

AN ORATION

ON NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE,

(DELIVERED BY PUBLIC REQUEST,)

ON THE FOURTH JULY, 1837,

AT

PORT GIBSON, MISSISSIPPI,

THE  
UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI  
1837

CONSISTING, PRINCIPALLY, OF A SKETCH OF THE RISE OF THE STATE OF  
MISSISSIPPI, FROM THE EXPLORATION OF DE SOTO, IN 1539,  
TO THE PRESENT TIME.

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BY MANN BUTLER.

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## ORATION.

ATTEND the gratitude, so righteously due to the Supreme Disposer of events, for the flood of happiness poured upon our country, by its Independence, let us enquire how we can best commemorate this noble deed of our ancestors. How can we best improve this most merciful dispensation of Divine Providence, so as to perpetuate its blessings of Liberty and Independence?—It has often struck the writer, that dilating on the military events of the American Revolution, (which has long ceased to be a novel course,) never was a very instructive one. Instead of loose, popular criticisms on military evolutions, it would be better occasionally to devote a portion of our national meeting to a review of the history of the individual States, each in its own jurisdiction, and thus imprinting these dear domestic mementos upon our hearts. The vestals in our political temple are in danger of being overshadowed by the great goddess herself, on whose worship they minister.

The central government of this republic is excellent, nay admirable in its own distant sphere; it preserves peace among the sister republics at home, and defends them most effectually from foreign violence. Still, we should not do well to allow it to engross our attention, much more our regard. The States of this Union, let it never be forgotten by American freemen, are their most precious depositories of freedom and domestic happiness. To these peculiar institutions of our country, so superior in dignity and worth to the dependent provincial and departmental organization of other countries; this phalanx of republics girdling our country and in turn girdled by it, which so much embarrasses foreign visitors and critics, we must flee to shield us from oppression in the federal head. Let us not, for one moment, as we value the dearest recommendations and the sweetest fruits of confederation, be seduced by the imperial splendor and power of the central republic, from our attachment to the States. They are the cradles, if not the castles

of our noble liberty. Every American has a double allegiance to perform,—one to each order of government constituting our country.

To contribute to perform this duty to our State, we now will, in a brief and rapid manner, sketch the rise and progress of Mississippi, from its earliest European explorations to its present fame and happiness.

There is no portion of the great republic of North America that possesses such old and interesting reminiscences of European connection as Mississippi. Not even the ancient colony and dominion of Virginia; nor the land consecrated by the pious enterprises of the Puritan Pilgrims equals the ancient romance of Mississippi history.

Is there a doubt that they form a fit foundation for State pride? A generous incentive to show the superiority of the American system of government to that of the monarchies of France and Spain, that preceded it? The contrast of this foreign government with our native rule is fraught with topics of curiosity, pride and instruction. Yet I have found great difficulty, in tracing any thing like a continuous line of Mississippi history. It is a most engaging portion of our general story; full of romantic incidents; touched now by a Peruvian Inca, a Spanish and Portuguese soldier; and then by French missionaries and statesmen.\* Still, notwithstanding these diversified sketches, they are at such detached times, and in such broken condition, that the history of Mississippi may be safely pronounced essentially unknown.† In the absence of the brighter lights indicated

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\* Garcilasso de Vega, a descendant of the Peruvian Incas, in his conquest of Florida, translated by Irving; Charlevoix's Nouvelle France, and Marbois's History of Louisiana.

† There is, I have learned it with a surprise only equalled by the pleasure it excited, a collection of rich and interesting documents in the possession of one of Mississippi's favorite sons—the Hon. John F. H. Claiborne; that he has made considerable progress in combining his materials for the public eye; and that moreover his liberal and enlarged views extend to consulting for farther illustrations, the archives of France and Spain. These foreign repositories of political records may well be called, in the language of a Roman historian, our *primordia* *actis*—the cradles of our history.

in the note, a faint outline of the progress of this interesting State, such as a position remote from public libraries has permitted me to execute, will be looked on with indulgence.

