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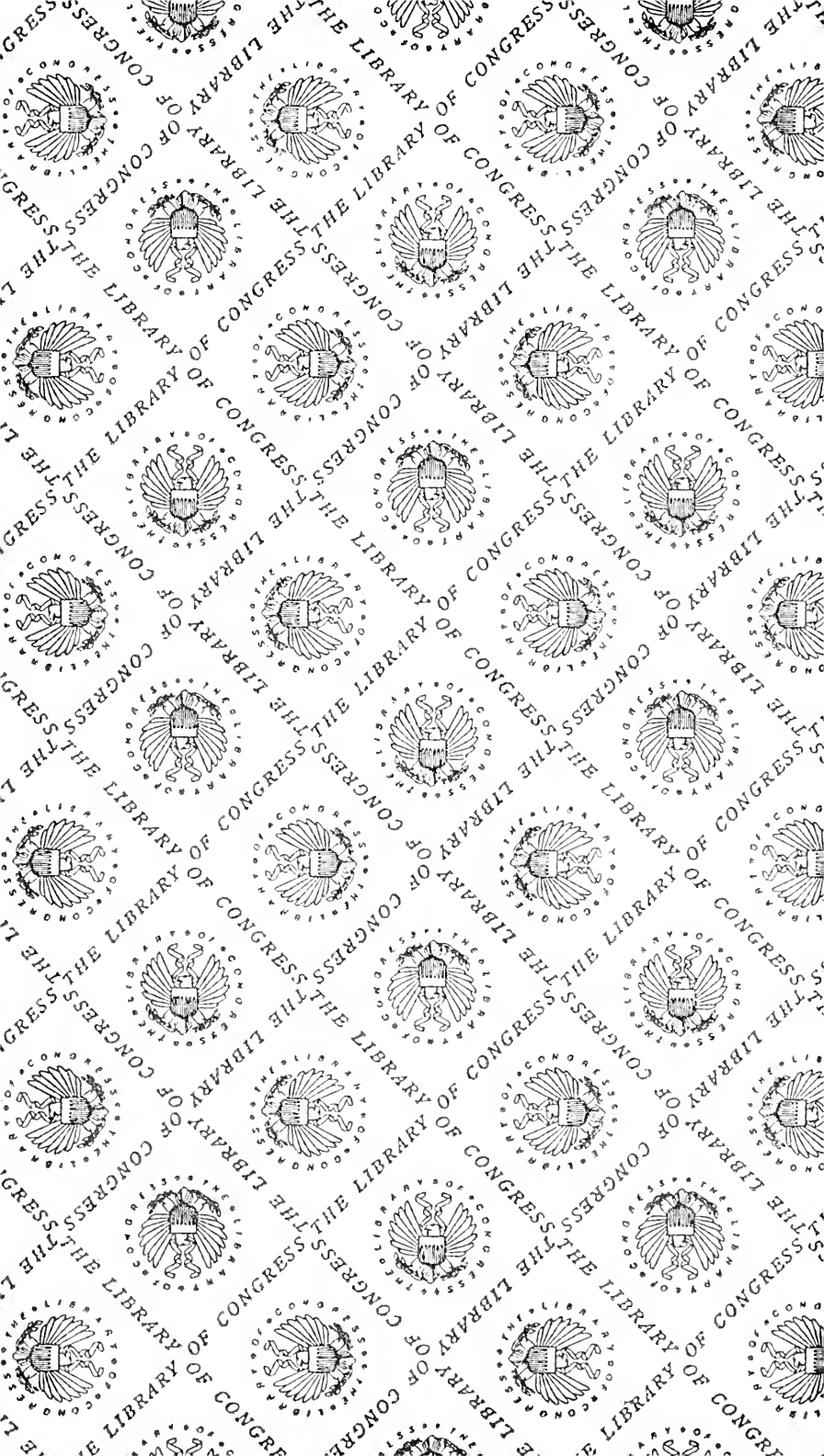
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ORATION

DELIVERED


ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1855,

AT THE CAPITOL,

IN THE HALL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, IN THE CITY OF
WASHINGTON,

BY JAMES MANDEVILLE CARLISLE, ESQ.

Published by the Committee of Arrangements for the National Celebration of that
Anniversary.



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WASHINGTON, D. C., July 5, 1855.

DEAR SIR :

The Committee of Arrangements for the National Celebration of the 4th of July respectfully request you to furnish them, for publication, a copy of your beautiful and patriotic Oration delivered yesterday in the Hall of the House of Representatives.

Very truly,

THOMAS MILLER, M. D., *Chairman.*
JAMES L. EDWARDS,
GEORGE SAVAGE,
GEORGE McNEIR,
JOHN C. FITZPATRICK,
WILLIAM JONES, M. D.,
JOHN F. CALLAN,

Committee of Arrangements.

JAMES M. CARLISLE, Esq.,

Present.

WASHINGTON, July 6, 1855.

GENTLEMEN :

I have the honor to acknowledge your note of yesterday, and to place at your disposal a copy of the Oration of which you are pleased to speak in such kind and flattering terms.

With great respect, gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant,

J. M. CARLISLE.

To DR. THOS. MILLER,

JAMES L. EDWARDS, Esq.,

GEORGE SAVAGE, Esq.,

GEORGE McNEIR, Esq.,

JOHN C. FITZPATRICK, Esq.,

WM. JONES, M. D.,

JOHN F. CALLAN, Esq.,

Committee, &c. &c.

ORATION.

