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Nov. 1 1942
Chase

ORATION:

National and State Patriotism and Progress.

DELIVERED AT YORK.

NATIONAL AND STATE PATRIOTISM AND PROGRESS.

AN ORATION

DELIVERED AT YORK, NEBRASKA, JULY 4th, 1878, BY

CHAMPION S. CHASE.

Published by the Committee.

FELLOW CITIZENS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—On the fifth day of July, 1776, John Adams, one of the signers of that Declaration, to the reading of which you have just listened, and while his signature thereto was still moist with the dew of inspiration, wrote a letter in these words:

“PHILADELPHIA, July 5, 1776.

“SIR:—Yesterday the greatest question was decided which was ever debated in America, and greater perhaps never was or will be decided among men. A resolution was passed without a dissenting colony: That these United States are, and of right ought to be, free and Independent States.

“The day is passed: The Fourth of July, 1776, will be a memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as a great Anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to Almighty God. It ought to be solemnized with pomp, shows, sports, games, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of the continent to the other from this time forward forever.

“You will think me transported with enthusiasm, but I am not. I am well aware of the toil and blood and

treasure it will cost to maintain this Declaration and support and defend these States, yet through all the gloom I can see the rays of Light and Glory. I can see that the end is worth more than all the means, and that prosperity will triumph although you and I may rue, which I hope we shall not.

“I am, &c.,

“JOHN ADAMS.”

With what prophetic vision did the inspired eye of that Revolutionary Sire peer into the future of the young Republic—with what certainty did his patriotic ardor enable him to predict the future annual celebrations of the great event in which he had just taken part. That broad scope, which only the eye of the true Statesman can cover, was, at a glance, comprehended by him. No mere political views cramped his hopes, for politics had not yet entered the arena, nor had the American politician then been developed. Patriots, lovers of liberty, statesmen, ruled and guided that auspicious hour. The sentiments, too, expressed by Mr. Adams, were the united and honest sentiments of all those who joined with him in signing and promulgating that Magna Charta

of Liberty—that famous pronouncement which was to result in the ultimate independence of the Colonies, or, failing in their attempts to sustain it, cause them to be subjected to still greater vassalage and dependence upon the mother country. Nor, was it alone those noble men whose names were appended to the Declaration—not alone Hancock, and Adams, and Jay, and Whipple, and Sherman, and Morris, and Rush, and Franklin, and Chase, and Harrison, and Lee, and Rutledge, and their colleagues in all fifty-six—who announced to the Colonies, as well as to England and to the world, the great principles of self-government—especially signaling the prominent feature, that taxation and representation should go hand in hand.

It was the voice of the people speaking through their chosen delegates— assembled in solemn consultation over the trials and subjugating hardships to which the parent government had reduced them, which on the memorable day which we to-day commemorate, rang out in such clear and unmistakable tones in behalf the Heaven-born principles of freedom. The Declaration was not unexpected. The people of the Colonies had already revolted against the Colonial Government. They could no longer be true men, and continue to yield obedience to the constantly increasing oppression which that government entailed. The war of the Revolution was already in progress. The citizen soldiery, undisciplined,—fresh from the plow, the workshop, the counting-room, and the office—the people's battalions—poorly supplied and fed—clothed in their scanty working suits, had already met the richly caparisoned, well disciplined and proud regulars of the British army, upon the field of blood, and had shown that patriotic valor—that indomitable bravery—which can, in the end, know no such word as defeat.

The battles of Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, Charleston, Moore's River and other lesser ones had been fought. The surprise and surrender of Ticonderoga had occurred—that event rendered so famous by the response of Ethan Allen, who, when asked by the commanding officer of the fort by what authority he demand-

ed the surrender, quickly replied, "In the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress." The metal of the yeomanry—those gallant sons of seventy-six, those men who loved their country more than they loved their own lives—had been tested as by fire and forth from the crucible came only the pure gold of promise. Everywhere, men, women and children were united in showing, and by their works as well as by their words, that they were ready to die, if need be, in defence of the principles of the forthcoming Declaration. Emissaries had been dispatched to England to effect pacification. Benjamin Franklin, the wisest of the early fathers, a man of remarkably agreeable personal presence, had been sent to Europe to secure, if possible, more reasonable treatment of the settlers, and he was known there as well as here, for his fame as a discoverer and philosopher had become world-wide. As early as 1757 he was entrusted by Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Maryland and Georgia with their affairs as colonies, in the capacity of Special Agent abroad. Again in 1764 Pennsylvania sent him as her ambassador, while he, at the same time, acted for the interest of the colonies generally. During this absence he traveled extensively in England, Holland, Germany, France, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. His mission, however, was not successful, and he returned again to his home, just after the battle of Lexington. How fitting that he should, at last, assist in drafting the Declaration. For our independence we owe much to the wisdom of that eminent philosopher and statesman. The motto of his life, which, when his motives were attacked by his enemies, he once announced, was this: "My rule is to go straight forward in doing what appears to me to be right, leaving the consequences to Providence." Soon after independence was declared, this eminent man was sent to Paris as "Commissioner Plenipotentiary," and thus became, as he deserved to be, the first Minister of the United States to a foreign court.