On the 27th March, 1512, fourteen years after the discovery by Columbus of the main land of America, Ponce de Leon discovered Florida, in his romantic search for the fountain of youth. This was a spring, which was extensively believed at that day, to possess the virtue of renewing the wasted powers of life. Notwithstanding this charmed power in the waters of Florida, the discoverer died mortally wounded in a contest with the warlike natives. He was soon followed by various adventurers, British and Spanish. But Pamphilo de Narvaez and Hernando de Soto, were the most distinguished. The former is supposed to have landed, on the 12th of April, 1528, near the bay, now called Apalachee. After passing six months in exploring Florida, he coasted the southern margin of this State and the whole party, except four, were shipwrecked, near the mouth of the Mississippi. The survivors, after years of captivity and hardship among the Indians, reached the city of Mexico. De Soto, whose fame you so well commemorate, in one of the northern counties of the State, possibly in the path of his ancient exploration, next followed. This most remarkable adventurer, even at a time and in a nation of unsurpassed enterprise, as if destined to realize the wildest visions of romance, had participated with Pizarro in the conquest of Peru. He had realized, in that fairy work, every thing, it might well be supposed, that love of fame and wealth could desire. Still this favorite of fortune, the pride of the knights of Old Castile, panted to intertwine his heroic and wayward fate with the stately forests of Mississippi. His keen passion for adventure kindled at the news brought to Spain, by the surviving associates of Narvaez; and he easily obtained from the partiality and confidence of Charles the Fifth, then Emperor of Germany and King of Spain and the Indies, the government of Cuba and of Florida.

In May, 1539, all but 300 years ago, the Adelantado of Florida landed at the bay of Espiritu Santo, the Tampa bay of our modern topography. Hence, after establishing a depot at the bay of Achusi, the modern Pensacola, and concerting communications with his noble wife, whom he had left in charge of his government, at Havana, he proceeded into the interior.

Without expatiating on the desperate and gallant contests between the native sons of the forest, (most probably the ancestors of the Seminoles,) and their warlike invaders, I will barely select a few of the most prominent and interesting points, which have been identified in this, the boldest of the European explorations of Alabama, Mississippi and Arkansas. Tuscaluza or Tuscaloosa, as it is now written, is first presented. He was, says the Peruvian historian, "one of the most politic, proud, and warlike of the native chieftains of the south." He has left his name indelibly stamped in a river, and the capital of the neighboring State of Alabama. His territories must have comprised a great part of what are now the States of Alabama and Mississippi.

The Spaniards entered his town of Mauvila, (evidently the original of Mobile,) which is supposed to have stood about the junction of the Tombeckbee with the Alabama river. Here was the scene of one of the bloodiest battles between the natives and their invaders. The ruins of this town, sacked and burnt by the Spaniards, became the tomb of the heroic chief of Tuscaloosa, and "several thousand of his subjects. The plain around the town was strewn with more than 2,500 bodies. Within the walls the streets were blocked up by the dead." "In one building a thousand persons perished in the flames," "a greater part of them females." It is some compensation for this demoniac havoc, that its authors did not entirely escape from the calamities they had brought upon these distant shores. Eighty-two Spaniards, cased as they were in armour of steel, perished, and forty-two Spanish horses were killed by the Indians and mourned "says the same historian," "as if they had been so many fellow soldiers." The baggage

and stores of the Spaniards were consumed in the flames of the town. The next point reached by the expedition, of immediate interest to us, is the province and town of Chicaza or Chickesaw. This is supposed to have been in the upper part of this State, on the western bank of the Yazoo, about 240 miles north-west of Mobile. Here the Spaniards experienced a desperate night attack from the Indians, losing many of their men and more of their horses, then unknown in America, and so precious to the invaders.

After many similar adventures, all testifying to the undaunted bravery and persevering fortitude in the natives, the Spanish party came in sight of the Mississippi, on the Rio Grande, as they called it. Below the lowest Chickesaw Bluff, the present site of Memphis, just ten miles above the northern limits of this State, is an ancient and convenient passage over the great river.\* Here De Soto is supposed to have crossed the Mississippi, and left the territory of our State. It does not comport with the purpose of this discourse to follow this gallant, but unfortunate wanderer beyond the limits of Mississippi. I will barely mention that, after penetrating to the highlands of White river, 200 miles from the Mississippi, to Little Prairie, the Salines and Hot springs of Washitta, the Spanish Captain reached the country about the mouth of Red river. Here he sent out a party to explore the country farther to the south. The frequent bayous, the impassable canebrakes and the dense woods permitted them to proceed but 40 miles in eight days; thus obstructed, the party returned with the disheartening intelligence they had procured. This disappointment, added to the sorrows of his whole career in these regions, so different from his fate on the golden coast of Peru, and a defiance sent him by a tribe of Indians near Natchez, completed the work of melancholy,

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\*Not 20 or 30 miles below the Arkansas, as supposed by Mr. Nuttall, in his "Arkansas"; but about 160 miles above it.

