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MR. WEBSTER'S ORATION At Bunker Hill, ON THE 17th DAY OF JUNE, 1843.

Our duty has been performed; our work of patriotism and of gratitude is accomplished; our task is complete; and that structure, standing on broad foundations, in that soil which drank deep of early revolutionary blood, rises before us in its grand proportions—it has reached its destined height, and lifts its summit to the clouds. We are assembled to celebrate the completion of this undertaking, and to indulge afresh in the gratifying recollections of the events which it was designed to commemorate.

Eighteen years ago, more than half the ordinary duration of the generations of mankind, the corner stone of this monument was laid. The hopes of those who conceived the design of raising here a structure worthy of the events it was intended to commemorate, were founded on the voluntary contributions—the private munificence of the citizens, and the general public favor. Those hopes have not been disappointed; individual donations have been made, in some cases of large amounts, smaller contributions by thousands; and all those who entertained an opinion of the value of the object, of the good to be attained by its successful accomplishment, will cheerfully pay their homage of respect to the gentlemen who have successively undertaken, as Presidents, Directors, and Committees of the Association, the general management of the work, while the Architect, equally entitled to our thanks, will find other rewards also, in the beauty of the obelisk itself, and the honor and distinction which it confers on him;—nor on this occasion will we forget to mention in praise the services of the builders who have been engaged here, in laying one stone upon another, in rearing this column.

At the time when the prospects of the farther progress of the work were most discouraging, and many of its friends were dubious as to its success, the Mechanics' Association, by a patriotic and vigorous effort, raised the funds necessary for carrying it on, and applied them with fidelity; for which it is my grateful duty to ask the public approbation. The remaining efforts to complete the construction of this edifice came from another source. Garlands of grace and elegance were destined to crown a work which had its origin in patriotism and manly vigor. The reigning power of the sex addressed itself to the public, and all that was needed to carry this edifice to its proposed height, and give it its finish, was supplied; the mothers and daughters of the land gave a charm to whatever there were of beauty, elegance, utility or public gratification in the building of the structure.

Of those with whom the plan of erecting this Monument originated, many are living; but, alas, there are others who have themselves become the subjects of monumental eulogy. WILLIAM TUDOR, a distinguished scholar, an able writer, and most amiable man, allied by birth and sentiment to the patriots of the revolution, died in the public service and now lies buried in foreign lands. WILLIAM SULLIVAN—a name fragrant of revolutionary reminiscences—a man who concentrated in a great degree the confidence of the whole community, and yet best loved where he was most known, has been gathered to his fathers. GEORGE BLAKE, a lawyer of learning and elegance, a man of wit and talents, possessed of brilliant qualities and fascinating gifts that enabled him to exercise a large sway over public bodies, has closed his human career.

I have thus far spoken of those who have ceased to be about us. Let me now speak of one whose long life, now drawing to a close, always characterized by liberal munificence and enlarged public spirit, has already become historical, the public regard and private regard for whom, conferring upon the living the proper immunity of the dead, makes him a just subject for our honorable mention and warm commendation. Among the early projectors of this undertaking there was none more zealous, none more efficient than THOMAS H. PERKINS. Beneath his hospitable roof, those whom I have mentioned of the dead, and others among those still living, took the first steps towards the erection of this monument. A venerable man, the friend of us all, his charities have been dispensed like the dews of heaven; he has fed the hungry and clothed the naked; he has given sight to the blind, (cheers) of such virtues as his, there is a record on high, of which our humble words, and all language of brass and stone afford but poor imagery. Among the projectors of this work, among

its early favorers, the first President of the Association, was the then late Governor, Gen. John Brooks, who was here on the 17th of June, '75, who discharged his honorable service in the Revolutionary war, and closed his life, a soldier without fear, and a man without reproach.

I know that in thus alluding to the names of the dead before an audience comprised as this is, I cause many a tear to flow; but such mention is due to their eminent public services, and private virtues, and not to be omitted, especially on this occasion, to their zeal and efforts in accomplishing this work which has now reached its fulfillment.

