

## An Address

Delivered at the house of William P. Springs, Esq. July 4, 1827, by the Rev. Samuel Williston.

**Fellow-Citizens:** The circumstance of your meeting to-day, indicates the high estimate which you set on your distinguishing privileges. Another peaceful return of our national jubilee inspires the voice of patriotism, and rouses the ardor of good feeling throughout our happy country.

The dawn of this glorious anniversary, ushered in, as it was, amidst the grateful acclamations of millions of freemen, and its morning light perfumed with the incense of their devout thanksgivings, announced the time for all strife to be hushed, and for the ringing of hearts on the altar of national gratitude. The deep-toned note of the canon, reverberated from the heights of Maine to the plains of Florida, told upon the bosom of the wave, and proclaimed, as it flew upon the wind, the heartfelt joy of a free and happy people. A thousand streaming banners, as they waved to the light of heaven, beckoned the sons of liberty to commemorate the birth-day of their political existence. And it is a day worthy to be had in remembrance! A day fraught with events that should be written on a table of brass, "with the point of a diamond." A day fruitful of consequences, to be embalmed in the hearts of the fair, and to be registered in the souls of the brave.

Humanity may sympathize and weep over crouching vassals, as they throng the levees of insolent despots; over terror-struck subjects, when they feign a joy on the birth-day of a prince of the blood; over an enslaved nation, as they mock their calamities, by carousing on the day of their monarch's coronation; but, thanks be to God, these are occurrences known to us only by report. It is for *Americans*, with a rational good will, to observe an annual thanksgiving: it is for you, and your highly favored countrymen, to consecrate the memory of the day, on which the throes of convulsed nature, under the auspices of a most merciful Providence, gave liberty to man, and freedom to half a hemisphere.

And the remembrance of such an era, with its associated circumstances, and all the political blessings which it has conferred upon our country, cannot fail to inspire with hallowed enthusiasm, every virtuous mind.

It was a crisis of awful moment; the death-knell of tyranny, and the day-spring of liberty, and the rights of man: On it we cannot reflect with coolness; to think of it with apathy, were a blighting sin!

From what did that eventful day deliver? and to what did it promote, the land of your fathers? It would be a trespass on your understanding to narrate the distressing history of these once British colonies; but on an occasion like the present, every American mind instinctively reverts to the condition of the first settlers in these western wilds. Jamestown and Plymouth are consecrated in memory, as the sepulchres of the first adventurers, who nobly dared to plant the standards of science and civilization on our then savage coasts.

These are the destined spots, where many an excellent spirit was sacrificed in the laudable pursuit of happiness, which is dear, and of natural rights, which are sacred to man. There you behold, at a distant day, persecuted religion and tyrannized virtue seeking an asylum from despotic rule.

In these early settlements, you find some exiled on suspicion or trivial offences, others, compelled by indignance and pressing want, and many, animated with the hope, that the rod of oppression could not fall with its deadly effect across the Atlantic, facing famine and pestilence, with every shape of death, that they might secure a better inheritance to their children.

There you find a band of pious Christians, braving the ten thousand perils of a wilderness, and the brutal ferocity of surrounding savages, that they might be freed from the trammels of Popish abominations, and released from the domination of lords spiritual upon earth.

Every dictate of reason would say, that these enterprising emigrants ought to have been fostered by Great Britain, and shielded by her protecting arm. But as soon as the infant settlements began to assume a colonial form, the unnatural mother appears to have looked on them as a kind of lawful game, that might be hunted and fed upon by every beggared profligate that had a friend in royal favor. If there was a worthless son, of some distinguished family, troublesome to his friends and to the crown, by solicitations for office, he must be set across the Atlantic as governor of a colony, where he might extort from the workings of industry the means of grati-

fying his vile appetites. Lawless oppression was laid upon the provinces, and insults heaped upon injuries, regardless of all petitions and remonstrances from the dutiful subjects; dragging the accused from their homes to a distant court of justice—regulating and controlling the military force—levying taxes without the consent, and against the interest of the people—and setting over them for rulers ignorant and unprincipled men,—are among the many acts of unrighteous oppression which kindled the spirit of revolution, and led to the freedom which we this day enjoy.