†Bancroft's U. S. Vol. 1, page 58, contains this digest of Spanish discoveries.

and broke the heart of De Soto. He fell a prey to a mortal disorder; and to conceal the body of the dauntless associate of Pizarro, the governor of Cuba and the first explorer of these south-western regions, "the corpse, wrapped in a mantle and in the stillness of midnight, was silently sunk in the Mississippi." Thus the discoverer of the Mississippi slept beneath its waters. "He had crossed the continent in search of gold," says the eloquent and most learned Bancroft, "and had found nothing so remarkable as his burial place."\* Three hundred out of one thousand, who had embarked with De Soto, alone lived to return to Mexico and to his heart broken wife, the noble Bobadilla. The Spaniards, after this succession of melancholy reverses, confined themselves, for a long time, to the eastern and northern coasts of Florida. From this sketch of Spanish exploration, let us turn to that of the French, the more permanent possessors of Louisiana and Mississippi. About 1673 the French, hearing from the natives of a great river to the west, which discharged its waters to the south, sent a party from Michillimackinac, under the direction of Father Marquette and M. Joliet, to ascertain the fact. These most enterprising voyagers proceeded down Lake Michigan to Green Bay; and up the Fox river to that Lake. Thence, under Indian guides, they were conducted over the portage to the Ouisconsin river. On the 17th June, the date of the battle of Bunker's Hill in the next century, our party reached the Mississippi; and thus became the European discoverers of its upper waters. This they descended, as low as the Arkansas, or Akamsca, as it is termed, in the journal; and delineated on a map of the Mississippi, the first ever published. It appeared at Paris in 1680. The party returned by the way of the Illinois river to Mackinaw. The animating tidings conveyed by these, the first Europeans, who ever descended from the upper waters, soon put new enterprises on foot.

The French government, in 1679, despatched La Salle

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\*Bancroft, ante, page 68.

by the way of the Lakes, on the same ground. He may have prosecuted the same route, with Marquette, as Hennepin asserts; but most probably did not descend below the Illinois river. Hennepin certainly ascended to the Falls of St. Anthony, and baptised them.

However this may be, La Salle, in 1684, set out from Rochelle, in France, at the head of a considerable expedition for the mouth of the Mississippi, but being driven by the currents out of his reckoning, he landed on the 18th February, 1685, in the Bay of St. Bernard, three or four hundred miles west of the Mississippi. Here, near the river Gaudaloupe, just east of the Rio Del Norte, he established a French colony. D'Iberville, (whose name is perpetuated in that of the Bayou Manchac, or Iberville, communicating with Lake Maurepas, from the Mississippi,) was likewise sent, at the head of another expedition from France in 1699. He again took possession, in the name of his country, of the region extending from Mobile to the Bay of St. Bernards; of course embracing the southern coast of this State.

In 1712, Louis the 14th granted to Crozat, a rich financier, the colony of Louisiana; so called by Hennepin, in honor of this monarch. In this patent, it was attempted to substitute the name of St. Louis, for the Mississippi, St. Stephen for Missouri, and St. Jerome for Wabash. With what success, this pious attempt to canonize our rivers has been attended, we all know! These saintly names exist but in the memory of antiquaries. Disappointment soon induced Crozat to part with his splendid, but burdensome, colony to the French company of the west. It was not, however, until 1721, according to Marbois, or between 1707 and 1717, on the authority of others, that settlements were made at Mobile; at Biloxi, west of the Pascagoula river, in the county of Jackson, in this State; and at New-Orleans.

A striking circumstance related by Charlevoix, who visited this country in the years 1720-21 and 22, illustrates, in a lively manner, the infant fortunes of the present brilliant capital of the south. At the time of his visit to the *hamlet* of New-Orleans, where now so many



proud spires tower into the air, and whose splendid edifices fill the admiring eye, Charlevoix could only get a tent in which to celebrate mass. The French soon extended their power to the present city of Natchez, where the ruins of Fort Rosalie still perpetuate the dominion of that lively but inconstant people.