FELLOW-CITIZENS :

OURS IS INDEED A GLORIOUS HERITAGE !

This is the earliest thought, coming with the dawn to awaken and to fill your hearts and mine at each return of this auspicious day. And with it comes the grateful and the reverent impulse to bless and praise Almighty God for all the precious memories and resplendent hopes that, like a thronging company of angels, hasten, and in revolving years shall ever hasten, to attend the gates of light and usher in this brightest morning in the calendar of time !

Yes ! it is a day freighted with the load of ages. It is a day big with the destinies of man. It is a day to which all people, in all time to come, shall ever turn to animate their hopes, to nerve their constancy, invigorate their courage, and confirm their faith, as often as that struggle shall recur which, here begun, shall sooner or later, but still surely and finally extend the blessings of liberty, in some form or other, to every nation and people, and kindred and tongue, even to the utmost limits of the earth.

This must be the work of centuries. But the influences of this day shall pervade them all, and stretch away even to the last syllable of recorded time. For what was in the begin-

ning but the feeble, flickering ray of a distant star has now blazed into a sun, pouring its flood of light over the land and over the sea, warming and cheering the heart of civilized man wheresoever there beats a heart large enough to embrace the love of liberty and deep enough for that devotion which liberty exacts. What was, even within the memory of many here, still a doubtful speculation, or at best an abstract truth, which beyond our own borders was but whispered from mouth to ear, is now a being and a power in the august form of a Republic, whose voice is heard everywhere under the whole canopy of heaven, and wherever heard proclaims the history of which this day is the perpetual and expressive token. >

Now, indeed, all the nations of the earth witness the great fact and acknowledge the sublime reality of a people strong in war, stable in peace, enlightened through all its masses, exhaustless in all the treasures of nature and of art, gigantic and ever growing in its proportions, conscious of its power, self-created, self-existent, self-restrained. The world now knows of a surety that the bountiful Creator has not reserved the trust of government for

“Kings and awful fathers of mankind,”

but has freely bestowed upon the masses of men those powers and capacities which, rightly educated and virtuously directed, make them their own best rulers.

This truth, first deeply planted on this memorable day, shall strike its roots deeper and deeper and stretch its branches higher and wider as time rolls on, until the whole family of nations shall repose under its thrice-blessed shelter. No power on earth can uproot it; no depth of degeneracy can banish it from the memory of man. Heaven-bestowed, like the light of heaven, though clouds and darkness may from

time to time obscure it, it shall ever break forth, again and again, till time shall be no more.

Truly, then, this day belongs not alone to us, but to all the earth; truly, it relates not alone to the past and present, but to the distant and still ever-distant future.

And yet ours alone are its first fruits. To us alone has descended the inheritance of the precious trusts which it brought forth. To us alone it still pertains to guard and cherish what of right belongs to all mankind. How sacred is the priesthood which has been laid upon us! How solemn is our office among the nations! How awful are our relations to the past, the present, and the future! The voices of our fathers, not more than the cry of remote posterity, are even now sounding in my ears. Together they adjure me by all that is forceful on my conscience, by all that is dear to me in life, by all that binds me to my country and my race, by the proud memories which belong to this day and this place, by the graves of those who have gone before me, by my home and hearthstone, by my children and my children's children—they adjure me to be faithful to my trust. They adjure me to remember in every act and word which, in the humblest and strictest sphere, may tend to influence my country's future—to remember, always and everywhere, what inheritance is mine, and how it is entailed to the latest posterity of man. They adjure me to go back to the deep and pure fountains out of which this swelling tide has sprung which now bears us on through ever-widening channels of power and prosperity. They warn me to hold to the faith of the fathers. They admonish me to shun as a fatal pestilence whatever is sectional, whatever is narrow, whatever is less broad and fair than the Union and the Constitution, whatever thrusts itself betwixt man and his Maker, and arrogates the power, by any indirection, to abridge or qualify

his civil rights and privileges because of his religious creed. Alas! that such a warning should even for the passing hour be unheeded by any who have part or lot in this day's memories!

(Fellow-citizens, it is good for us to be here. It is good for us on such occasions as this to revive the sense of those obligations which have fallen upon us as a nation, and on each one of us as a man, who, whether by the course of years passed here in his native land, or through the term prescribed for his adoption, has become one of the active body of the American people, bound to all their duties, joint possessor with them of all their privileges.

It is good for woman to be here. It is good for her from whom must spring the future men of the republic—her on whom it most depends whether their earliest, and thus their latest, impressions shall be such as are becoming in a race of freemen. Oh! if I could win from Heaven one gift most of all fruitful of blessings to my country, it would be the power to inspire the heart of every mother with the noble consciousness that she is indeed a priestess at the altar of her country's freedom. I see the young boy standing at her knee, his face beaming with all his mother's purity and his father's soul, listening with his whole heart to the story, simply told but grand in its simplicity, of which this day is the epitome. I see his young eyes fill and fire; I mark the swelling of his youthful breast, and read upon his fair and candid brow that in him are now sown the seed of the Revolution.

Gentle, pure, noble, sublime mission of the mother! How deeply are impressed on my own heart those simple early lessons, which from that sacred source first taught me the meaning of this hallowed day!

But let us now turn from these thoughts and feelings, so

inseparable from the occasion, and devote some moments to a survey of our rich inheritance. Let us compare its beginning with its increase; and let us not forget to trace that increase to its true sources. It is thus that we may convert the hour not simply to congratulation and thankfulness, but to guidance and instruction.)