These preliminary proceedings show that the colonists did not hastily attempt to throw off the British yoke. The course they finally pursued to do

this and thus to free themselves from unjust taxation, with no representation, was by no means a rebellion. It at once, and from the beginning, assumed all the proportions and importance of a revolution—a revolution never to turn backwards. The signers of the Declaration, acting for a people such as they represented, could do no less than pledge their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor in support of the new-born Republic. How natural that John Adams, constantly witnessing and taking part in the soul-stirring events of that period, listening to and speaking from day to day of the wrongs of the people, should utter the prophetic sentiments of that famous letter.

The seeds of civil and religious liberty sown by the Pilgrim Fathers, the Huguenots and the Quakers, had taken deep root in the hearts of the people of the new world years before. They had been planted in a soil which promoted a vigorous growth of patriotism, and here and there the ripening fruit was already discernable, and thus, evidences of the real public sentiment now and then appeared. In 1763 the famous old bell, which hung so long over Liberty Hall in Philadelphia, and which had been imported from England in 1752, having been cracked, was re-cast, and then upon its surface appeared this venerable motto, quoted from Leviticus, xxv, 10: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." Immediately under this inscription are the words. "By order of the assembly of the province of Pennsylvania, for the State House, Philadelphia." This announcement so conspicuous, and comprising as it did in so brief a space the leading principle of our renowned Declaration, preceded that document by thirteen years. A full year before the public announcement of Independence, the people of Mecklenburg, North Carolina, formally declared themselves "independent of England."

Early in June 1776, Richard Henry Lee, acting under the authority of the Legislature of the colony of Virginia, offered in the Continental Congress, a resolution declaring "that these thirteen colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent

States." This was the open beginning of the end. That resolution was referred to a committee consisting of Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, John Adams of Massachusetts, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Roger Sherman of Connecticut and Robert R. Livingston of New York, with instructions to draft a report in accordance with the sentiments it expressed. Hence the Great Declaration.

From the time of the destruction of tea in Boston harbor in Dec. 1773, the feelings of the colonists in favor of independence had rapidly increased. Speeches and publications in favor of such a movement were frequent. Among the most noted of the former was that of Patrick Henry in the spring of 1775, in the assembly of Virginia, during which, he exclaimed, "What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it Almighty God. I know not what course others may take, but as for me give me liberty or give me death." Of the publications circulated no one produced a profounder impression than the pamphlet issued by Thomas Paine, entitled "Common Sense."

During the year 1775, the royal Governors of the entire thirteen colonies had abdicated and left for the old country, so fast was public opinion tending toward Independence. George Washington, who had been a member of the first Continental Congress, and subsequently of the Assembly of Virginia, was, in 1775, and while a member of the second Continental Congress, on the 15th day of June, just two days before the battle of Bunker Hill, chosen by that body commander-in-chief of all the armies of all the colonies. Most fortunately, he proved to be a man equal to the great occasion. It was concerning him that Patrick Henry, a delegate to the first Continental Congress, said, upon his return to Virginia, when asked, "whom he considered the greatest man in Congress?" "If you speak of eloquence, Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina, is by far the greatest orator, but if you speak of solid information and sound judgment, Col. Washington is unquestionably the greatest man on

the floor." Yet this man was maligned and misrepresented most cruelly by some of his cotemporaries. But the people, the masses, regarded him as their leader and deliverer. They loved him to adoration. It is remarkable that with such devotion as the American people have clung to his memory, the monument designed to commemorate his deeds should have so long remained unfinished. For that structure it is the proud privilege of Nebraska to furnish a State tablet properly inscribed. Thanks to a few public spirited men and women, the work is now to go forward to completion. When its summit shall have pierced the sky we shall all behold the marble column with pride, but the name of Washington will be no dearer to us, nor fresher in our memories. Marble alone cannot perpetuate his deeds, nor sculpture prolong his fame. Ages hence, when that pedestal shall have crumbled to dust, the name of Washington will be as familiar as to-day.

Is it not time that pseudo men should cease giving utterance to the opinion that George Washington was a good, rather than a great man, inasmuch as that conclusion, concerning him, can only be drawn from the fact that he was not a ready public talker, or, as it is called nowadays, a "speech-maker." To the theory that unusual silence of manner or its twin sister, reticence, indicates absence of mental ability, the lives of the two greatest generals this country ever produced, is a sufficient rebuke. I refer, as you must know, to General Washington and General Grant. In the olden days modesty was a merit and men were chosen to office by the people and not by themselves.