Time and nature have had their course in diminishing the number of those who were present at the celebration eighteen years ago, at the laying of the corner stone of this Monument. Most of the revolutionary characters have joined the great congregation of the dead; but we have among us those of the name and blood of Warren; the kindred of Putnam, Stark, Knowlton and McCleary; and here is one, beloved and respected as universally as known, the son of the gallant and daring, and indomitable Prescott, (cheers.) And here, too, are some, a scanty band, of those who performed military service on this field, on the 17th of June, 1775. Here are Gideon Foster, Joseph Harvey, Philip Bagley, Jas. Tenney, Phineas Johnson, Robert Andrews, Nehemiah Porter, Jesse Smith, John Stevens, McGrew, and Plaisdel; (cheers.)

They have outlived all the storms of the revolution; they have out-lived the want of good and sufficient institutions of government—they have outlived all the dangers threatening the public liberties—they have outlived most of their contemporaries;—they have not outlived,—they cannot outlive the ever abiding gratitude of their countrymen. Heaven has not allotted to our generation an opportunity of rendering services like theirs; of showing such generosity as they manifested in such a cause. But it may well become us to praise actions that we cannot equal, and to commemorate what we were not born to perform. [Loud repeated cheering.]

"Pulchrum est beneficere reipublice; etiam benedicere laud absurdum est."

Yes, Bunker Hill Monument is completed! Here it stands! Fortunate in the natural eminence on which it is placed;—yet higher, infinitely higher in its object and its purpose! Behold it:—rising over the land and over the sea, and visible at this moment to 300,000 of the citizens of Massachusetts, it stands a memorial of the past, monitor to the present, and to all succeeding generations of men. [Renewed cheering.]

I have spoken of its purpose,—for if it had been without any other object than a mere work of art, the granite of which it is composed would have been permitted to sleep in its native bed. But it has a purpose, and that purpose gives dignity to the structure and ennobles it:—that purpose it is which robs it with a moral grandeur;—that purpose it is which seems to invest it with the attributes of an august intellect. It is itself the great orator of the occasion!— [Loud applause.] It is not from my lips—nor from any human lips, that the strain of eloquence is to flow, competent to express the emotions of this multitude. [Cheers.] The potent speaker stands motionless before you. It is a plain shaft, it bears no inscription, "fronting the rising sun," from which the future antiquarian shall be employed to wipe away the dust. Nor does the rising sun awaken strains of music on its summit;—but there it stands,—and at the rising sun and at the setting, at the blaze of noonday and beneath the milder effluence of lunar light, there it stands; it looks—it speaks—it acts—to the full comprehension of every American mind, and awakening the highest enthusiasm in every true American bosom. Its silent but awful utterance, the deep pathos with which, as we look upon it, it brings before us the 17th of June, 1775, and the consequences resulting from the events of that day to us and our country and to the world—consequences which, we know, must have their influence on mankind to the end of time,—surpasses all the eloquence of the study of the closet, all the inspiration of genius. Today it speaks to us,—its future auditory will be the successive generations of men as they shall rise up before it and gather around it. Its spirit will be of courage and patriotism,—of religion and liberty,—of good government,—of the renown of those who have sacrificed themselves for the good of the country.

In the older world many fabrics are still in existence, reared by human hands, whose objects and history are lost in the darkness of ages. They are now monuments of nothing but the power of the human hand.—The mighty pyramid itself, as buried in the sands of Africa has nothing to bring down and report to us but the power of the king and the serfitude of the people. If asked for any just object, for any sentiment, for its admonitions, for its instructions to mankind, for any great end of its being, it is silent,—silent as the millions of human beings in the dust at its base and the catacombs around it. Having thus no just object known to mankind, though it rise to heaven, it excites no feeling; it is the simple exhibition of Egyptian power.

But if the present civilization of mankind, founded as it is, on solid science and art, and on a sound knowledge of nature;—stimulated and preserved as it is by moral sentiments and by the Christian religion, be destined to last until the termination of human being on earth, then the objects of this monument shall be known among men

until that hour shall come. And if, in the designs of Providence, the truths of Christianity are to become obscured by another deluge of barbarism, the memory of Bunker Hill and the great events we here commemorate shall be past, and elements of the knowledge of the last man on whom the light of christianity and civilization shall be extended. [Cheers: after a moment's pause Mr. W. continued.]