There is an affecting circumstance related respecting the fate of some of the last chiefs of the Natchez Indians, which I cannot resist repeating. Those, who like the Peruvians, were believed by their countrymen to be children of the Sun, and were called Suns, had left a few remaining chiefs at Natchez. The French commanding officer, General Perrier, at length had them carried away from their homes, to Cape Francais, in the present island of Hayti.\* Here a miserable pittance for their daily support was soon deemed too great a burden, and they were ordered to be sold as slaves. There was likewise a French settlement at St. Peters, about fifteen miles above Vicksburg, at the first Yazoo Bluffs. The French colony languished, in a manner inconceivable to Americans. We, who are so much used to the free, untrammelled exertions of all the energies which God has given us, cannot well imagine, how luxuriant soils, beneficent climates, the facilities of the ocean, and rivers second but to the ocean, can all be lavished upon man, without his improving them. Yet such is the melancholy fact which has attended all the colonies planted on this continent by the Europeans, except our British ancestors. Monopoly of trade, the curse of over-government, and the arbitrary authority of any adventurer "clothed in a little brief authority" have thwarted the bounties of God, and kept a country a desert, which Divine Goodness had capacitated for an Eden. For a time, the grand scheme of uniting Canada with Louisiana, by a chain of posts from the St. Lawrence to the Mississippi, which should leave the British colonies, like a string to a bow, gave a momentary energy to the exertions of France; contests for the country, watered by the Ohio,

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Marbois's Louisiana.

brought on the war of 1755, commonly called the French war. It began July 3d, 1754, with the capture, by the French, of a fort begun by the Ohio company, on the site of what the French termed Fort Duquesne, and the Americans afterwards called Fort Pitt, the present Pittsburg. The gloomy reverses of Braddock on the Monongahela, and the capture of Fort William Henry, on Lake George, (so beautifully celebrated by our Cooper, in his "Last of the Mohicans,") seemed to threaten that our countrymen were to be driven off this continent, by the French and the Indians united. "But the clouds which had hung over the British empire, and had obscured the splendor of her arms, were about to disperse, under the administration of the most brilliant of English ministers of State. In June 1757, William Pitt, the elder, became for a second time, principal Secretary of State. By the following December, measures of the most vigorous and liberal character were adopted in regard to America." Soon the heroic Wolfe, and Amherst, and Vernon with our beloved Washington, Putnam and a host of American spirits, placed the proud fortresses of Quebec, and the Moro Castle of Havanna, and Fort Du Quesne, in the possession of British troops. The Spaniards were driven from your own Natchez, and Anthony Hutchins, the maternal grand father of your talented and liberal Claiborne, headed the noble deed. The cross of St. George floated in triumph from Quebec to Pensacola, and from the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico; Florida and Canada were subjected to the British Empire. "Americans may well look back with delight to this splendid portion of British history; for, on this continent, it emblazons the actions of our fathers, under a government then common to them and their British compatriots in the field. The proud triumphs over the House of Bourbon, on this side of the Atlantic, form an inheritance of fame for both America and England; the blood and talents of both countries were freely contributed to one great purpose of national aggrandizement; and both deserve honor, embittered as it is with the misfortunes of their gallant and enterprising antago-

nists. To this war America must look for the source of her western empire—"a prize," in the language of one, both an illustrious magistrate and an eloquent writer, "the capabilities of which, are now unfolding themselves with a grandeur and magnificence unexampled in the world; but of which, if the nominal possession had remained in either of the two princes, (English or French,) who were staking their kingdoms upon the issue of the strife, the Buffalo and the Beaver, with their hunter, the Indian savage, would at this day have been, as they then were, the only inhabitants."\*

This was indeed a triumphant period for the British race. But the prosperity of these colonies was a deceitful one. There was "a worm in the bud." British ambition, (so naturally the offspring, in every nation of military success,) could not any longer brook the complex system of colonial government and colonial privileges; which with all their embarrassments to prompt military movements, had still enabled the mother country to put down the French and Spanish, on this side of the Mississippi.

Our British ancestors had, from very early periods in the government of England, been accustomed to grant taxes by their own representatives, in the popular assemblies of that island. There had been no taxation—in regular times there could be none, either under the Saxon government or the Norman princes—without the substantial consent of the Commons, in free parliament assembled. This simple element, of popular consent to the burdens of government, has, by the progress of commercial society, the accumulation of wealth and the consequent extravagance of government, become a complete instrument, for controlling its operations. To refuse the appropriations of the year, stops, in these commercial times, the wheels of government; money is the essential oil, the very pabulum of all social operations in civilized society. Our forefathers would not admit that their rights and privileges had become any less by

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\*Oration on Lafayette by John Quincy Adams—page 5.