We behold, then, at the first glance, a marvellous consummation. (Looking back through a series of years) still within the period of the life of man, we see a result to which, under other circumstances and less favorable influences, as many centuries might not be equal. Behold yonder—even in the days of the childhood of some who are yet lingering among us—(the thirteen colonies, sparsely populated; in active resources apparently poor indeed; separated from each other physically by wildernesses, morally by distinct and independent governments; with no blessed Union, no common bond except the distant mother country; hugging the Atlantic shore, and looking across the broad ocean for all that could give them nationality and presence among States.) Behold the

“Antres vast and deserts idle”

which lie behind them. See in their condition and their prospects all of hopelessness which commonly belongs to the colonial state, aggravated by the power and the will of the strongest master then on earth. Recall the crisis. Witness the patient appeals to reason and remonstrance—the “repeated petitions answered only by repeated injuries.” Then dwell upon every word and letter of that imperishable Declaration, which, with the calm dignity that belonged to so momentous an occasion, and in the apparent consciousness that its language would be repeated for ages, recapitulates its motives, and announces the FACT—whose consequences are yet unfath-

omable—that “these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States.”

Pause here a moment and count the cost of that Declaration. Sum up the blood and treasure which the wise men who published it to the world must have surely estimated as necessary to be poured out in maintaining that position from which there was now no honorable retreat. Place yourselves in imagination in their midst. Look abroad upon the field thus opened, and cast about you for resources. How many hearts would have quailed under that prospect of immense disproportion betwixt the means and end! How many would at best have sunk into a dark and desperate constancy, prepared to perish in the contest, and hoping for nothing better! But not such was the spirit of the Revolution. No gloomy presage of vengeance or of self-immolation presided over its councils. Open as the day, challenging the attention of the world, and looking hopefully to heaven, our fathers gave their banner to the breeze. A dreary wilderness indeed seemed to stretch itself before them; but a Divine inspiration had revealed to them the land of promise. Blessed be God! that he “went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light to go by day and night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people.”

YES! It was even so. No man can look back upon those scenes and not perceive the Almighty hand leading and directing all. Not more surely did it govern the chosen people of old. True, the age of miracles had passed. The sacred mountain and the burning bush no longer attested the presence of the Deity on earth. But to him who sees the providence of God in the course of nations—to him who is not blind to

the relation betwixt this world of ours and its beneficent Creator—it is clear as the morning light, certain as his own life, that Washington was the chosen servant and the gift of God—his eyes ever fixed upon that pillar of the cloud by day, that pillar of fire by night. Test his character by any scale of human greatness, and you will find it immeasurable; try to sound it by any plummet adapted merely for the depths of human motives and human constancy, and it will prove unfathomable. The surging tide of time has borne upon its bosom but one such ark of liberty, proof alike against the storm and sunshine—firm and incorruptible in all time of tribulation, in all time of prosperity. No fitter day than this to dwell upon his virtues, to ponder on his counsels, to recount his deeds; no fitter place—what place so fit as on these consecrated plains, where, when his work was done, he traced his immortal autograph and forever stamped his name?)

It is my part, by the charm-word of that name, to evoke them from your memories, where they are so faithfully preserved. In this audience it were superfluous to do more. In your hearts, as in mine, his history is treasured up; in your hearts, as in mine, his parting words are garnered. When they are forgotten or unheeded the shades of night will have fallen upon our history and our hopes.

We trace our origin as a nation, then, to the special favor of the Giver of every good and perfect gift; and in the life and character of WASHINGTON we learn what are the fitting instruments of such a favor. Kindred virtues, indeed, are piety and patriotism! The soul of man contains nothing larger, nothing nobler. “GOD AND OUR COUNTRY” is a cry which must ever summon up every generous impulse of the heart, every manly quality of daring and devotion.

And now, passing over for the moment the intermediate

time and means, let us see to what point of progress we have reached. How shall it be aptly described? Not in a brief and fugitive discourse like this, but rather in volumes of statistics and libraries of philosophical speculation. If we look to the boundaries of our country, we are astounded at the change. We find her already stretched from ocean to ocean. From the extremest West we are reaching forth the arms of peace and commerce to the furthest East, to gather in

“ ————the wealth of Ormus and of Ind.”

The shores of the Pacific are already alive with the busy hum of commerce, and teeming with all the elements of empire. In the incredibly short space of six years from the period when that great region passed under the government of the Union, the most wonderful revolution has taken place in its whole condition, physical and moral. A fair and beautiful statue, it lay dull and lifeless. Touched by the Promethean spark which sprung from the great event which we now commemorate, it started into life and vigor. The history of the world can furnish no parallel for its progress, and scarcely a spot on the face of the whole habitable globe can promise so imposing a future. Were it not unsuited to an address like this, plain facts and figures from the public archives would be far more impressive than all the power of the most commanding eloquence on such a theme. You have them at hand. Turn to them and see of what marvels our free and happy institutions are capable.

Two oceans, on either hand, now mark our limits; and what so shortly since lay between them a wilderness as trackless and apparently more impassable than any unknown waste of waters is already, in large part, occupied by civilization, and for the rest is traversed with more ease and certainty

than our fathers found in passing through the limits of the thirteen States of the Revolution. Northward and southward, to the lakes and the Gulf, we have spread. Great cities upon the Atlantic border, great cities upon distant rivers and lakes; towns, hamlets, villages, plantations, farms, and thriving frontier settlements have everywhere marked the magnificent progress of the country. Science and the arts, while adding to the sum of human knowledge and treasure throughout the world, have unconsciously contributed to bind together our most widely-separated regions, by instituting a new standard of time and space. Men pass rapidly and securely between our utmost borders. The men of Boston and the men of New Orleans may now converse together almost as face to face with a whole empire lying between them. And beyond our shores,

“Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam.”

our commerce whitens every sea, and the stars of our ensign are familiar as the stars of heaven.