This celebration is honored by the presence of the Chief Magistrate of the nation, surrounded by the distinguished individuals who are its constitutional advisers. [Cheers, which the President acknowledged by uncovering his head and bowing to the audience.] An occasion so national, so much connected with that revolution out of which the government grew at the head of which he is placed by his fellow citizens and the laws of the country, may well deserve from him this mark of attention. Intimately acquainted as he is with Yorktown, where were the last great military efforts of the revolution, he has now an opportunity for seeing the theatre of the first of those great struggles:—where Warren fell, where Stark, Knowlton, Putnam and McCleary, and their associates fought. He has seen the field on which 1000 choice regular troops of England were stricken down in the first great contest for liberty by the arms of the yeomanry of New England: [Cheers.] and with a heart full of American feeling he has come here, I am sure, to participate as much as any citizen present, in the sentiment of enthusiasm and grateful recollections which this day suggests to us.

His Excellency the Governor of the Commonwealth is also present on this occasion. Nor is it to be doubted that he enters with an enthusiastic glow into the celebration of an event which has been so bright an honor to the people of the Commonwealth over which his good fortune has called him to preside. [Loud applause.]

Banners and flags, processions and badges, announce to us, that with this multitude have come up thousands of the sons of New England resident in other States. Welcome! Welcome ye of kinder climes, whose blood: [Renewed cheering] from the savannah of the south, from the newer regions of the west;—ye who cultivate the rich valleys of the Genesee and live along the wide borders of the lakes; from the mountains of Pennsylvania, from the prairies of Missouri, or from the thronged and crowded cities of the coast; welcome! Wherever else ye may be scattered, ye are all at home here. You have a common ancestry of liberty. You bring with you names which are found in the rolls of those who fought at Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill. You come here to this shrine of liberty, near to your family altars, where you received your earliest lessons of devotion—near the temples of public worship which you first entered;—near the halls and colleges where you received your first education. You come here, some of you to be embraced once more by an aged and revolutionary father—to receive, perhaps, another and the last blessing warmed by the love and trust of a mother,—or to enjoy once more a reunion with some still surviving friend. If these family recollections, or others like these, have brought you hither with something of an extraordinary alacrity, and give to you from us, and to us from you, something of a more hearty greeting than usual on this occasion,—we have a like hearty and cordial greeting for every American, from any and every spot, who comes here to day to tread this sacred field with American feelings, and who inspires with pleasure an atmosphere redolent with recollections of 1775. [Cheers.]

In the 17,000,000 of happy people who compose our American community, there is not one who has not an interest in that structure, as there is not one who has not a deep and abiding interest in the events which it is designed to commemorate. The respectability—I will rather say the sublimity—of this occasion depends on its nationality. It is all American—extensive enough to embrace the whole family from North to South—from East to West—and I hope this monument may stand forever as emblematic of the bonds which bind us all together. We bestride the man who comes up here with sentiments less than wholly American in his bosom, who shall stand here with the strife of local jealousies, local feelings, local animosities burning in his breast. All our happiness and all our glory depends on union. That monument itself seems governed by the same influence, that monument stands on union. I do not say but it might keep its position; I do not know that the heaving earth would move it from its base, and that it would actually totter to its fall if dismemberment should be the affliction of our land. I do not know that it would mingle its fragments with the fragments of a broken constitution;—but in such an event who is there that would dare to look up to it? [Loud cheers.] Who is there, that, from beneath such a load of mortification and shame as would overwhelm him, would approach to behold it? Who would not expect that his eye balls would be seared by the intensity of its silent reproaches? [Renewed cheers.] For my part, if it be a mistoturne designed by Providence for me to see such a catastrophe, I will look at it no more, I will avert my eyes from it forever. [Loud cheers.]