In troublous times the people of all ages have been wont to listen to no uncertain sound and to put their trust in none but the ablest men of their day. So it was in 1776. The wisest and best men of the land were selected, and, by the people, to act as leaders in the fearful ordeal through which the country was passing. When, then, those whom they had chosen to represent them, and to proclaim to the world their sentiments, spoke, their words were welcomed in confidence that they were words of wisdom befitting the occasion. So, when the

voice of the Congress was at last heard, as it was uttered in old Liberty Hall, one hundred and two years ago this day, declaring that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," the people shouted the glad announcement, and the very air, catching the joyous sound, its echoes chanted the welcome message along the coast and over the hills and dales of the sparse settlements, until the glad tidings had reached the home of every settler from New Hampshire to Georgia. No wonder that staid men, like old John Adams, should become inspired by the spirit of prophecy; nor that they should write enthusiastic letters concerning the auspicious events then transpiring; nor that they should utter the most earnest ideas in regard to freedom and its future celebrations. In obedience to the prediction of that eminent man we have come up here to-day, to spend an hour rehearsing the story of American Independence. All for what? To keep alive the spirit which animated the early fathers—to reiterate and cherish the true principles of the Government and to preserve ever green our patriotic devotion to the Union. Passing events admonish as that this is wise. Who can tell how much the annual celebration of this great day, from the first, had to do with the spirit which animated the hearts of our union-loving people during the late civil war, and with nerving them to the sacrifice they made for the preservation of the Government.

Is it probable that the fires of Liberty would have burned as warmly in the breasts of the lovers of the old Union,—that the sentiment of loyalty would have been as strong in the land, had not the patriotic deeds of the early fathers and the sacrifices of the early mothers, been publicly rehearsed throughout the states, as often as once a year, by processions, parades and orations and in story and in song, ever since "those days that tried men's souls?" It is well then, that in nearly every community there are patriotic people, always including patriotic ladies who will not willingly let this day pass unobserved,—people who represent true love of country, those to whom refer-

ence was made so prophetically in that famous letter to which your attention has already been called. True indeed was it then, and at all times it is true, that, "Words fitly spoken are like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

With what stern devotion to truth—with what earnest hopes for success—with what ardent longings for the last battle and that it might be victorious did those early sentinels upon the Watch Tower of Liberty look forth into the dim future? Theirs was not the enthusiasm of the victor, but, rather, that of the soldier who enlists for the war.

Representing these thirteen scattered little colonies whose average population was less than that of our own state at this time, and whose total population did not exceed that of a single State of this Union to-day, they had been in long and earnest consultation over the condition of the people whom they represented. With no public treasury except that to which the people voluntarily contributed, with only such arms as could be procured by individual donation throughout the country, with few munitions of war, of a general character—with very great lack of the necessaries of life among the colonists—and in some instances with poverty stern and unrelenting staring them in the face—poverty struggling with patriotism—these men were relied upon to save the land from conquest by a foe whose armies in contest with other and powerful nations, had been victorious by land and by sea—a nation which did not then, and never since has, willingly admitted that in the prowess of its arms it had a superior on the globe.

In the battles already fought the colonists had lost many men and not a few valuable officers, of whom Warren, who fell at Bunker Hill, was chief. Wisdom and courage, and discretion, and devotion to one's country were the qualities required of the congress then in session, and nobly and well did it act in favor of the truth and the right.

"Honor to them—God bless them all
Who sat that day in Congress Hall
And pledged their names and honor bright
To stand for freedom and the right!
How well that sacred vow was kept,

How well they battled side by side
Through the long years when conflict swept
The colonies with ruin wide,
Yon starry banner's graceful play
Proclaims through every breeze to-day."

We who live at this time, and who have seen even amidst the darkest days of the Republic, but little national, or even personal deprivation, comparatively, can have but a faint idea of the hardships endured by the people in those early days. Bear in mind, when contemplating the events of that period, that steamboats and railroads and telegraphs—not to mention an almost numberless list of minor inventions, useful in war, were still undiscovered—that the most rapid method of communication was with horses and relays of horses which extended under the most favorable circumstances, but a little more than one hundred miles a day. The Declaration of Independence was indeed made against most powerful and portending odds. The faith of the early fathers in the right of the people to self-government and the ultimate triumph of their cause could have been second only to that of the Christian in his Savior.

Having once asserted our rights, and our determination at all hazards to secure and maintain them—the truly good and great, the patriotic, liberty-loving men of all nations sympathized with our cause. From over the sea came some of our ablest Generals and Commanders and many of our best soldiers. Of these the Marquis De La Fayette deserves more than a passing notice, to-day. He came from fighting stock. His father, who belonged to the French nobility, fell in battle in Germany at the age of 25. His mother died soon after, leaving him an orphan when a mere child. He married at the age of 16, a lady still younger, who ever after sympathized with him during all his remarkable career. At the age of 19, hearing that the American colonies had declared their independence of England, he determined to come to this new country and join the Continental army. At this period the cause of American liberty looked desperate. Fort Washington had just been lost, New York occupied by the British, and the Americans were on a retreat through

New Jersey. He was urged to abandon his design, but all to no purpose. Then he was watched and thwarted in every way possible to prevent his embarkment for this country. He left in secret on a vessel fitted out at Bordeaux. Encouraged by his wife who fully espoused the American cause, he effected by stratagem what he could not do openly and landed on our shores at Georgetown, South Carolina, in April, 1777. His arrival produced a most favorable sensation. The United States commissioned him as Major General on the 31st of July following, and while he yet lacked more than a month of being 20 years old. The valuable services he rendered are a bright example to the youth of our day, as well as a worthy illustration of the ability of young men.