emigrating to this side of the Atlantic. No wonder then that a people, described by Burke as "one" "who snuff the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze," readily took fire at the attempt which the British government made to tax them; moreover "to bind them in all cases whatsoever" by mere act of Parliament. Taxes must, by the immemorial usages of the British constitution, be consented to by the Commons in free Parliament assembled. This popular consent could only be given, in America, by our colonial assemblies. These, our countrymen finally and passionately viewed, as types of the great assembly at home. It had made Europe ring with the fame of its bold and successful struggles with tyrannical kings, and with all the wiles and terrors of arbitrary power, until it had established the solid fabric of British freedom. The attempt of Britain to govern us, independent of these assemblies, aroused all the pride and love of old British freedom that was burning brightly in the land. Our ancestors felt that it was the old battle of Runnimeade and Magna Charta, which was to be fought over again, and on these western shores. This hostile policy to the old liberties of the British colonies was of no sudden growth; it engaged the cabinet of England from 1765, the date of the memorable stamp act, to 1775. Then the colonies were driven from arguments to arms, and from humble petitions to an earthly monarch, to an appeal to the Lord of Hosts, who is equally the God of people and of princes. The fortitude, the painful privations, the generous gallantry of our fathers, exhibited in many a battle field fought with the choicest officers and troops of Great Britain, have been often, and well, dwelt on.

Let our youth refresh their patriotism over the noble story of American battle, through nearly eight years, of poverty with wealth, of weakness with power, of a handful of people of yesterday with a nation that had proudly figured in history for nearly eighteen hundred years. "The race is not however always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong;" two British armies highly

appointed, one at Saratoga and the other at York, completed the wonder of Europe, finished the heroic work of the American Revolution, and established the independence of the United States.

It was the fate of this war to restore our Natchez and southern Mississippi to the Spaniards.

The independence of Mississippi was established by the independence of Georgia. That State maintained a chartered right to this country, extending to the western and southern boundaries of the United States, as settled by the treaty of Paris in 1783. By it, the Mississippi river was established as our western boundary and the parallel of 31 deg. north latitude, a little below Natchez, as our southern limit. The former of these boundaries, now enveloped in American territory, from its source to its mouth, then required all the patriotic firmness of John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the United States, to secure against the intrigues and machinations of both France and Spain. Much of this high honor is likewise due to the stern energies of George Rogers Clark, the founder of Kentucky, and the most consummate commander of the western country.

It was this hero, who at the head of the gallant riflemen of Virginia, captured the British forts of Kaskaskia and Vincennes, the latter armed with artillery, in 1778 and 1779. In 1780, he built the first American Fort on the banks of your own Mississippi, Fort Jefferson, at the Iron Banks. These military successes most essentially aided our negotiations at Paris, in withstanding the pertinacious intrigues of both branches of the House of Bourbon, at Paris and Madrid, to limit these States, first to the eastern side of the Alleghanies; and second, as the ultimatum, "to run the boundary to Fort Thoulouse, (the head of the Tombeckee, some where it is believed in this State,) and thence, by various points, which it is difficult if not impossible to identify in our recent topography, to intersect the Cumberland river, and the course of this river was to be followed to the Ohio river." Such was one of the early dreams of Spanish ambition; nor was it soon abandoned. It was

renewed by the intrigues of Don Garloqui with a Kentucky statesman, at New York, in 1793. The attempt was repeated through Thomas Power, a Spanish agent, deputed from New Orleans to Louisville in 1795; and again in 1797; when \$200,000 in money and any amount of military stores were offered to Kentucky, to detach herself from the Union. The compensation to Kentucky, for this treason, was the offer of all the territory north of the Yazoo, not forty miles north of the spot\* where we are now assembled. But what, at length, have these lingering intrigues effected for Spain? She has ceased to be a power on the continent of America. Not only has this fair and fertile land, these majestic forests, now blessed by the liberties of America, escaped from her grasp; but the Floridas, Louisiana, Mexico, nay the Indies, have abjured the government of the modern Croesus; and the successors of Charles Vth, and the Philips, on whose dominions the sun never set at once, are confined within the patrimony of the ancient Gothic kings of the Spanish peninsula.