It is not as a mere military encounter of hostile armies that the battle of Bunker Hill founds its principal claims for commemoration and importance. Yet as a mere battle there are circumstances attending it of extraordinary character, and giving it a pecu-

liar distinction. It was fought on this eminence; in the neighborhood of yonder city; in the presence of more spectators than combats; men, women, and children, drawn from their homes, filling the towers and steeples of the churches, covering the roofs of private dwellings, spread around on all these eminences, looking on for the result of a contest of the (importance of the) consequences of which they had the deepest conviction. On the 16th of June, under a bright sun, these fields exhibited nothing but verdure and culture. There were, indeed, notes of preparation in Boston, and the provincial army was lying at Cambridge with its wings resting on Dorchester and Chelsea; but here all was peace, and the fields were then rich with the promise of an early harvest held out to man. On the morning of the 17th, every thing was changed. On yonder height had risen in the night a redoubt thrown up by a few hardy men under Prescott. At dawn it was perceived by the enemy in Boston, and was immediately cannonaded from the floating batteries in the harbor, and those on land on the other side of Charles River.

I suppose that it is difficult in a military point of view to ascribe any just motive for that conflict. To the Provincial army it was not very important to them in the British by a little but a little nearer to the city; and on the other hand if the British in Boston had no other object than to dislodge them from the redoubt, without the shedding of blood, they had the means entirely in their own hands. They commanded the water, both the Mystic and the Charles; and where these streams approach each other at the isthmus towards the North, they might have cut off all communication, and reduced Prescott and his party by famine in eight and forty hours. But that was not the day for such a sort of calculation on either side. The truth is that both parties were ready and anxious to try the strength of their arms. The British officers were not willing that the rebels, as they were reboult built here as if in defiance, in their very teeth, and it was determined to destroy it at once, and obtain for the royal army vengeance as well as security. On the other side, Prescott and his gallant followers were fully persuaded that the time was near for breaking out into open hostility. They wished to try it, and to try it now. That was the secret. [Cheers.]

I will not attempt to describe, what has been so often described, the cannonading from the water—the assault from the land—the coolness with which the provincial army (if it may be so called) met the charge of the regulars—the vigor with which the latter was repulsed—the second attack, the second repulse—the burning of Charlestown, and finally the closing scene of the slow retreat of the militia of New-England over the neck.—But the consequences; this battle in its consequences stands among the most important that ever took place between rival armies. It was the first great controversy in the revolutionary war, and in my judgment it was not only the first blow struck, but the blow which determined the issue of that conflict; it did not put an end to the war, but it put the two countries in a state of open hostilities. It put their differences to the arbitration of the sword; and it made one thing certain,—that after Warren fell—after the troops of New-England had been able to face and repulse an attack of British regulars—it was certain that peace could never be established between the two countries but on the basis of the acknowledgment of American independence. [Cheers.] When that sun went down the independence of these States was certain. [Renewed Cheers.] No event of military importance took place till the independence of the Colonies was declared in July, 1776. Indeed, it rests I believe on the most indisputable authority, that when General Washington heard of the battle of Bunker Hill, and was told that although for the want of ammunition or some like cause, our countrymen were compelled to retire and yielded the ground to England, yet that a body of the militia of New-England had stood the fire of the British regular forces, and not only that, but had reserved their own fire until the enemy was within eight rods of the redoubt,—"Then," said he, "the liberties of the country are safe." [Cheers.]

The consequences then of the battle of Bunker Hill are just of the importance of the American Revolution itself. If there is nothing of value, nothing worthy of the regard of mankind in the American Revolution itself, then there is nothing of value or worthy of regard in the battle of Bunker Hill or its consequences. But if the Revolution be an era in the history of man favorable to happiness—if it has marked the progress of the human race from despotism to liberty, and shed a vast influence for good over the country and throughout the world, then this monument has not been raised without a cause, then the battle of Bunker Hill is not an unimportant event, but is worthy to be celebrated by every ceremony, and perpetuated by every durable memorial. [Cheers.]

What then is the principle of the American Revolution, and of those systems of politics and government which it has established and confirmed throughout this country? Now the truth is that the American Revolution was not the instantaneous adoption of a theory of government which had never before entered the minds of men, or embracing ideas which were before wholly unknown. On the contrary, it was but

the clear development and application of sentiments and opinions which had their origin far back in American and English history.