De Grasse, the successful naval commander to whom the British fleet lowered its flag, when Cornwallis surrendered to Washington; Steuben, the great organizer and disciplinarian of our forces; De Kalb, the brave general who fell at Camden; Kosciusko, the skillful engineer who built our fortifications; Pulaski, the creator and brilliant leader of our cavalry; and the other heroes, who like them, fresh from the best military schools of Europe and the hard fought battle fields of the old world, brought their learning, skill and experience to our aid, and who from pure love of liberty, and, fired by generous ardor, helped to fight our battles and win our victories,—we honor as our own.

Wherever the spirit of liberty prevailed there were found volunteers who espoused our cause—men who gladly came to join us in demonstrating the truth of those principles upon which we based our hopes of success. Our final triumph and the proclamation of peace in 1783 was the triumph of all who fought for and who have since lived under the protecting aegis of our government. It was a victory for the lovers of liberty throughout the world. The message which that old flag—the ever victorious representative of freedom, conveys to every man who reads aright its emblems, no matter from what country he came hither, is: "Equality before the Law," and protection for all.

Here arises the question—have we as a people realized the destiny predicted for us by the men of those days? We answer "yes," and venture to say, far more than realized it. We have in one hundred years increased our population from three millions to forty-five millions, and the number of our States from thirteen to thirty-eight. We have extended our settlements from the Atlantic to the Pacific—we have blotted out the border line of barbarism and dotted the entire land over with the cottages of enlightened civilization—we have demonstrated to our satisfaction and to the world, we think, our ability to preserve intact, from rebels within and foes without, the Union bequeathed to us by our fathers—we have extended our trade, under the protection of the National banner, to every port on the globe; we have covered the high seas with our commerce abroad, and at home have built cities of magnificent proportions. We have increased our yearly exports, estimating by the last eleven months, from a cypher to the enormous figure of \$741,318,778, and in excess of our imports \$270,590,671. By inventions of our own free men we have transformed the single-hand scythe, sickle and flail into the mower, reaper and thresher with horse-power. We have replaced the turnpike with the railroad; turned the slow-sailing schooner into the flying steamship, and annihilated time and space with the telegraph. We have spanned the continent with our railways, covered it with our people, and extended our domain to double its Continental proportions, and we have turned a land of Slavery into a land of Liberty. In art, in industry, in science, in learning, in literature, discovery and invention, as well as in National Honor, we have placed ourselves in the front rank, and among the most exalted nations of the earth; while in virtue and in morals, as a people we are not, in proportion to our numbers, behind any nation that can be named. Above all, and better than all, we have set an example as a patriotic, enterprising, industrious and free people, well worth the imitation of all nations, and in our government successfully illustrated the truth of the principles laid down in the

Declaration of Independence, for more than one hundred years.

To-day, as the citizens of a commonwealth which is fast becoming great, we may well review our own State history and see in what relation we stand to the National government and its progress. When Independence was declared, the territory from which the State of Nebraska was carved was foreign soil and under Spanish rule, and there it remained until 1800, when Spain ceded it to France, and by that government it was sold to the United States in 1803. The vast valley of the Missouri, which stretches from the river on our eastern border, whose name it bears, to the Rocky Mountains in the West, and eastward to the valley of the Mississippi—covering an immense tract of many millions of acres of the most productive land on the continent, was, until a period within the memory of many now before me, only known as Indian territory, the home of the red man, and was designated on approved maps as the "Great American Desert." Fifty years ago, even, it had not been explored, except that the government had, at intervals of several years, sent a few parties up the Missouri river as discoverers, and the adventurous Indian trader had coasted along its river banks in quest of furs and such other commodities as the savages possessed and which they were ready to dispose of at fabulously low prices, for tobacco and the white man's inexpensive trinkets.

But this condition of things could not long continue after the spirit of emigration had once been aroused and the wonderful richness of this goodly land had become known. As one Territory after another from Ohio to Iowa had yielded up its virgin soil to the advancing tide of emigration, so Nebraska, in its turn a quarter of a century ago, in order to protect its sparse settlements from Indian depredations, applied for a Territorial government, and was formed as a Territory on the 30th day of May, 1854. In thirteen years more, so rapid had been its settlement, a State government was secured. From that period our advancement in all that goes to make up a prosperous people, has been most remarkable. The admission of

the State deserves, on this occasion, further notice. When organized it embraced a much larger area than now, Colorado and Dakota each possessing some of the territory then included in Nebraska. In March, 1860, the people voted on a question of State government and rejected it by about one hundred majority. In April, 1864, Congress passed the necessary enabling act for our admission, but the prevailing war for the Union and other minor causes delayed action under it. Early in 1866, the Territorial Legislature framed a constitution for a State, and in June of that year the people, by a small majority, ratified it, and the first Legislature under the new government met at Omaha, July 4th, 1866. The same month Congress passed a bill for our admission, but it failed to obtain the signature of the President. The next year another bill was passed, but this was vetoed, principally on the ground that the population was not sufficient, but the bill was passed over the veto. This act provided "that it should not take effect except upon the fundamental condition that there should be no denial of the elective franchise, or of any other right, to any person, by reason of race or color, except Indians not taxed." On February 20th this act was ratified by the Legislature, and on March 1st, 1867, it took effect by the proclamation of the President, and Nebraska became a State.