It is truly surprising how far the usual sagacity and forestalling prudence of the British Court were lost sight of in their unnatural conduct towards the colonies. But it is evident, that for wise and benevolent purposes, a fatal blindness was permitted to fall upon them, and an impenetrable stupidity to envelop them. The illustrious Chatham, with others of distinguished merit, warned the crown of the danger and inevitable consequences of such wretched policy; but in vain.

The royal ear, occupied by parasites, was deaf to all reason, and incapable of an impression from any thing short of the cannon's roar. Nor was it long, till he found there was a spirit of resentment in his much injured subjects; that there was a capable arm amongst the American yeomanry; and that exiles from British oppression were not tamely to be divested of their natural rights in another land. The judicious and happily conceived disposal of the tea cargoes in the port of Boston, spoke the determinate purpose of the Provincials; and it told thus much, at least, that they claimed the prerogative of judging for themselves what they would eat, and what they would drink. This was a sufficient challenge to his majesty for the enforcement of his dread threatenings, to crush all remonstrance. Lexington and the plains of Charlestown gave a pledge to the British soldiers of the reception intended them by the Provincials. And in quick succession, the bloody field of Breed's Hill, strewn with more than a thousand of the royal forces, proved that a virtuous people, desperate in defence of their rights, and fighting under the sanction of an approving conscience, were not to be despised. "The die was now cast, the Rubicon was transgressed," and if justice was to be had, it must be claimed by the sword.

A general impulse, rapid as the electric spark, pervaded the continent; hope and fear alternately seized the minds of the people; but Divine Providence had raised up and qualified agents to counsel and to lead in this perilous moment; and through their instrumentality, order and co-operation were induced amongst the far scattered inhabitants. As war was now inevitable, a commander of the American forces was necessary; and the election could not fall wrong, being with the spotless patriots of the first Congress, and under the forefending care of Heaven.

There was a brilliant orb in the constellation of American worthies; one distinguished from every other man, by the concentration, in himself, of all the rare and excellent qualities which, singly, ensure pre-eminence. If military talents only had been sought for, other pretenders might have been found; but it was congenial with the republican spirit of the times, that the commander of their citizen soldiers should himself be a citizen of the first order, and a patriot of the purest morals. Accordingly the fearfully responsible appointment was assigned to WASHINGTON. To the man who was a profound statesman—a wise and prudent politician—an ardent patriot of unblemished morality—a devout Christian, of a brave and generous heart.

Such was the man, designated of God to be the Father of his Country. Great was the office assigned him, and pre-eminently was he qualified to fill it.—What might not be expected from an army under such a leader? It is true, his ranks were thin, while the veteran foe was mighty; but there was an invisible arm with him, an unseen host attended him, which no wisdom could baffle, no power resist.

A nation was to be reared on a new and perfect model; a government was to be founded on the pure principles of equity and justice; and the appointed means were worthy of the end.

The condition of the colonies at this crisis, bore a fearful aspect—open war with the mother country, whose navy lined the coast, and midnight vengeance from the skulking savage, who spared neither sex nor age. The love of inglorious ease and the fearful chance of war, kept back many from the dreadful contest. Great sacrifices awaited all who took part in the emancipation of their country; but to the honor of that venerable age, enough were found,

trampling on sordid motives and inspired with the love of liberty, to accomplish the noble object.

The sacred ties of blood and friendship gave place to the paramount law of nature. The prattling of his babes was exchanged by the fond father for the clangor of arms: the affectionate husband relinquished the sweets of domestic happiness, for the perils of a tented field; the dutiful son, receiving the last blessing of his bending parents, made his way to the camp, to rise or to fall with his country! Thousands, from every quarter, rushed to the support of their Leader, and to the defence of a righteous cause. The conflict was sanguine, and victory for a time seemed doubtful. While the enemy kept the seas, the provincials felt little inconvenience; when he presumed to set his foot on land, he was met with deadly effect; and as he marched through the interior, he was annoyed at every corner, and harassed at every step.