From the less than three millions of souls of the days of the Revolution, we have swollen to nearly ten times that number. Our thirteen States have become one and thirty, with seven organized Territories, besides this Federal District. Our territory has expanded from about eight hundred thousand to largely over three millions of square miles. Our citizen-soldiery of effective men, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, now nearly equal the whole population of men, women, and children, bond and free, on the day when our forefathers pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to the Independence of their country. The Confederation, which nobly served the exigencies of its times, has long since given place to a perfect UNION, which, while it imparts

life and vigor and concedes separate action to every member, has consolidated them all into one gigantic body, conscious of every power of unity and individuality, and yet feeling its just dependence on each and all of its constituents.

To the day of that UNION, to the date of the CONSTITUTION which gave it birth and prescribed the laws of its existence, may we securely trace all that gives us dignity and power among the nations of the earth; all that has given us such unexampled growth in everything that constitutes a State; all that warrants an equal progress for the future; all that this day showers upon all our people throughout all the land every blessing which human government can make or mar. From the time of the Union and the Constitution, the national and State statistics show, in every element of national grandeur, an unparalleled progression. The powers granted to the Federal Government have been proven by experience to be not only necessary to national unity, but in themselves, when wisely administered, the highest and most fruitful sources of national increase and prosperity. Whether in regard to our relations to the rest of the world, or with reference to our internal development, no thoughtful and considerate man can doubt that this Union and this Constitution are not only the sources of our present power, security, and happiness as a people, but are the sure pledges and the indispensable conditions of their duration in the future.

And now let us inquire what have been the chief agents of this Union and this Constitution, under the Supreme Ruler of Nations, in bringing us to our present state in this amazingly brief period of time.

How can we better approach such an investigation than by asking first, with the often quoted thought of the poet, so beautifully rendered into English:

“ What constitutes a State ?

Not high rais'd battlements or labored mound,

Thick wall or moated gate ;

Not cities proud, with spires and turrets crown'd :

Not bays and broad arm'd ports,

Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride ;

Not starr'd and spangled courts,

Where low-brow'd baseness wafts perfume to pride.

No!—MEN, high-minded MEN,

* * * * *

Men who their duties know,

But know their rights, and knowing, dare maintain.”

Here lies the grand secret. Ages ago, at creation's dawn, this broad continent, then, as now, bore in its bosom every element of greatness, except that without which all its vast resources were counted dead, all its exhaustless treasures nothing worth. MEN! MEN! MEN! These constitute a State.

Then, as now, two mighty oceans washed these shores. Then, as now, broad fields and mighty rivers, inland seas, great harbors, mountains of mineral wealth, and valleys teeming with all the rich luxuriance of varied nature lay within these borders. But all these were but the means and instruments for MEN.

Our progress is the product of our population. To the extraordinary increase of our people—an increase to which the natural growth of nations has never even distantly approached—to this is due, more than to all other sources combined, our present happy, secure, and dignified position. Not even the unthinking fanatic who, blindly pursuing a phantom, is loudest in his acclamations to the wretched delusion of the hour, can still be blind to this significant fact, once placed prominently before him. It is a truth so obvious and so trite as almost to demand some apology for its reproduction here. The natural growth of population, nowhere on the face of the

earth, at any time, has been equal in the most remote degree to emulate these results. No one will seriously pretend it. Nor will any man not utterly besotted presume to deny that our prosperity and power have kept even pace with our population, and that our population has outstripped the career of all other nations in that respect, solely because of the unprecedented immigration which we have invited and obtained.

And how have we invited and obtained it? Not simply by throwing open our ports to the craven spirits of every land, content, for the privilege of being hewers of wood and drawers of water, to be among us, but not of us. Not by this, nor by anything short of the honest tender and free pledge of brotherhood, and of a species of political regeneration which, in the reasonably appointed time and manner, should confer on every exile who should have finally planted the lives of himself and his descendants in our soil as that of his adopted country, the privileges of citizenship, obliterating forever his ties of natural allegiance, and by the same act merging all his antecedents in a new fountain of his life and race.

This is political regeneration. Let those sneer at it who are themselves too narrow of soul to comprehend what it is to be truly an American citizen. Let those deny its efficacy who are ignorant or forgetful of our country's history, or who are unable or unwilling to fathom its meaning or perceive its moral.

Emigrants ourselves in the beginning, and fugitives from the oppression of the Old World, by the tide of immigration mainly have we been borne to our present condition. To repress this immigration, to interpose obstacles to naturalization, nay, even to refrain from active measures for the encouragement of both, was by our forefathers regarded as a tyrannical grievance, fit to be set forth prominently in the cata-

logue of injuries "submitted to a candid world" in justification of the momentous measure which we are here to celebrate. In their solemn impeachment of the British King, they say:

"He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new appropriations of land."