We are apt to hear men say that our State is not progressing as fast as it should. How is this? Let us here make a few notes as to our advancement in the last twelve years, or from the period which marked the close of the late war for the Union and our admission as a State.

Then we had about 50,000 people, and these mostly scattered along the bank of the Missouri—now we have 350,000, and their settlements extend, as these thickly cultivated fields and this waving grain demonstrate, from the river westward hundreds of miles—and, at our present rate of addition—40,000 a year—in two years more, when the United States census of 1880 is taken, we shall have increased our population to nearly, if not quite, half a million. Then we had but twenty-six organized counties, now

there are sixty-nine; then there were but seventeen newspapers to represent public opinion, now we have one hundred and seventeen, by the last reckoning a week ago. How many more there are to-day, it will take another count to tell.

Then, but few school houses, and those of the most antique style, opened their doors to our children—now thousands adorn the land, and in almost every village can be found school buildings which would lend grace to any city. These speak in eloquent language the educational spirit of our people. Then, institutions where classical and higher education could be obtained were scarcely known. Now there are many, while our State University is fast becoming famous as a seat of learning of high rank. The national endowment of this institution is worthy of note here. It consists of 45,119 acres of land for the University proper, and 89,452 acres for the Agricultural College connected with it. Our State Constitution provides that these lands shall not be sold for less than seven dollars per acre. As some of them have already been sold at double that price, it will readily be seen that the University fund raised from this endowment will ultimately reach several millions of dollars. This magnificent heritage our people should guard with strictest paternal care. We have before us the unfortunate example of other States, whose Universities had endowments of this character, but whose Legislatures by too early sales of their lands and at insignificant prices—and by other means known to political speculators—squandered these generous bequests of the government and reduced to thousands, a fund which, properly managed, would have reached millions.

Twelve years ago the number of children in our public schools was estimated at 12,000. Now there are 92,161, between the ages of five and twenty-one, enrolled. Then the school apportionment from the State tax was but about \$10,000. Now it has reached \$89,573.90. The school fund apportionment was then but a few thousand dollars. It is now \$328,082.15, while the permanent investment of the school funds in State and county bonds is already \$98,035.01 and the

public school expenditures for all purposes last year were \$1,037,192.21. The school property of the State, then of mere nominal value, is now officially reported at \$1,862,385.88, while the wages of teachers now amount to the liberal sum of \$457,048.70. At that time our churches could scarcely be counted beyond scores—now we have nearly five hundred. Then there were but few cities, the largest of these boasting of about 3,000 people—now we have cities by the score, many of them created by and scattered along our railroad lines, flourishing evidences of our rapid advancement, set like so many gems in the diadem of beauty; while Omaha, the first commercial town, has increased her census to 25,000, and Lincoln, then unknown, with not a house on the ground where it stands, save the humble cot of a single frontiersman—now the capital of our State and the bright example of western enterprise, has its 10,000 people, the University, the Capitol, the Insane Asylum, the Penitentiary, the National Court House and Post Office, its High School, Churches, Opera House, Public Halls, and all other embellishments which a cultivated taste could devise.

Then Nebraska had but 245 miles of railroad, and those just built by the Union Pacific and extending to the 100th meridian, now there are 1,235 miles, and every day adds to the number, while the appraised value of the same for taxation is \$8,570,387.20. Twelve years ago the State expenditures per annum were less than \$50,000; now we have reached in State disbursements the sum of \$1,202,493.84 including 557,785.82 funded debt. Then our internal revenue tax was a mere nominal sum, now it is over \$600,000, and more than that of four of the New England States combined. The number of acres of land taxed in 1867 was 1,888,038 and at an assessed value of \$7,299,809; now, there are returned by the county clerks for taxation 13,081,219 acres, and the assessed value of the same is \$69,263,823.51. In addition to this the town lot assessment is \$8,612,083.70. The personal property of the State was then assessed at \$8,013,040; now it reaches \$26,513,628.76; total

valuation for taxation \$74,389,535.97. These figures, it must be remembered at the usual rates of appraisal for taxation, represent only about one-third of the value of the property taxed. The number of banks in the State then was but nine, three of which were National with \$150,000 capital; now we have 52 banks, 15 of them State and National with a capital of \$1,500,000. Private Bank capital not estimated. I have been unable to obtain the correct figures as to the number of acres cultivated there, but last year the number was 2,358,553; and the average cultivated in 1878, is far in excess of that in 1877.

Our export trade had then scarcely begun, in fact it by no means equaled our imports,—while last year this young State shipped away over 8,000,000 bushels of grain, 40,000 head of cattle, and 50,000 hogs besides 125,000 slaughtered in our packing houses. The estimate for this year is a surplus of 73,000,000 bushels of grain, 80,000 hogs and 60,000 cattle to be transported to eastern markets.

So much for grain and cattle and hogs, three leading products of the State. By the latest returns it appears we have in the State in round numbers 450,000 cattle, 500,000 hogs; and 100,000 sheep.

