men's souls. Watch for a moment their progress; look at the conflicting interests to be reconciled; see the deep intensity of interest felt by every lover of his country. What a feeling of harmony and patriotism reigns in that body; how every grant of power from the people is watched, guarded; how the interests of large and small States are equalized and adjusted; how every feeling of discord is quelled; and how at last, the glorious result of all their anxious thoughts and collected wisdom is submitted to the people, and by them accepted, in the form of our present constitution. Almost as soon as it went into operation its benign and blessed influence was felt in every portion of our growing and widely extended country. The rich but hidden resources of our govern-

ment were rapidly developed ; the spirit of freedom, the intellect, gave new impulse to the energy and industry of our land. Commerce and the arts dispensed their blessings, our cities sprung up as by magic, population increased, the forest fell before the bold and hardy pioneer, wealth poured into our treasury ; our credit was restored ; in short, the full rich blessings of peace and happiness were ours.

But these halcyon days were soon to pass. The power whose fetters our fathers had broken, looked upon us with the spirit of revenge, avarice, and jealousy, and soon commenced again the work of insult and oppression. Seeking peace at any expense, save that of honor, we took up arms, once more to contend with the acknowledged mistress of the world.

I cannot dwell, as I would delight to do, upon the incidents of this struggle, as history records them. It will better suit our present purpose to recur to that brilliant event we this day commemorate. In doing so, I may perhaps be pardoned, familiar as are the scenes of this great victory, if I detain you with a brief history of it, drawn mostly from one of our most graphic historians.

A short time after the capture of Pensacola, it was evident that formidable preparations were making for an invasion of Louisiana. About the 15th of September, Clairborne, Governor of Louisiana, ordered the two divisions of Louisiana militia, the first under Gen. Thomas, the second under Gen. Villiere, to hold themselves in readiness to march at a moment's warning. Louisiana had felt as yet but little of the war, except upon her commerce and agriculture. The French—mild and gentle in their disposition, had paid but little attention to it, and the militia outside the city could scarcely be said to be organized ; nothing short of invasion could arouse them. The city was better prepared, relying much upon themselves, and expecting little aid from the General Government, they manifested some zeal in preparing to meet the invador. Their great security was found in the nature of the surrounding country ; and yet they had reason for the alarm so generally felt, for, as it respected men, arms, and military works, they were in a most defenceless condition. The Legislature, though in

session, had as yet done nothing. They greatly needed at this time some master spirit to direct their destinies and save them from impending ruin. At this time, that master spirit came, quick in thought, bold and daring in execution, with heart and energies devoted to his country. General Jackson, who had left Mobile at the first tidings of danger, reached New Orleans on the 2nd day of December. Every heart felt joy, every eye flashed with confidence at his approach. Without a moment's delay, and with the eye of an accomplished and gallant seldier, every position was examined and fortified. The Legislature at his call granted him aid. About a thousand regulars were placed in the city, and the Tennessee troops, under Coffee and Carroll, were distributed at the most vulnerable points. These hasty arrangements were scarcely finished before intelligence was received that the British fleet, consisting of at least sixty sail, was off the coast on the east of the Mississippi. Commodore Patterson now despatched a flotilla of gun-boats, under the command of Lieutenant Jones, to watch the movements of the enemy. Soon they were seen in such force at the entrance of Lake Borgne, that Jones determined to make sale for the passes of Lake Ponchartrain to oppose the entrance of the enemy there. On the 14th of December, while becalmed, this flotilla was attacked by nearly forty barges, carrying twelve hundred men, and after a gallant struggle with such fearful odds, surrendered. This loss was severely felt: the enemy could now choose his point of attack, and the Americans were deprived of the means of watching them. But the firm heart of Jackson failed not at slight difficulties like this. Placing a battalion under Major Lacoste, together with the Feliciana dragoons, he ordered them to take post so as to defend the Gentilly road leading to the city, and the passes from Lake Borgne to lake Ponchartrain, while Capt. Newman was ordered to defend to the last extremity, the only other channel between these two lakes. Other active and energetic means and modes of defence were adopted, which I need not here detail. There was a channel connected with Lake Borgne which, though known to few, had not escaped the vigilant eye of the commander. He had ordered it to be obstructed. A small

force was placed there, but its obstruction was forgotten or neglected.

On the 22d of December, guided by some fishermen, a division of the enemy, under Gen. Kean, came suddenly upon the American guard and took them prisoners. At about 4 o'clock in the morning, they had reached the commencement of Villiere's canal, and satisfied with their advantage, rested for a few hours. Soon afterward they surrounded the house of Gen. Villiere, who fortunately escaped, and communicated the intelligence at head-quarters. Quick as thought, Jackson determined to attack him. It was enough for him to know that the foot of the foe pressed his country's soil. In an hour's time the riflemen, under Coffee, the regulars and city volunteers were ready to march. The Caroline, under Capt. Henly, dropped down the river, and the Louisiana, under Thompson, was soon to follow. The order of battle was soon arranged. Coffee was ordered to turn their right, and attack them in the rear. General Jackson with the main body assailed them in front and on the left. The signal of attack was a fire from the Caroline. It was now night, and the enemy's fires were seen; thus directed, the action commenced by a raking broadside from the Caroline. At this moment Coffee's men rushed with impetuosity to the attack, while the troops under Jackson advanced with equal ardor. The enemy thus surprised, with the cool bravery of English soldiers, extinguished their lights and formed, but not before hundreds had been killed and wounded. A thick fog rising at this time, and a misunderstanding of instructions, caused confusion in our ranks, and induced Gen. Jackson to call off his troops. Yet they laid upon the ground that night, and the next morning retired to a position about two miles nearer the city.