In the first address of President WASHINGTON to Congress, among the earliest subjects which he commended to their consideration and action in carrying the new Government into effect, was that of naturalization. Accordingly, the first Congress under the Constitution fixed the term of naturalization at two years—an Act which received the signature of Washington. Afterwards, in the administration of the elder ADAMS, in the same spirit which gave birth to the notorious alien and sedition laws, the term of probation was extended to fourteen years. But in 1801 Mr. JEFFERSON, in his first message to Congress, uses this language:

"I cannot omit recommending a revisal of the laws on the subject of naturalization. Considering the ordinary chances of human life, a denial of citizenship under a residence of fourteen years is a denial to a great proportion of those who ask it, and controls a policy pursued from their first settlement by many of these States, and still believed of consequence to their prosperity. And shall we refuse," (continues the author of the Declaration of Independence,) "shall we refuse the unhappy fugitives from distress that hospitality which even the savages of the wilderness extended to our fathers arriving in thisland? Shall oppressed humanity find no asylum on this globe? The Constitution indeed has wisely provided that for admission to certain offices of important trust a residence shall be required sufficient to develop character and design; but might not the general character and capabilities of a citizen be safely communicated to EVERY ONE MANIFESTING A BONA FIDE PURPOSE OF EMBARKING HIS LIFE AND FORTUNES PERMANENTLY AMONG US?"

Such was the doctrine of JEFFERSON. The experience of

the Revolution and of the administrations of WASHINGTON and the elder ADAMS had not changed those views of immigration and naturalization which were briefly expressed in the language already quoted from that immortal writing which has forever connected his name with this day. Accordingly, in the year 1802, in the administration of JEFFERSON, was passed the general naturalization act, which is substantially the law to this day.

These are the AMERICAN doctrines on this important subject: not, indeed, of any "*American Party*," but of AMERICA HERSELF—of the men of all parties who are not prepared to sacrifice to the hope of ephemeral party sway the earliest and longest tested principles and policy of a Government founded in patriotic wisdom and forecast, and hitherto supported by the affections and approved by the judgments of a free and magnanimous people.

This is no day for party strifes and criminations. But it is eminently a day to challenge and to condemn whatever falsely and unworthily assumes the American name. In your name and right, therefore, fellow-citizens; in the names of the departed Fathers of the Revolution; in the names and by the authority of those who pledged themselves to the great charter of rights; in the names of the heroes, native and foreign-born, whose blood was mingled on many a battle-field, from the plains of Abraham, where Montgomery fell, to those of Savannah, where Pulaski perished; in the name of the Constitution and the Country. I would arraign before you the leaders of this so-called "*American party*," and demand to know from what teacher or what text-book of American doctrine they have learned to band themselves into a faction practically to disfranchise and excommunicate a large body of the people of America? I demand their precedents in the

history of our common country for attempting this enormous fraud upon a whole class of citizens, who have become citizens upon the faith of the Constitution and the Laws. I call upon them to tell us by what authority they have attempted to sow discord and to inflame envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness between brethren of the same family, children of the same common country? “*American party!*” ARE WE NOT ALL AMERICANS? Or are our Constitution and our Laws but a solemn cheat and a delusion? And are those who, in accordance with their requirements and by virtue of their authority, have become American citizens, not indeed AMERICANS, but still aliens and sojourners, strangers and enemies in our midst, against whom all true Americans are to band themselves in dark and secret conclaves, and by a vast league, bound by oaths and mustered by talismanic signs, to hunt them, and all who recognise their equal rights, from every post of trust and honor; to make them feel that this is not their country; that here they are but servants and by sufferance; that here they have come only to be governed—governed by those who will still be alien to them, since here “*Americans must rule America?*” Miserable watchword of delusion and folly! Wretched sacrilege to the American name! What is AMERICA, and who are AMERICANS? Let the answer be thundered in their ears by the Constitution and the Laws. Let it arise to confound them, from the broad bosom of our country, from the whole volume of its illustrious annals.

But I have yielded to an impulse I could not control, and have departed from the course I had proposed. We were considering the sources of our national prosperity.

As we should have long lingered in comparative insignificance but for our unexampled increase of population, so that

population would have been powerless to produce the results we have been contemplating but for our free institutions and our just and equal laws. The unspeakable blessings of civil and religious liberty have animated the whole mass, and shed vigor, hope, enterprise, happiness, and success through every department of life. Above all, perhaps, that which has most spread cheerfulness and contentment throughout the land; that which has most impressed men with the consciousness of freedom, and thus inspired them with all its energy, is that religious liberty which leaves every man to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, with none on earth to make him afraid. This, indeed, comes home to his heart, and mingles with every tender tie and memory of earth and every hope of heaven. This, indeed, is the crowning jewel in our country's diadem. Its mild and heavenly lustre has cheered many a heart in distant regions and weaned it from all the associations of kindred and of place. HERE, (have men said,) here at least there is a perpetual dissolution of that unhappy union between Church and State which, whatever the Church and whatever the State, has ever and everywhere, in other hands than those of Deity himself, been fruitful of misery and oppression. Here at least the duties and the rights of the citizen towards his country and his Government belong to a sphere widely and forever separated from that of his religion. Here at least shall ever govern that divine precept of the Saviour, as he held the tribute-money in his hand and with simple truth confounded the casuists: "RENDER UNTO CÆSAR THE THINGS WHICH ARE CÆSAR'S, AND UNTO GOD THE THINGS WHICH ARE GOD'S."

This doctrine of perfect religious freedom, of the entire and final separation of all questions and influences of religious creed from everything that directly or indirectly may give color

or direction to public affairs, tone or temper to the laws, status, hue, or complexion to the social or political relations of the individual citizen—this is a great fundamental American doctrine, vital to the AMERICAN name. Whoso denies it, or, in words admitting it, practically assails its fullest and widest operation in spirit and in truth, may dare to call himself American, may perchance trace his lineage to some immortal name upon the scroll of independence, if such apostacy be imaginable, but he is now no true American; and by and by, awaking from his delusion, he shall repent in sackcloth and ashes his desecration of his country's name.