As a grain producing State, Nebraska stands to-day the fourth in the Union and soon will be the third, else the immense and constant emigration to our fertile fields and rich valleys, does not indicate aright. The wheat reports show that Minnesota stands first with her 60,000,000 bushels; then Iowa 40,000,000; Kansas next with 30,000,000, then Nebraska comes up with 25,000,000 bushels. Following in order is Missouri with but 15,000,000 bushels. Of corn alone Nebraska last year raised 32,817,143 bushels, and of oats, barley and rye, 8,000,000 bushels. In fruit—especially in apples it is known Nebraska leads all the States of the Union.

In the manufacture of flour however, Nebraska in proportion to her bushels of grain is behind, showing that, in this line, an immense and most profitable field is yet unoccupied. While Minnesota has 2,200 mills, or run of stone—Nebraska raising more than one-third as much wheat, has but

250 mills. With water power abundant, such opportunities for home manufacture cannot long escape the eye of the enterprising miller, and this is but one illustration of the many kinds of manufacturing which will soon be carried on in our State, and for the simple business reason that the men engaged therein will make money thereby. The faster we provide for the home manufacture of our own products and the fitting them at our own doors, for market and consumption, the more speedy and substantial will be our growth in population and wealth. To allow our wheat, for instance, to be bought by speculators, sent off to St. Louis to be floured, and then, with all the additional expense attending the various preparations which accompany its progress from the field to the kitchen, to be attached, and with added transportation, to buy it back at our own Nebraska groceries, and besides give it the preference to any other flour simply because it is the best, and therefore bears the highest price, is a huge practical joke on our people which they will ere long see and appreciate to their ultimate manufacturing and moneyed benefit.

What we want, and what we must have, ultimately, to become a prosperous, money-making people is a manufacturing, laboring, industrial population of proportions adequate to our productions, a population which will consume at the golden gateway of our immense harvest fields, every kernel of that surplus which is not needed to sustain the life of the toiling producer. Every county must have its flouring mills, its manufactories of farming implements and of all the various kinds of machinery which the toiling millions of Industry need in their daily avocations. Then the enterprise of our people will be amply remunerative. Then the busy hum of the whirling wheel, the buzz of the revolving saw, the whirring of the dressing plain, and the rip-rap of the falling hammer, will fill the air with the joyous music of peace, plenty and pleasure. When the beautiful town of York, where we to-day celebrate, now but five years old, with its thousand people, shall have accomplished these ends for herself, there will de-

velop here a city numbering its people by thousands and tens of thousands, a people whose road to wealth and weal shall pass close by each happy door.

Our state interests are immense and they are our heritage. Who is there among our people, who among the hardy sons of toil, so oblivious to his duty as a citizen, as an integral part of the State,—as not to be willing at all times to lend an honest hand to the work of its speedy material development? Again I ask, who? Is it not high time that promotion of self and self interests in money matters, and in all things else, should be sought chiefly through the promotion of the great interests of the state and the general advancement of the public good? Our state is fast ripening with the harvest of prosperity. Her citizens have but to plant the seed of present hopes to quickly realize the bountiful harvest of a future promise. With a soil which has no rival in the world for its rapid and abundant productions,—with our immense fields everywhere loaded with bountiful crops, with a rapidly increasing population of hardy, diligent settlers—emigrants who have come from Germany, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and various other foreign lands, and from the States east of us—many of whom are Union war soldiers—all for one common purpose, and all of whom are striving to attain on common end—wealth and happiness,—with our railroads spanning and soon to span our State in every direction to carry our products to market, well may we look hopefully and trustfully into the future.

Nebraska challenges the entire Union of States, acre to acre, product to product, and she fears no danger in the contest. With her inexhaustible valleys of native grasses upon which her cattle become seal-fat for market; with a soil upon which timber grows like vegetation, with abundant natural irrigation through her spreading rivers, her winding creeks and numerous streamlets, her never-failing springs, the deep, inexhaustible richness of her broad acres will always be well watered. I am indebted to Prof. Aughey, of the State University, for the statement that one hundred and eleven living and important springs

are running in this State, which have commenced to flow in the last four years. Add to these constant supplies the well-known fact that with extending settlements westward, the rain-fall from year to year increases—a fact now established by actual measurement beyond cavil—and all fears of drouth will soon be unknown within our borders. We are, and always must remain an agricultural and stock-raising, pastoral people. We are not left to envy our youngest sister on the west on account of her mines of precious metals—as charming as she may be with her silver crown, crystal veil and golden sandals—for we have in our fertile fields mines far more valuable than hers, patiently waiting to be wrought and certain of speedy production. True, the prospector in the land of precious ores may now and then “strike it rich,” but the chances are nine to one that he will “strike it poor indeed.” Who that has ever seen this beautiful slope of the Missouri, has not said to himself, here are mines of untold wealth; here labor cannot long go unrewarded; here is the garden of the West, and here these fertile acres present to the man of willing industry an enchanting home ground.

We have but to advertise our resources, to let it be known abroad that we have, and can have, no rival as a stock-raising and grain-growing country, and all will be well. Let the State, then, stretch forth its lusty arms and with open hands woo and welcome the immigrant who seeks a new home, and ten years shall not have passed ere a million of people shall bless the day upon which they first trod the soil of Nebraska. To attain this end, and to preserve the State from political as well as financial disasters, should be the aim of every true patriot.