In this battle the gallant Lauderdale, of Tennessee, fell; the enemy's loss was very considerable, and ours small. With ceaseless energy, Jackson fortified his new position; nor were the enemy idle: erecting batteries, they set fire to and blew up the Caroline, and the Louisiana was only saved by the greatest exertion and skill of her commander.

On the 28th of December, another attack was made with a de-

sign to drive General Jackson into the city ; but in this the enemy were repulsed. Again, on the first of January, the enemy were repulsed by the bravery and well directed fire of our troops. Things were now rapidly approaching a crisis.

On the 4th new hope and spirit were imparted to our army by the arrival of 2500 Kentuckians. They had hastened to the scene, and though worn down, and a great number of them unarmed ; they gathered such arms as were to be found, and were ready to battle in their country's cause. At this time the British were reinforced by the arrival of 4000 troops, under Gen. Lambert.

The last, the decisive effort was now to be made. On the 7th the foe had made a water communication from the swamp to the Mississippi. On our side, things were in a state of readiness to receive them.

And here, fellow citizens, permit me, before I notice the event which followed, to dwell about that scene, to mingle with the feelings of our gallant army, and with the feelings of him who so ably and successfully commanded it. Who can describe the feelings of that noble band. Before them was a well disciplined army, commanded by able and experienced officers, accustomed to triumph, superior in numbers, bold and daring, and urged on by every passion, promise and appeal. Behind them were their homes, wives, children, and friends ; in their hands were placed for a time, the destinies of their loved, their native land, yea, liberty itself. How throbb'd their hearts, as the thought came rushing o'er their spirits—shall our country and our homes be saved, or shall we find a soldier's grave o'er which yon host shall march. Shall kindred, country, all be lost, or shall we send up the shout of victory over those who seek to destroy. Who can tell the firm resolve that swelled every heart and flashed from every eye. Who can picture the hushed, deep stillness of that scene, as there they wait the shock, the rush, the charge of battle. But such were the thoughts and feelings of that brave and patriotic band, how may I tell the deep, intense emotion of him upon whom rested the dreadful responsibility of that dreadful hour ! To him every eye in that faithful band was turned. They had followed

him through many an hour of toil—through many a scene of danger—he knew them well; he loved them much. Yon city with its thousands, awed and hushed, looked to him. His country, through all its vast extent, with strong confidence, but yet with trembling anxiety, turned to him in this trying hour. Country, army, home, freedom, fame—all seemed perilled on the event. Well and deeply did he feel it. With the firm and undaunted coolness of the hero, he moved along his line, and the flash of his eye, the tone of his voice imparted hope, animation, and courage to every heart in that little army.

But the light of the ever memorable Eighth has dawned; the note of preparation is heard; the marshalled columns firm, determined, move slowly on. The eye of our commander is fixed upon them; the work of death must soon commence. How feels that chief now? Ah! could we read his heart, his earnest, unuttered prayer would he—