It may not be uninteresting in this part of my sketch, to notice the earliest efforts of *our* countrymen at navigating the Mississippi, from the northern waters of the United States. "The first attempts, which I have been able to collect, were 1st, that of Colonel Richard Taylor, of the neighborhood of Louisville. This gentleman, in company with his brother Hancock Taylor, both of Virginia, was at Pittsburg in 1769; and thence descended the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, to the mouth of the Yazoo river. Thence the brothers descended, passed through the country of the southern Indians, to Georgia and to Virginia."† The information is on record in some judicial proceedings of Kentucky. 2d. The second attempt was made by a party of soldiers, by the names of John Whitaker Willis, John Ashby and William Ballard. These men had been engaged with Col. Andrew Lewis, in 1774, at the battle of Point Pleasant, at the mouth of the Kenhewa, against the Shawnees. After

\* Port Gibson, Mississippi.

† Butler's Kentucky, p. 155.

the battle they visited Kentucky, and afraid to return through the wilderness, they descended the river to New Orleans. Thence they procured a passage to Pensacola, and were forwarded, by the British Governor, home to Virginia. This information was obtained from an intimate friend of the parties, and a relative of your orator.\* 3d. The third voyage was made by Cols. Gibson and Linn, the latter the grandfather of Dr. Linn, now in the Senate of the United States, from Missouri. It took place from Pittsburg in 1776, by orders from Virginia, to procure from New Orleans, military stores for her western posts. The enterprise was rewarded by a success worthy of its boldness; it procured 156 kegs of gunpowder for the suffering posts at the head of the Ohio river.

From these historical sketches of the earlier years of Mississippi, my flight must be hastened over the precious volume of events, in whose luxuriant fruits our own State has so lavishly shared. Six years did not elapse after the treaty of 1783, when the present admirable system of government was adopted. The confederacy, to use a favorite revolutionary figure, was composed of thirteen States, which, it was dryly observed, without a hoop, would not make a barrel. The hoop was hammered on; and the vessel has served the best purposes ever since. One of the earliest benefits conferred on Mississippi, by the new government, was the negotiation of the Spanish treaty of 1795, which first provided for the removal of the Spaniards from Natchez, Walnut Hills, and in fine from Mississippi, and procured a right of deposite for our produce at New Orleans.

The next important step, much against the will of Georgia, was to establish the Mississippi Territory, in what Georgia had called Bourbon county. This was done by an act of Congress in 1798, establishing the boundaries of the territory of Mississippi along the 31st parallel of north latitude to the Mississippi, and up that

\*Captain William B. Wallace, formerly of Virginia, and lately of Kentucky.

river to the Yazoo river, and east to the Chatahochie. Yet the actual Indian boundary, called the old Choctaw boundary, was within 15 miles in an eastern direction from this place and about 20 miles from the Mississippi. Thus thirty-nine years ago the country of Mississippi, to which the Indian title had been extinguished, embraced a ribband along the river about 20 miles in width, by about 120 to 130 miles in length to the Yazoo; which is about an area of 2,400 or 2,600 square miles, or 1,536,000 acres. The American population was, by the census of 1800, only 8,850 souls, or something over three souls to the square mile; and those surrounded by an Indian population of about 30,000. The government a feeble territorial one, of a Governor and Judges, all dependent on the will and power of the United States.

But what is the proud contrast at this day? Mississippi now extends, in undisputed jurisdiction, from the Gulf of Mexico to the 35th degree of north latitude, and from the great river nearly to the Tombekbee, embracing an area of about 48,000 square miles, or 30,720,000 acres. This amounts to twenty times the area of the territory in 1798; yet of this we have, in cultivation, only 1,048,530 acres, or a little more than one twenty-ninth part of our territory. On this we have, by the last State census, 308,744 souls, of which 144,351 are free, and 164,393 are slaves. This gives a fraction over six persons to the square mile. Yet with this partial cultivation of our territory, 317,783 bales of cotton are *reported* to the Legislature as raised during the last year; while well informed men believe it should be 340,000 bales. This is independent of other large cultivation, so luxuriantly displayed in the maize fields of this year.

The cotton crop, on the low official estimate would bring, at former prices, more than 19 millions of dollars; but reduce it to \$50 a bale and we have the imposing amount of more than 15 millions of dollars. Now what member of this confederacy is there, that raises 15 millions of produce on one twenty-ninth part of her territory?



In 1817, Mississippi was admitted into the Union, somewhat shorn of the natural boundary, which the Tombecbee would have so conveniently formed.

The progress of your noble State for nearly 300 years, has now been rapidly traced, faintly, I fear, and in a languishing manner; we have seen the State in embryo growing from a forest and a hunting ground of barbarous and scattered tribes of Indians, till she has become the dominion of a high spirited community of freemen. What remains to be done? It is to glance comprehensively at the duties of this new social relation which Mississippi has assumed for herself and with the world, as a free and independent and happy member of the great republic of North America.