The discovery of America and its colonization,—the history of the colonies from the time of their establishment to the time when the principal part of them threw off their allegiance to the States that planted them, constitute a train of events among the most important recorded. These events occupy a space of 800 years, during which period knowledge made steady and rapid progress in the old world, so that Europe herself at the time of the settlement, even of the New England States and Virginia, had been greatly changed from that Europe which had commenced the colonization of the continent 100 years before. And what is most material to my present purpose is, that in the first of the centuries, that is to say from the discovery of America to the settlement of Virginia, political and religious events took place which materially affected public sentiment in Europe, especially in England. Now we know that after some feeble attempts by Henry VII. no effective effort was made for the purpose of establishing the authority of the Crown of England itself, over her discoveries here for almost a century. Without inquiring into the cause of this long delay, the consequences are sufficiently striking. England, in this lapse of a century unknown to herself, was becoming fit and competent to colonize North America, and men were training within her shores competent to introduce the English name and Anglo Saxon race into a great portion of this western world. The commercial spirit and commerce were much encouraged. Several laws were passed in the time of Henry VII. for the protection of manufactures, and to induce the introduction of the arts from Eastern countries: some of them not unimportant as modifying the feudal system, as in the case of the provision for breaking entails.

These and other measures at that period produced a new class of society, and caused it to emerge from the bosom of the feudal system, and show itself in action. This was the commercial or middle class; composed neither of barons or great land-holders on the one hand, nor of the mere retainers of the barons or laborers of the holders of land on the other; a class of industry, commerce, education. This class produced a change in the face of Europe, although a gradual one; the seeds were then planted, which from that time forward were growing, and though of slow progress, were sure in the end to produce their effect. There were other operative causes, in existence, which hastened these changes. From the time of Henry VII. to the civil wars, there was more peace in England and greater security to property, than during the wars of York and Lancaster. Causes of another description came into play. The reformation of Luther broke out, kindling up men's minds afresh, forming new habits of thought and discussion in the public and awakening energies in individuals before wholly unknown to themselves. Society as well as religion was changed, and it would be easy to prove that society was changed where religion was not. The spirit of foreign adventure followed the impulse given to commerce and the arts, and this spirit gained so much strength, advancing with religious liberty and society in its reformed state, that it carried with it a devotion to civil liberty which influenced the characters which were formed in introducing English colonies into North America.

Sir Walter Raleigh and his associates settled Virginia, which was a colony created by the first of these principles, the spirit of adventure, mixed with the hope of gain, and with the expectation of finding mines of great wealth in North America; not unwilling to diversify its proceedings by occasional cruises against the Spanish in the Indian seas. Urged by such motives they crossed and recrossed the ocean with a rapidity and daring which, in that day, might well excite surprise.

The other cause was most active in the settlement of New-England. When the May flower sought our shores she carried no high-wrought hopes of commercial gain—there was the love of home—though a new and strange home—she bore no purpose of warfare or hostile enterprise:—solemn prayers, on her departure from the seacoast of Holland, had invoked for her the blessings of heaven. She put forth like the dove from the ark, in pursuit only of rest. The stars that guided her course were the constellations of religion and liberty, her deck was the altar of the living God and Prayers mingled with the voices of ocean and the sighing of the winds. If prosperous breezes filled her sails, and carried the pilgrims forward to their unknown homes in a distant land, they awakened new anthems of praise: if the elements were wrought into fury—if the sea tossed their fragile bark from billow to billow, like a reed or a feather, not all the power of the tempest—not all the darkness of the howling midnight storm could shake, in man or woman, the firm purpose of their soul, to undergo all, and to do all which the meekest patience, boldest resolution, and the steadiest reliance on heaven could enable human beings to perform. For they knew that while they had perilous duties to perform, and unknown destinies to encounter, the power of an Almighty God was always over them, and, living or dying,—on the sea or on the land—they were always encompassed in the arms of everlasting love.

Some differences may be traced through

the history and circumstances of Virginia and New-England:—It is the pleasing variety between the members of a large family. (Cheers.)