How wonderful is the flux and reflux of the tide of error in the history of man! How constantly should we wake and watch, lest, returning in some new form and through some unguarded avenue, it overwhelm us in its dark and bitter waters! Who would have imagined that any portion of the people of this land should now be gathering in and passionately hugging to their breasts the worn-out bigotry and folly which so long besotted the British people, but from which a quarter of a century ago they emancipated themselves in the name of "Catholic emancipation?" What prophet among our fathers would have ventured to predict that the time would ever come when honest men—men of liberal minds and patriotic motives, men born to the blessings of the American Union and to all the clear and cheerful light of its Constitution and Laws—cheated by the *ignis fatuus* of a false patriotism, would, by one bound, precipitate themselves to those depths of bigotry which were the proper realms of the pitied and forgotten dupes of Titus Oates—a name from which Protestant England, once its deluded worshipper, has long since recoiled in horror?

Let any man who finds himself startled by those topics of the day which demagogues are wielding to excite the passions

and blind the judgments of the true-hearted people of America, seducing them to uproot and cast down the chief pillars of their own liberty in the pursuit of a phantom—let any such man turn to the repeated debates in the British Parliament, to the journals and periodicals of the day during all that angry contest which resulted, six and twenty years ago, in the recognition of the political rights of the Roman Catholic population of the British Empire, and let him there learn how stale and stamped with folly is all that tale whose lightest word, if you could but believe it as they would have you—

“ Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
 Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres ;
 Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
 And each particular hair to stand an-end
 Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.”

Humbling indeed would it be to every true American to be confronted with the finally enlightened though tardy course of that monarchy, and to be justly accused of taking up its exploded prejudices and its cast-off errors. What! shall such a course be deliberately adopted by such a Government, with all its long-settled policy and its established church? And shall free, happy, united America now begin to retrograde and commence the work of religious intolerance? Forbid it, Heaven! forbid it, sacred spirit of the Revolution, revisiting us this day!

No! surely that day—let me rather say that long and hopeless night—shall never come when our country shall renounce and abjure a principle so inseparable from the idea of popular rights, so vital to the distinctive spirit of our National Constitution, as religious liberty, twin sister to civil liberty, and indispensable to its existence.

And how does it

“Keep the word of promise to our ear
And break it to our hope,”

to refrain from rekindling the fires of Smithfield on the one hand, or re-enacting the fierce penalties of the no-Popery statutes on the other, while all the while a bitter intestine strife is suscitated, in which differing religious faiths are made the badges of party politics, and to profess a particular creed is to fall effectually under a species of political excommunication which, could it be enforced, would practically exclude its unhappy subjects from all benefit of active participation in the privileges of that citizenship the undeniable title to which is, in formal phrases, still conceded.

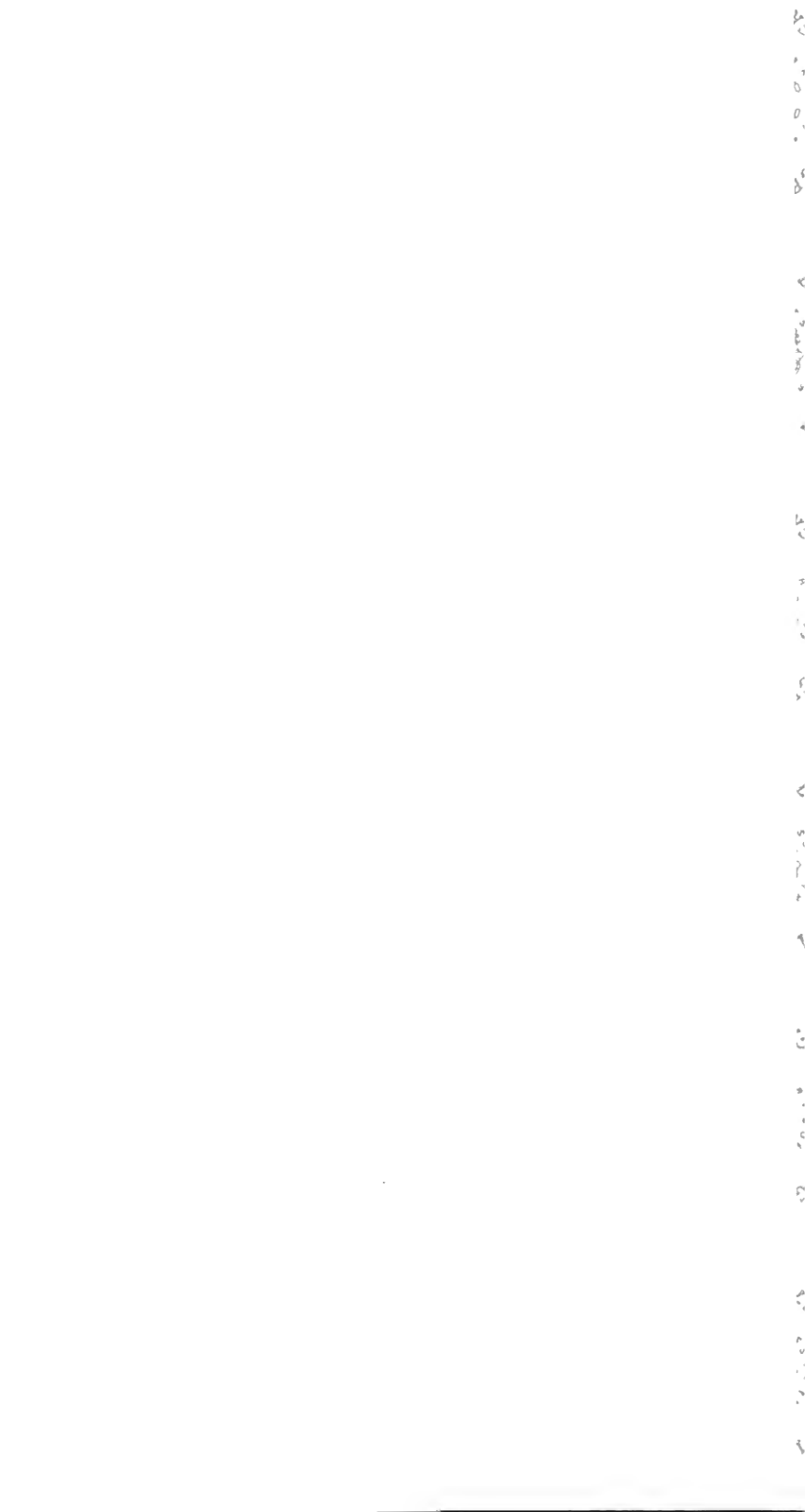
Let us, fellow-citizens, hold firmly to the body and substance of the true faith of the Constitution, and yield ourselves, without quibble or equivocation, to its pure and honest spirit in proclaiming and upholding, with our whole hearts and in every action of our lives, the whole doctrine of religious liberty in its broadest, deepest, and sincerest sense. Let us ever remember that the Union of Church and State, however cunningly it may be disguised, and by whatsoever plausible pretexts it may be attempted to be justified, is ever the same forbidden thing: repugnant to the genius of our country, inconsistent with the principles of the Constitution, incompatible with American freedom.