After having wasted the flower of the British army, meeting many signal defeats, and being repulsed at every onset, it was found that the American spirit was invincible, and their resources inexhaustible; the royal forces wisely resolved to withdraw, and seek for glory from some other quarter.

But Divine Providence overruled this prudent counsel to their confusion. The capture of Cornwallis and the victory at Yorktown, were only wanting to render the triumph of American arms complete, and the cause of justice intelligible to an English understanding.

That memorable event restored the long frenzied court of Britain to a good degree of sanity, and disposed them to give, by amicable negotiation, not only the natural rights which they had contemptuously denied to all prayers and entreaties, but also to acknowledge the independence of the United States as a free and sovereign people. Such was the boon for which our fathers fought, and it was obtained at an inestimable price.—The precious blood of thousands was shed in the noble cause: the liberty which we this day enjoy, was a dear-bought inheritance. Dangers and losses, toils and sufferings innumerable, were sustained by all classes, without distinction of age or sex, to procure the high privileges which we peaceably enjoy. And blessed is the memory of all who had part in the great achievement. They are to be esteemed the benefactors of mankind; and the remaining few who are spared to grace the assemblies of this joyous anniversary, have the best earthly reward of a virtuous mind—honor and reverence from a grateful, happy people. They have lived to be praised for the deeds of "other times," by ten millions of freemen; to consummate their characters and fill up the measure of their bliss, it only remains that they be true to the King of kings, and take protection under the banner of the Prince of Peace, who alone can give the victory over the last enemy, and insure an inheritance in a "better country." When the noise of war had ceased, and the soldier returned to his family rejoicing, a guardian spirit watched over the national councils, and the interests of the people were consulted in all their deliberations.

Envious aristocrats had exultingly boasted that republics were but the dreams of visionary brains, and that no constitution could be made so wise, nor any people be found so virtuous, as to be able to maintain that most desirable form of government. But the patriots of the revolution, having experienced the delivering, protecting hand of the God of nations, in bringing them to freedom, were willing to trust in the same for its defence. Accordingly, they framed and adopted the Federal Constitution, that perfect paragon of political wisdom, free from all error, free from all defect.

And near half a century's experience has proven, that it is an all-sufficient chart for a great and mighty nation. In peace and in war it has been tested. It has withstood the bickerings of faction, and triumphed over party rage. It answered all the purposes of a rational compact, in the late war; with this high bond of union, the concentrated power of the numerous States exhibited a fearless front.

On the deep, the American seamen signally triumphed over the high pretensions of the British navy, and the splendid victory at Orleans awarded the palm of military glory to the American arms.

Thus far has the nation steered well under the great chart. Let not that sacred instrument be tampered with by unhallowed hands. Let it not be altered to the whims of shallow politicians. Let it not be conformed to the views of aspiring ambition. Under its auspices the American canvass has whitened every sea; American commerce has profited in every port; the American name is respected in every clime; and it has guaranteed to us a succession of wise and wholesome Administrations at home! What other nation on earth can say so much? What other people under heaven are favored as we are? You search in vain for a parallel. How firmly ought we to adhere to our republican institutions? How tenaciously ought we to hold that system which has been tried, and that course of policy which has been proven? It is true, that nothing earthly is perfect

and if it were otherwise, our imperfect senses would not comprehend it. But as we enjoy all the blessings, privileges and advantages which a united people of common rights, and common interests, can enjoy in a political association, we have reason forever to be thankful to the God of our fathers; who has exalted us to such preferment amongst the nations of the earth. And we must deprecate the day when a change in this happy state of things may take place.

The surest defence, in a republic, against the dangers to which it is liable, are stern virtue and intelligence among the people: these are the pillars of the state, and should be promoted and cherished by every friend to the welfare of posterity.