My countrymen, we have received from the bounty of Heaven, and by the noble deeds of our fathers, a great and glorious trust. It is not only the freedom and the political happiness of our own country, to its latest generations, but it is an example and model of social liberty for a benighted world. What language is there strong enough? What terms sufficiently expressive, to convey the obligation incumbent upon us to preserve the sacred deposit, not only undeteriorated, but enriched by the brightening virtues and enlarging wisdom of every successive generation? And at the same time, how withering will be the scorn? How bitter the maledictions of future ages, if, untrue to our sacred charge, we shall suffer, *basely* suffer, the prize to impair in value, while in our hands.

But how shall we best guard against this calamity and disgrace? By cultivating in our own hearts, and impressing upon our children and all within our influence, a profound and practical reverence for a divine, religious influence, which shall govern our passions and liberalize our selfishness. No people were ever long free, or deserved to be so, who neglected the great duties of religion, of justice and mercy between man and man. The birth place of freedom, the most sacred altar of her worship, is the domestic fireside and the relations of every day life. The man whose spirit does not freely

and generously prompt him to perform all the noble duties of private life, of neighbor and friend, is unfit to be a freeman. The liberties of no nation can be secure but under responsibility to God for their thoughts and most secret actions. All other foundation is sand and stubble. The privileges enjoyed under a free government, the tempting prizes offered to ambition, even honorable ambition, that "last infirmity of noble minds," the fierce collisions and competitions inevitably engendered in public pursuits, call imperatively and solemnly, in such a government, above all others, for the restraints of rational, genuine religion. I mean not one of mere dogmas, articles of faith, or rites and ceremonies; but one of "peace on earth and good will to man"—of responsibility to God in another state of existence, for our actions in this life—such a religion as preached and practised by Jesus Christ. This life and all its glorious opportunities and capacities must be built upon another, a better, and never dying one. When our condition in an immortal state of being, is familiarly dependent, in our convictions, as a necessary and inevitable consequence, upon our *conduct* in this world, upon our tastes and our moral habits formed here, then indeed the liberties of society are under the guardianship of God. And as astronomers say, the earth could never have been measured without a previous knowledge of the stars, so the happiness of the earth can only be secured by its dependence on Heaven. Jealousy of the public liberty, no *profuse* confidence in any men, or yet in any mere *written* instruments framed for securing public freedom and happiness, are essential to a republic. Neither demagogues, however brilliant their services may have been, nor instruments of government, are the proper securities of a free people. They must be their own guardians, or their dependence upon others will be but the stepping stone to their slavery. To discharge the duties of an American freeman, in a manner worthy of his high vocation, requires stores of moral and intellectual light. Every step he takes, every opinion of men and things which he may form, is, without such aids, full of

danger to the country, or to himself. The importance of popular education, soaring at sightless distance above the petty forms and mere elements of reading, writing and a little calculation, must be impressed in words of fire, upon the hearts and minds of the freemen of this republic, or they will cease to be freemen. Ignorance is as naturally the cradle of vice and slavery, as the morass is of pestilence and death. Nor let the tremendous error poison the mind, that intellectual light is sufficient to guard society. The cultivation must be *moral*, it must be that of the heart—its affections and passions. All other foundation is hollow hypocrisy and deceit. The source, the perennial fountain of the multiplied blessings of education, must be the home—the parental fireside. Here is the source of the holy influences, which are to sanctify society—sanctify it in the widest and noblest sense—in all the charities, all the duties of life. But how is this mighty revolution to begin? It must begin in the hearts and minds of parents, they are the true reformers of society: the domestic fireside is the true lares, the household gods of our christian worship. And around this altar of freedom and virtue it would be unpardonable not to notice the place destined for female devotion. Matrons and virgins of this noble republic, what a vista of moral greatness is opened for you! Who that is conversant with the most powerful machinery of the human heart, can be ignorant of the divine agency placed at the disposal of female loveliness? Well indeed may you be pronounced the arbiters of society, where barbarity has not trampled down all your equal privileges and rights. *Equal* they are, in every sense of right and justice, though from the diversity of sexual condition, *dissimilar* in their nature.