Our State pride, however, should not blind us to our National affairs nor prevent us from looking well to the interests of the general government. Taking Nebraska as a specimen State of the West, the time is not far distant when Western representation in the Halls of Congress will be such as to make itself felt as a power in the land.

In times like these when the chosen rulers of the Republic stoop to con-

quer; when government officials in high places employ men and women professedly more corrupt than themselves, but, in truth, no more so, to perform such dishonest political work as these officials would not deign in person to touch with one of their fingers, when the old ship of state launched upon the deep blue sea of Liberty by virtue of the high endeavor of our forefathers, amid trials and dangers which shook the stoutest hearts, is coasting where breakers betoken treacherous rocks in her pathway, it is high time that every patriotic citizen turn to the old National chart, to the compass established by the framers of our government, to see if he may, whither we are drifting. If we are nearing the shore we must watch the ancient landmarks. Guided by them, we shall escape the threatening dangers.

It is, then, and always has been, well for our people to gather around the old flag upon occasions like this, in public assemblies, and rehearse the story of 1776. The people of these United States never tire of listening to the patriotic incidents which attended the birth of the Republic, and it is well for our government that this is so. Neither will those who survive to enjoy the continuance of the Union since the rebellion, cease to cherish the warmest interest in the memory of those who fell in defence of those civil rights which were bequeathed to us by the brave old heroes of the Revolution. Amid the battle of life and the din of the daily contest for success, we may for the moment become oblivious to the terrible, soul-sickening scenes of the late war for the Union; yet, how easily the least spark from memory's camp-fire rekindles the flame of a never-dying patriotism in the breast of every lover of the Republic!

True patriots need no rules to remind them of their duty. Did they, what better ones could be found than those laid down by the “Society of Cincinnati,” an organization created near the close of the Revolution and composed of military heroes:—

“1. An incessant attention to preserve inviolate those exalted rights and liberties of human nature, for which they have fought and bled, and

without which the high rank of national being is a curse instead of a blessing.

“2. An unalterable determination to promote and cherish, between the respective States, that unison and national honor, so essentially necessary to their happiness and the future dignity of the American Empire.”

And what, my countrymen, of the special events of to-day?—what of the wars and rumors of wars in the Old World, and of the tendency to centralization of government in the New? While we watch with eager interest the passing events of foreign lands, whose rulers are to-day contesting, as it were, inch by inch, the right of domain, and whose highest ambition is not, as it should be, how to so conduct their respective national affairs as to secure to the people whom they rule the greatest personal liberty in all things, consonant with the safety of the government,—but, rather, who strive for the aggrandisement which increased empire begets, because it betokens power, and brings under control more subjects and hence more soldiers, and while we may sharply criticise the designs of these monarchs we must not forget that our best thoughts and ablest efforts, as true patriots, are needed at home.

In our own beloved country to-day a spirit prevails which tends toward anarchy. It is that spirit which is the natural offspring of those corrupting influences which surround the first great privilege of the American citizen—the right to vote, the right to dictate free and unrestrained the rulers and the laws by which he himself shall be governed. It is the spirit which dares to do any act or thing whereby the freely expressed will of the majority may be defeated or even modified. So long as the chosen representatives to the highest legislative body in the land wink at corruption in political affairs, so long as they use for hire those who claim to be skilled in adroitly cheating the ballot-box of its sacred mission, so long as men in power not only tolerate but even court the society of those whom they know to be tricksters—so long as the political circulating medium of the day is money rather than merit,—there is danger to the Republic, it may be remote, or,

perchance, it may be immediate. As long as the people can be hoodwinked by, and made to support designing politicians by personal entreaty,—as long as second and third rate men are hired at so much a day to travel in the interests of the candidates,—as long as otherwise respectable men can be induced to support, for public positions, those well known to be disreputable and void of some of the most essential principles of morality and virtue,—as long as the people allow politicians to combine and by their united strength to place themselves in power, and thus indirectly supplant the free will of the masses,—there is danger to the Republic.

The fear that this government, a government which has stood a beacon light on the ocean shore of human liberty for more than a century—shall ever be less Republican, less Democratic, than to-day, does not lie in our increased possessions—the enhanced value of our exchequer—the swelling of our population nor the vastness of our national expenditures. All these, each of which has been predicted as the ultimate cause of the overthrow of our free institutions, are as nothing when compared with the wide-spread and constantly increasing evil arising from the dishonest use of money in politics, and the buying and selling of places of public trust for political purposes. The eyes of all nations are upon us, and wherever the prevailing sentiment of a government is in favor of monarchy, there our political corruption is pointed at as the natural outgrowth of republicanism and the sure indication of our destruction as a nation.

We boast of our free institutions, of our free men, free speech, free press and free schools—and yet, are we free? Is the ballot box the unerring index to our real, truthful opinions? Do we guard it as the most sacred gift bequeathed to us by our forefathers? Is the choice of the people, rather than the choice of politicians, purely expressed through its agency? I leave you, my countrymen, to answer.