While, therefore, we lift up our hearts in humble thanks to Almighty God, for all his goodness to us, let us, as the immortal Washington did, commend our beloved country, and all that is dear to us, into His holy keeping.

## BONAPARTE AND THE MAMELUKES.

From *Walter Scott's Life of Napoleon.*

Upon the 5th of July, the army marched from Alexandria against the Mamelukes. Their course was up the Nile, and a small flotilla of gun-boats ascended the river to protect their right flank, while the infantry traversed a desert of burning sands, at a distance from the stream, and without a drop of water to relieve their tormenting thirst. The army of Italy, accustomed to the enjoyments of that delicious country, were astonished at the desolation they saw around them. "Is this," they said, "the country in which we are to receive our farms of seven acres each? The General might have allowed us to take as much as we chose—no one would have abused the privilege." Their officers, too, expressed horror and disgust, and even generals of such celebrity as Murat and Lannes threw their hats on the sand, and trod on their cockades. It required all Bonaparte's authority to maintain order, so much were the French disgusted with the commencement of the expedition.

To add to their embarrassment, the enemy began to appear around them. Mamelukes and Arabs, concealed behind the hillocks of sand, interrupted their march on every opportunity, and woe to the soldier who straggled from the ranks, were it but fifty yards. Some of these horsemen were sure to dash at him, slay him on the spot, and make off before a musket could be discharged at them. At length, however, the audacity of these incursions was checked by a skirmish of some little importance, near a place called Chelieh, in which the French asserted their military superiority.

An encounter also took place on the river between the French flotilla and a number of armed vessels belonging to the Mamelukes. Victory first inclined to the latter, but at length determined in favor of the French, who took, however, only a single galliot.

Meanwhile the French were obliged to march with the utmost precaution. The whole plain was now covered with Mamelukes, mounted on the finest Arabian horses, and armed with pistols, carabines, and blunderbusses of the best English workmanship—their plumed turbans waving in the air, and their rich dresses and arms glittering in the sun. Entertaining a high contempt for the French force, as consisting almost entirely of infantry, this splendid barbaric cavalry watched every opportunity for charging them, nor did a single straggler escape the unrelenting edge of their sabres. Their charge was almost as swift as the wind, as their severe bits enabled them to halt, or wheel their horses at full gallop, their retreat was as rapid as their advance. Even the practised veterans of Italy were at first embarrassed by this new mode of fighting, and lost several men; especially when fatigue caused any one to fall out of the ranks, in which case his fate became certain. But they were soon reconciled to fighting the Mamelukes, when they discovered that each of these horsemen carried about him his fortune, and that it not uncommonly amounted to considerable sums in gold.

During these alarms, the French love of the ridiculous was not abated by the fatigues or dangers of the journey. The savants had been supplied with asses, and beasts of burden easiest attained in Egypt, to transport their persons and philosophical apparatus. The General had given orders to attend to their personal safety, which were of course obeyed. But as these savants had little importance in the eyes of the military, loud shouts of laughter used to burst from the ranks, while forming to receive the Mamelukes, as the general of the division called out, with a military precision, "Let the asses and savants enter within the square." The soldiers also amused themselves, by calling the asses demi-savants. In times of discontent, these unlucky servants of science had their full share of the soldiers' reproaches, who imagined, that this unpopular expedition had been undertaken to gratify their passion for researches in which the military took very slender interest.