Our American free government has placed in your hands an empire of moral influence, which you may rule to the reformation, or the corruption of the national character. Make your own hearts pure or keep them free from the corruptions of the world; enlighten your own minds by all the wisdom, bearing on duty, life and manners, decorate yourselves with all the sweet and

delicious influences of taste and accomplishment, and you prepare yourself for an unequalled career of moral glory. It is as superior to that of the Cornelias of ancient Rome, as our christian republic exceeds that barbarous conspiracy against the liberty and independence of the world. The first impresses on the moral and intellectual powers, particularly the temper, are placed by divine gift in your hands. Can you be too ready, too well prepared to direct those impresses most favorably to the happiness and reform of society. There is not an item in the account of social happiness of such importance as temper; it colours the whole stream of existence: nor is any portion of the human character so utterly, hour after hour, day after day, and year after year, placed as this is, at the disposal of the female sex. Let every man in his own sphere combine to waken up society around him, to these immortal, these divine truths. The republic is expiring in the best constituents of a free government, owing to the national apathy on this vital point. Our freedom, our glorious freedom is fast departing the land. Let us all arouse to our danger, and stop the ruthless invaders of our peace and our liberty. Let every child of the republic be educated in his duties and his faculties; educated at *home* and at *school*. The proudest honors of any government and its noblest triumphs are the encouragements and securities it furnishes for the developement of the moral and intellectual faculties of our nature. These are triumphs, over which angels must smile, nay must rejoice. Developed the faculties will be, by the exuberance of nature, and it rests with society and parents, to give that development, a direction safe and wholesome to the community. My countrymen we have a field of most glorious opportunity presented to our faculties. In our own country, for more than two centuries, experiments in popular government have been carrying on. Is it saying too much of them, and too complacently to our national character, that they have generally been attended with marked success? I trust not, representative government and political confederacy are certainly more profoundly understood and *practised* upon in this *repub-*

lie, than in the rest of the civilized world. What we are most deficient in, is political economy in the administration of our admirable system of government. We do not sufficiently appreciate the fact that free government is not directly a good; but only an *instrumental* one. It affords ample liberty—in other words, power to the people; but its character for good or for evil, still depends upon the way in which that power shall be exercised and consequently upon their fitness to discharge their duties. Liberty, says a political sage, is the power of doing as we please, and whether it shall prove a blessing or a curse depends upon what we shall please. The American revolution, growing out of no one man's influence, but the product of a people's spirit, has been a fountain of freedom to the world. After drawing its first breathings from British nourishment, it returned the divine boon to Europe, to America, to the world. If there is at this time a loftier tone of liberty in any portion of Europe, or Southern America, than about the period of our great convulsion; if oppression has lowered her exactions and veiled her foul plots against the freedom of the human race; to these States, to our patriot sages and warriors, it is essentially due. To their bright example the world owes immortal thankfulness. It has, in effect, given freedom the empire of the world. But my countrymen we mistake our admirable liberty when we pursue our differences of opinion without the fullest practical respect for the right of those differences in others. Opinion is involuntary; it is the spontaneous inevitable fruit of circumstances. It is, besides, the sweetest flower in freedom's lovely garden. No human being is responsible for his opinions; but for his actions under the influence of those opinions. Let us then banish from our American politics the bitter denunciation of motives, the fierce assaults upon the liberty of private opinion, which defamed and disgraced the religious controversies of the middle ages. Let us restore to political discussions a generous and a manly toleration of each other's differences of sentiment, without which, President Jefferson eloquently said, "liberty, and even

life, are dreary things." "Could my countrymen rise to the exalted moral privileges of their liberty, not only in the halls of legislation, but in the disposal of their public honors, and the daily intercourse of life, then indeed the freemen of America would be superior to all Grecian and Roman fame. Just as superior, as the scope of this republic, and the grand sphere of its operations are superior to the circumscribed dominion of the cities of Greece, or the stern sway of Roman power.— Then, indeed, the beneficent powers of social liberty might bear the immortal fruits of happiness at home, and respect abroad. We should see an end to the exasperating and disgraceful bigotry, and the personal denunciation, which now disgrace the newspaper press, and poison the political discussion of our excitable republic. The rights of involuntary opinion would be regarded in *practice* and by *social* treatment, as of the very essence of our freedom. The children of American liberty might then rejoice, in the generous and magnanimous freedom of their land and proudly point the world to its sweet and lovely fruits as the vindication of their pride. That such may be the course of his countrymen is" your orator's "most ardent prayer."\* And that

"The star spangled banner in triumph may wave,  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

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Butler's Ky. 2d edition.