But, ere we close let us turn again for a moment toward pleasanter thoughts—thoughts of our own thriving and promising State—of its fu-

ture growth and greatness. Situated, as it is, mid-way between the two great oceans which lave the eastern and western shores of the continent and mid-way between British America on the north and Mexico on the south and in the center of the Union, with two thousand miles of navigable water from it extending each way north and south, and from the mountains to the sea; with its two thousand miles of railroad connections each way east and west, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific; with its 76,000 square miles of territory, or 48,640,000 acres, a tract larger than all New England with its six States; with a people proverbial for industry, intelligence and probity, what may we not hope for the future? Let the most enthusiastic of my hearers, in imagination, draw a picture of Nebraska as she will be when half as old as New England, and the prophetic sketch will but faintly outline the fulfillment of her destiny as she will appear when five millions of people shall occupy her fields and her cities—hence, one hundred years. While striving for ourselves then let us not be unmindful of those who are to come after us, though a century shall have passed away ere they take our places.

This day is sacred to Liberty. It is the holiday of holidays throughout the land. From Maine to California, from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, everywhere patriotic assemblages are gathered to renew their allegiance to the Old Flag, and to kneel again at the altar of Freedom and pledge thereon anew, their sacred vows to protect the starry banner and the Republic it represents—wherever it floats, and to swear by the blood of the brave heroes who fell fighting for Independence in the olden time,—by the tear of the mother of the early days and the wail of the orphan,—by the groan of the dying soldier and the patriotic whisper of his last breath,—by all the sacred memories of the Revolution and by all the terrors of the late rebellion,—to stand by the old flag and preserve it inviolate from the touch of the invader, the rebel, and every other foe.

The old flag* which you see festooned here above this stand, is worthy of remembrance and remark. I

am informed by one of the Union soldiers who rescued it, Mr. Eli F. Chittenden, one of your citizens, and to whom the flag now belongs, that it was first raised at Renick, Mo., by the First Iowa regiment, which took possession of the town, and, seeing no stars and stripes floating, asked if they had no Union flag in town. They were told the ladies had one, and brought forth this one. It is, as you see, a large one but somewhat rude. It has, however, the eagle, the stars and stripes, though tattered, soiled and terribly torn. After the capture of the town, the rebels returned, and with most wrathful demonstrations, undertook to take down the flag. It was securely fastened, however, and then they tore it and riddled it with over one hundred bullet holes, and here they are—count them if you will. While in the act they were attacked by the Fourteenth Illinois infantry, under Col. Palmer, and the flag recovered. "Long may it wave." And by this flag, too, let us swear eternal fealty to the old Union, and pledge ourselves for it, and by it to stand forever.

In the pride of our National greatness we will not forget our sister Republics who to-day remember us and wish us good cheer. To all of these let us send greeting: To France, our ancient ally, learned, polite, and self-reliant where to-day the flag of our Republic floats side by side with the tri-color over that multitude of gallant Americans who, gathered at the world's fair, in Paris, are celebrating their own national birthday amid surrounding shouts of "*Vive la Republique d' Amerique*,"—to Switzerland, mountainous, musical and merry, impregnable in her Alpine fastnesses,—to Liberia, patient and hopeful—to the South American Republics, the Argentine, Bolivia, Chili, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela,—and in Central America to Costa Rica, San Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatamala and Honduras, San Domingo and Hayti, and last, but by no means least in her turmoils and revolutions—Mexico.

To-day from yonder spirit-land, the forms of Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Franklin, Jay, Rutledge, La-Fayette, Warren, and the other great heroes of the Revolution are looking down upon us, joyous that we are still celebrating the natal day of the Republic, and speaking to us, unseen but not unfelt, words of most cheering assurance. Upon us all, upon you, upon me, upon every man, woman and child of this land has fallen the mantle of the brave ones who offered themselves a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom, that we might live. To us has fallen the lot to protect, preserve and perpetuate the Republic. Let us then prove to our country, to posterity and to the world, that we are the worthy sons of worthy sires.

With a love for humanity and for its sake, for the true principles of the government, unlimited in its scope, a love that knows no North, no South, no East and no West, but only the welfare of the Union as it was handed down to us by our Fathers and by us preserved from the hand of the destroyer—we will go forward in the full confidence of future greatness and with honest, constant and earnest effort to protect inviolate and un sullied the heritage bequeathed to us by the heroes of 1776, trusting thereby to promote the truest and best interests of our Nation and our State.

And now, to thee,—O, flag of Truth—
Flag with ever blooming youth—
Thou flag inscribed to Liberty—
The flag that floats above the free—
The flag whose every thread is brave,
Whose stripes were pierced, this day to save;

To thee, we dedicate anew
Our pledges—faithful, tried and true—
And, by the glories of thy light,
And by thy crimson, blue and white—
By all the stars thy union holds
And every rustling of thy folds—
Again, we swear by thee to stand,
Proud emblem of our ransomed land.

* [NOTE.—At the close of the oration Columbus Smith, one of the soldiers of the First Iowa, who erected this flag at Renick came forward and made himself known much to the surprise and gratification of the audience, who then gave three times three for the flag and its defenders.