"—facies non omnibus una,
Nec diversa tamen, qualem decet esse sororum."
Their differences of habit have been modified by local causes; as they have had throughout the same sentiments and objects in view; they alike adopted the principles of English Jurisdiction, and what at first might have separated them disappeared in the progress of time, and intercourse, with the necessity of some degree of co-operation, till it gave way to a mutual respect and regard. They fought together against France in the colonial times—the revolution forged new links to unite them; and, fortunately, and happily, the present form of government has bound them more closely together,—until we have alike, whatever our origin, whatever our native soil, only one country, one constitution, one destiny. [Enthusiastic cheering.]

The colonization of the tropical regions and South America, by Spain and Portugal, was conducted on other principles, actuated by other motives, and produced far other consequences. From the time of the discovery, the Spanish Government pushed forward her colonists with the utmost vigor and eagerness, so that long before any settlements had been made in the north she had planted hers in Mexico, Peru, and Chili; and had stretched her power over nearly all the territory she ever acquired on this continent. As early as 1630 or 1632, that is, just about the period of the settlement of this colony of Massachusetts, Spain had taken possession actually in many cases, and at least formally, of every foot of land between Florida and Cape Horn. The rapidity and eagerness of these conquests was not to be wholly ascribed to the rapacity of the numerous bands of adventurers. The mines of gold and silver excited them indeed to effort, and on application to government, the natives were set to work in the mines. A love of gold grew up, of gold not produced by industry, but dug from the earth which had been ravished from its possessors by the cruelty and avarice which became the ruling passions of the conquerors. Even Columbus himself did not wholly escape from the influences of these courses, and we find him in his voyages continually inquiring of the natives for gold, as if God had opened the new world to the old, only to give new means to excite the most degrading passion, leading men to draw the sword against their fellow men in cruelty and ruthless rapacity. Columbus was above his age, as his life shows; but he doubtless addressed his followers by such motives as would be most likely to lead them on. He regarded the new world as all ready to be seized and enjoyed. It was a military colony. The Spanish Government acted by its usual means, and that was by military embassies. Her standing armies were the sources of her power and prerogative. Standing armies in time of peace for the purpose of domestic government are the portion of perfect despotism. There was no liberty in Spain; Spain could transmit none to America.

The colonists of New-England were free; they were an independent class, among whom liberty first revived from its sleep of the dark ages. Spain gave to her colonies arbitrary monarchs and armed soldiers; England secured to hers their personal rights. England transplanted her liberty to America; Spain, her power. The English colonists followed out their industrious purposes in their own way, depending on themselves for support and defence, recognizing the rights of the original holders of the soil, and (with a general honesty of purpose) introduced the fruits of civilization and religion into their new found land. Spain, on the other hand, stooped like a falcon upon her newly acquired territories, destroyed their industry with fire and sword, carried cities of hundreds of thousands of human beings with fire and sword, and even conversion to the Christian faith was attempted by fire and sword. This was the difference between these colonies,—the blessed difference; and even to-day the same difference exists, and would that thousands of voices to-day from the summit of Bunker Hill could proclaim that it still exists by a shout that should be heard over the globe. (Cheers.) Our inheritance was liberty, security, law, enlightened by knowledge and religion; that of the South American colonies was power,—tyrannical, military power. Look at the results as they are developed at the two ends of the continent. I suppose that the United States comprises a territory of about one-eighth or one-tenth of the Spanish dominions in South America. Yet in all that large region there are probably not more than one or two millions of persons of European color and blood, while in this country, of one-eighth part the size there are fourteen millions of happy and intellectual citizens of free States. (Cheers.)

If we follow these principles of colonization still farther, we shall find that their different effects in the multiplication of population is not the only one, but that the consequences show themselves in differences of civilization and the moral improvement of mankind. The true secret of liberty and the really great principle of government have not been fully understood by these new Republics. I would not willingly say anything discourteous of governments yet on trial, but truth, that sacred truth and fidelity, from which I will never falter, to the cause of true liberty, compels me to say that the new Republics of South America are quite too much disposed to partake of the senti-