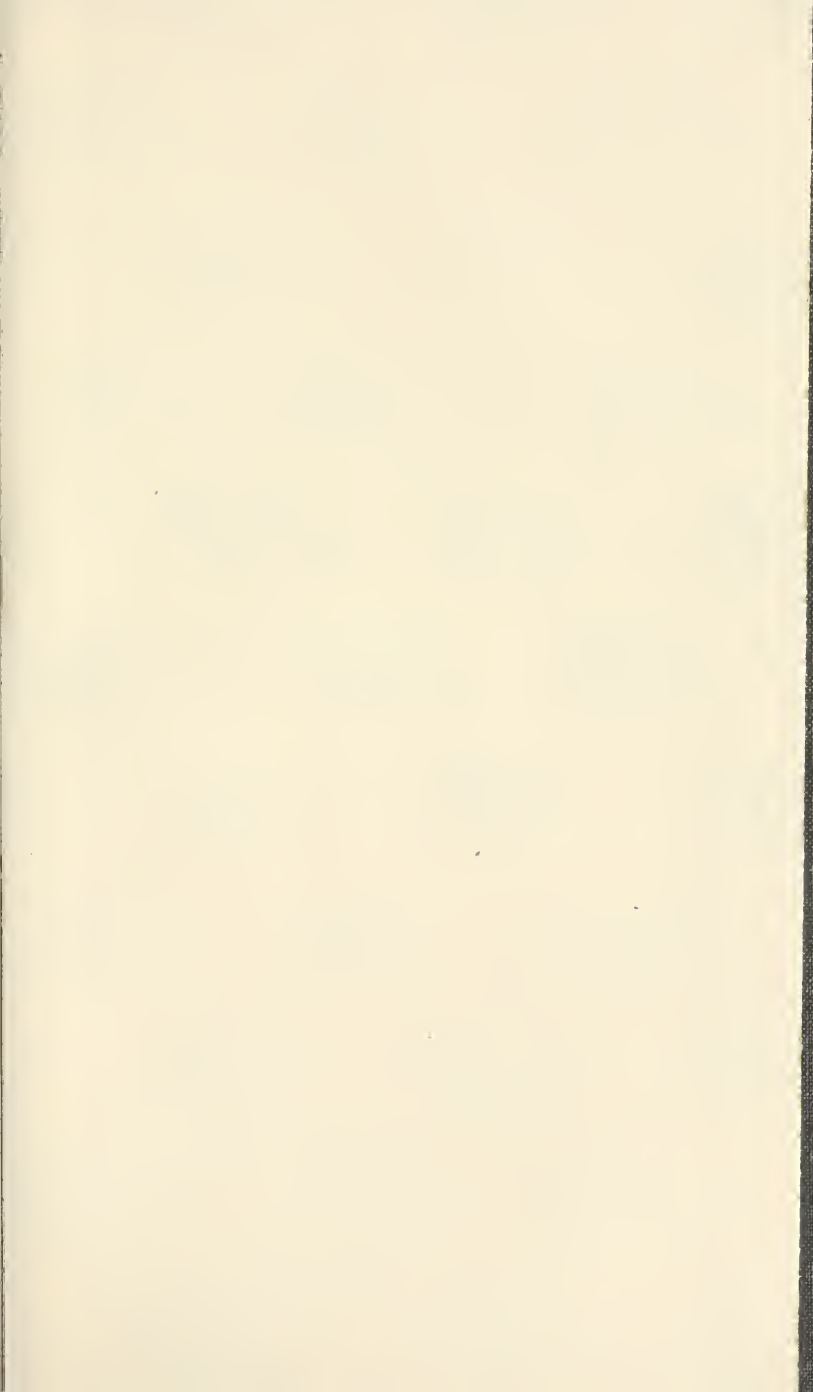
Oh! Heaven, my bleeding country save!
 Is there no hand on high to shield the brave?
 Yet, though destruction sweep these lovely plains,
 Rise, fellow men, our country yet remains.
 In that dread name we wave the sword on high,
 And swear for her to live—with her to die.

But ere the thought is past the pealing thunder of the battle is heard—the wreathing columns of flame flash from his whole line, mowing down with dreadful fatality the columns of the approaching foe. The effect was overwhelming. Broken, disheartened, they retired. An effort is made to rally them. Packingham is at their head, animating and cheering them, and falls in the act, (amid the hundreds of his brave soldiers,) fighting with a bravery and energy worthy of a better cause. Once more these brave and devoted men by Kean and Gibbs are brought forward to feel again the dreadful power which had just slain their friends. Again they give way. Kean and Gibbs are both wounded, their army routed; and, though disaster happened to our army on the right bank of the river, the day was won, the contest finished, victory was ours. The stars and stripes floated in proud triumph over that field of blood. The shout of victory streamed along the American line—the glad city welcomed the returning conqueror, yielding him the

deep gratitude of full hearts for the laurels he had won, and the blessings he had bestowed. And thus, in the language of one of the hero's most eloquent defenders, were breasted the tempestuous waves of a doubtful war; a war which had shaken to its base the massey columns of the hall where it was declared, and razed the capitol to its foundation stone, whilst phrenzied fear bewildered all it met, and red-eyed hate rolled with a satanic smile over the administration of your country—he it was who brought a reputation to your arms and to your country, bright and more bright as the storm lulled away.

Let us, my friends, to whom are committed the destinies in some measure, of a government thus built up, thus defended, catch something of the pure spirit and patriotism of those who preceded us, and throwing aside every narrow and selfish feeling, give to those who shall succeed us, the government under which we live, uninjured by any action of ours, and strong and firm in all that shall make it a blessing to the untold millions that may live under it. Let us remember that the virtue, patriotism, and intelligence that built it up, will at all times be required to preserve it.

But before I conclude, may I not turn again to the man whose name is forever identified with this day. Venerable chief, how thrills thy heart this day! Thirty years have passed since its glory was won, and yet thou livest to behold it once more. To see the nation, for which thou didst peril thy life, great, growing, and prosperous. Thy eventful life is nearly closed; time has written its traces on thy brow; thou standest in the twilight of two worlds. With the storms, contests, and honors of the one thou art nearly done: To the realities of the other thou must soon approach. May the evening of thy life be as calm, as peaceful, and happy, as its morning was stormy and brilliant; and when thy earth-wearied spirit leaves its tenement of clay, may repose and bliss be found in that upper and better world, where war, and strife, and toil forever cease.





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