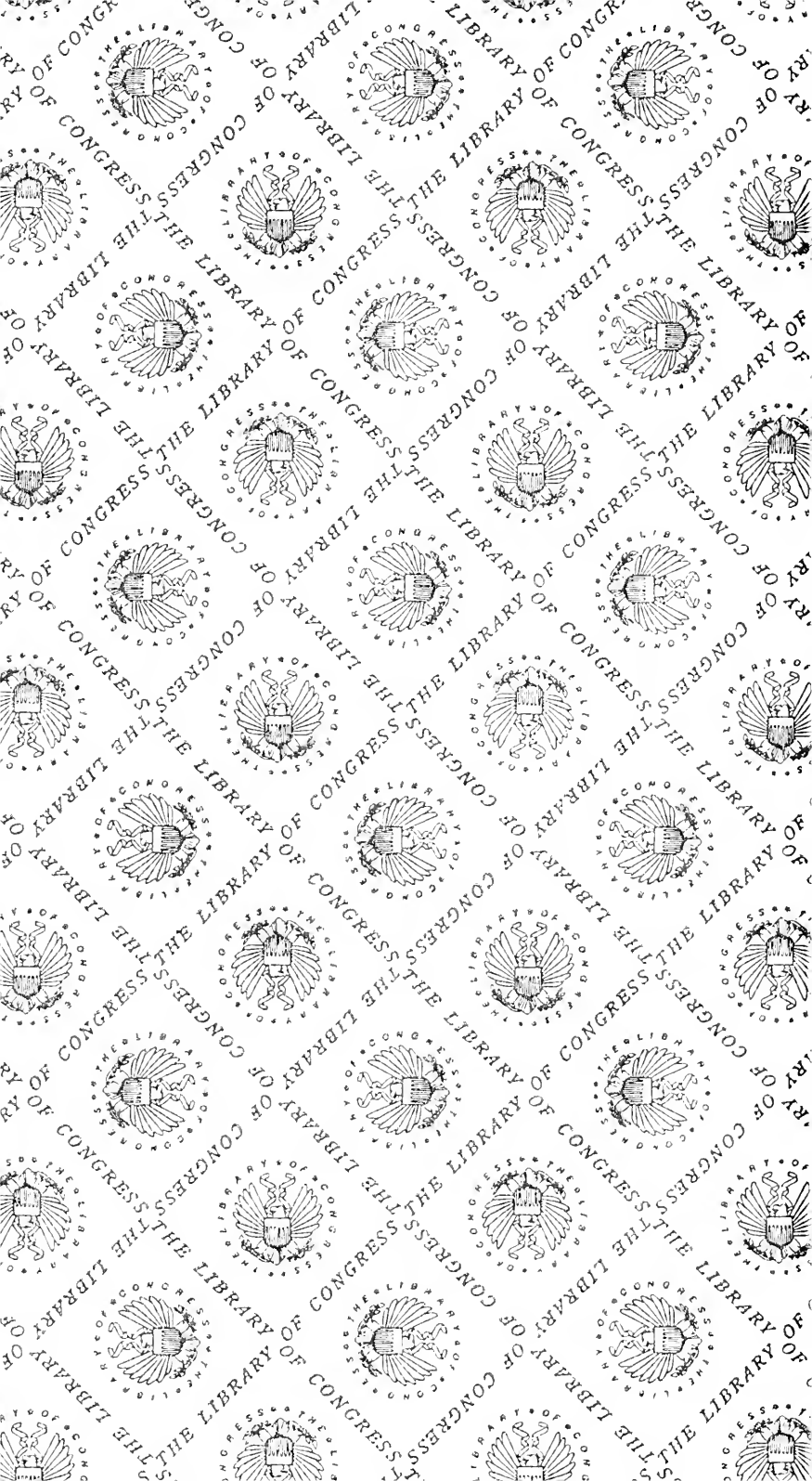
Looking back, then, to the past, witnessing its products in the present day, and with fervent and patriotic hearts invoking continued prosperity for these now happy, powerful, and united States, may we not safely conclude that in the aggregation of men—“men who their duties know, but know their rights, and knowing dare maintain”—in our indissoluble Union,