Under such circumstances, it may be doubted whether the literati themselves were greatly delighted, when, after seven days of such marches as we have described, they arrived at last within six leagues

of Cairo, and beheld at a distance the celebrated Pyramids, but learned at the same time, that Murad Bey, with twenty-two of his brethren, at the head of their Mamelukes, had formed an entrenched camp, at a place called Embabeh, with the purpose of covering Cairo, and giving battle to the French. On the 11th July, as the French continued to advance, they saw their enemy in the field, and in full force. A splendid line of cavalry, under Murad and the other Beys, displayed the whole strength of the Mamelukes. Their right rested on the imperfectly entrenched camp, in which lay twenty thousand infantry, defended by forty pieces of cannon. But the infantry were an undisciplined rabble; the guns, wanting carriages, were mounted on clumsy wooden frames; and the fortifications of the camp were but commenced, and presented no formidable opposition. Bonaparte made his disposition.—He extended his line to the right, in such a manner as to keep out of gun-shot of the entrenched camp, and to have only to encounter the line of cavalry.

Murad Bey saw the movement, and fully aware of its consequence, prepared to charge with his magnificent body of horse, declaring he would cut the French up like gourds. Bonaparte, as he directed the infantry to form squares to receive them, called out to his men, "From yonder Pyramids twenty centuries behold your actions." The Mamelukes advanced with the utmost speed, and corresponding fury, and charged with horrible yell. They disordered one of the French squares of infantry, which would have been sabred in an instant, but that the mass of this fiery militia, was a little behind the advanced guard. The French had a moment to restore order, and used it. The combat then in some degree resembled that which, near twenty years afterwards, took place at Waterloo; the hostile cavalry furiously charging the squares of infantry, and trying, by the most undaunted efforts of courage, to break in upon them at every practicable point, while a tremendous fire of musquetry, grape-shot and shells, crossing in various directions, repaid their audacity. Nothing in war was ever seen more desperate than the exertions of the Mamelukes. Failing to force their horses through the French squares, individuals were seen to wheel them round and rein them back on the ranks, that they might disorder them by kicking. As they became frantic with despair, they hurled at the immovable phalanxes, which they could not break, their pistols, their pointards, and their carabines. Those who fell wounded to the ground, dragged themselves on, to cut at the legs of the French with their crooked sabres. But their efforts were all in vain.

The Mamelukes, after the most courageous efforts to accomplish their purpose, were finally beaten off with great slaughter; and as they could not form or act in squadron, their retreat became a confused flight. The greater part attempted to return to their camp, from that sort of instinct, as Napoleon termed it, which leads fugitives to retire in the same direction in which they had advanced. By taking this route they had placed themselves betwixt the French and the Nile; and the sustained and insupportable fire of the former soon obliged them to plunge into the river; in hopes to escape by swimming to the opposite bank—a desperate effort, in which few succeeded. Their infantry at the same time evacuated their camp without a show of resistance, precipitated themselves into the boats, and endeavoured to cross the Nile. Very many of these also were destroyed. The French soldiers long afterwards occupied themselves in fishing for the drowned Mamelukes, and failed not to find money and valuables upon all whom they could recover. Murad Bey, with a part of his best Mamelukes, escaped the slaughter by a more regular movement to the left, and retreated by Gizen into Upper Egypt.

Thus were in a great measure destroyed the finest cavalry, considered as individual horsemen, that were ever known to exist. "Could I have united the Mamelukes horse to the French infantry," said Bonaparte, "I would have reckoned myself master of the world." The destruction of a body hitherto regarded as invincible, struck terror, not through Egypt only, but far into Africa and Asia, where ever the Moslem religion prevailed; and the rolling fire of musquetry by which the victory was achieved, procured for Bonaparte the oriental appellation, of Sultan Kibir, or King of Fire.

After this combat, which to render it more striking to the Parisians, Bonaparte termed the "Battle of the Pyramids," Cairo surrendered without resistance.

The shattered remains of the Mamelukes who had sworn the Nile and united under Ibrahim Bey, were compelled to retreat into Syria. A party of three hundred French cavalry ventured to attack them at Salahieh, but were severely handled by Ibrahim Bey and his followers, who, having cut many of them to pieces, pursued their retreat without further interruption. Lower Egypt was completely in the hands of the French, and thus far the expedition of Bonaparte had been perfectly successful. But it was not the will of Heaven, that the most fortunate of men should escape reverses; and a severe one awaited Napoleon.