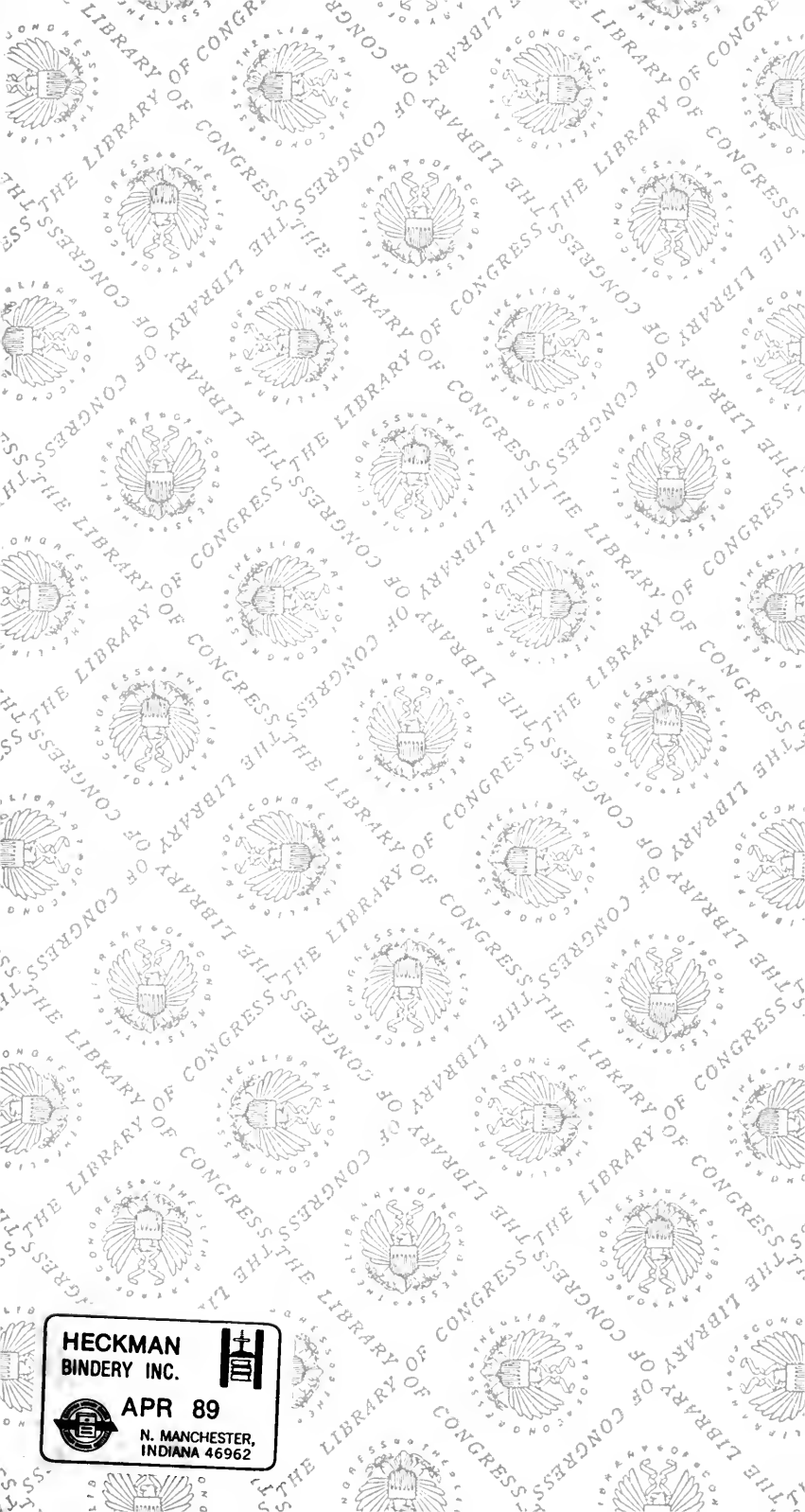
in our equal laws, and in our firm and constant faith and practice of "civil and religious liberty" lies all our treasure, past, present, and to come? This is the whole law of our freedom and of our imposing presence among the nations of the earth. By the continued, perfect, and harmonious combination of all these powerful elements alone may we hope that our career as a people shall be still upward and onward, and that in the lapse of ages, as often as the sun shall rise to restore this memorable day, he shall awaken increasing millions of freemen to hail it with proud and grateful acclamations, and shall at each return gild earlier with his earliest beams the still ascending towers of our national glory and prosperity! So MOTE IT BE!

FELLOW-CITIZENS, this is the first day of the new year in our national calendar. It should be a day of general jubilee and universal gratulation. Our hearts should swell beyond all narrow and sectarian limits—social, religious, or political. One people, with one common country, one common glory in the past, one common hope in the future, here and hereafter, let us leave this place this day, joining all our souls in one harmonious and fervent invocation of all the choicest blessings of Heaven upon the whole land and all that it inherit!









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