

THE GLORIOUS FOURTH.

CELEBRATION PROCEEDINGS AT
LIBERTY PARK AND OTHER
PLACES.

By 10 o'clock, the hour announced for the commencement of the exercises at Liberty Park, the large grove, especially in the immediate vicinity of the grand stand, was thronged with a great concourse of people. The number, by the time the proceedings were well under way, was estimated at between 10,000 and 12,000. The stand, near the northeast corner of the grove, was appropriately decorated for the occasion, with the stars and stripes, while small flags with the names of all the States and Territories were attached to adjacent trees.

While the company was assembling Croxall's silver band, the Sixth Infantry band, and Beesley's martial band played appropriate airs.

Gen. M. M. Baine, chairman of the executive committee, made some opening remarks and introduced Governor Eli H. Murray, President of the day. The Governor expressed himself to the effect that he had no doubt that the assembled people would accept with pleasure the excellent programme prepared by the committee, the rendition of which would not only do honor to the day we celebrated, but also to ourselves. He then successively announced each part of the proceedings, the first of which was the playing, in fine style, of "Hail Columbia," by the Sixth Infantry band. The opening prayer was offered by Rev. R. G. McNiece.

Prof. T. B. Lewis read the Declaration of Independence, his clear and powerful delivery of which was greeted by a strong burst of applause at its conclusion.

That fine, patriotic song, the "Star Spangled Banner," was delightfully sung by Mrs. Careless, who was in excellent voice, her performance being rewarded with ringing plaudits. Prof. Careless and Messrs. M. Croxall and M. Olsen, played a fine accompaniment.

Judge C. C. Goodwin read a poem composed by him expressly for the occasion. Want of space precludes its being given here. It is a very meritorious production, with the genuine poetic ring, some of the figures introduced being remarkably fine, while the sentiment is elevating throughout. Its effect was slightly marred, however, on account of the somewhat defective reading of Mr. Goodwin, but some of the very best writers and poets have been unable to do elocutionary justice to their own creations.

"Nearer, my God, to Thee," was feelingly played by Croxall's band.

The orator of the day, Judge P. T. Van Zile, delivered the following

ORATION:

To-day we, as a nation, are standing upon the outer boundary of another year's march, and looking back through the more than a century that has passed, are reflecting upon the grand achievements of other years, with their difficulties and trials, stopping here and there as we, on memory's wings, retrace our steps, to breathe in the sweet fragrance of the flowers that are blooming by the way side, nourished and fostered by the beautiful sentiment of freedom and equal rights; and with the history of America that is already written before us, we try here to peer into the future and discern, if we can, upon what grounds the camp fires of the coming years will be lighted, and what is in store for us.

Upon such an occasion, ruled and governed, and possessed by such thoughts and reflections as only have place in the heart of a true American citizen what can be said?

It seems to me that the most eloquent oration I could pronounce at such a time would be simply to stand here and point to the history of this grand country, the birth of which we to-day celebrate.

A nation whose grandeur is not told alone by her vast domains and

unconquerable prowess, whose strength lies not alone in brawny arms and innumerable hosts—but in the sentiments, principles and grand institutions upon which it is builded, into which its life is rooted.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident 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."

"That to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

Never before nor since have such beautiful and comprehensive truths fallen from the lips of men; never since nations have lived and man has kept a record of events, have thoughts, ideas and sentiments been formulated that stirred and fired and determined men to deeds of valor like these.

These self evident truths filled full to overflowing the hearts of our forefathers; upon this their souls fed, for this they lived and rather than be driven from this their fortress of truth, of right, of justice, they would die, for to them it was better to die for the right than, living, be oppressed by the wrong.

These principles were not, however, wholly original with those of our noble forefathers who drafted the Declaration of Independence. The germ of the sentiment which they developed into a perfect growth had taken possession of the hearts and lives of their martyred forefathers a century before it was declared by their noble sons in this sacred instrument. And to understand this and fully appreciate how thoroughly it had taken root in those early days of martyrdom for truth, we need but to read the history of those times, when the people were ruled by an unrelenting theocracy, which deprived the citizens of every privilege which was in the least antagonistic to the ruling tyrant and his followers.

Do you wonder that men and women of those days were found who were willing to, and did turn their backs upon their native land, thus ruled and oppressed, and facing storms and privations—starvation and death—set out for a wilderness away beyond the seas. Before them was an untried land and an almost trackless ocean; but dark and awful as it was, and looked to them, it was not so cruel and pitiless as the lurid, smoking fires that were continually burning and smouldering, the funeral piles of those they loved.

But it was not entirely for the sake of escaping martyrdom that they fled their native shores, but it was that they might enjoy, and have, and realize liberty from oppression, that they might breathe the pure air of freedom in a free land.

Thus the watchword and guiding star of those of our forefathers who first took possession of American soil was—freedom, freedom to think, freedom to act, freedom to worship God, as opposed to dictation, oppression and tyranny. It was these early pioneers fleeing from oppression and martyrdom, and those who followed, filled as they were with a longing desire for another and a different government, where they might forever shake off the yoke and break the shackles of oppression which bound and bore them down, they and their fathers—that first planted and nourished the seeds of liberty and free government in America.

Scarcely had their ships got fully under way, guided by the star of hope, which to them never set, but stood like a pillar of fire in the western horizon—than they began to feel and understand that governments were made for men, not men for governments, and that they had no need of crowned heads and royal blood, but that they could govern themselves. And while they were yet upon the waves of old Atlantic far away from their northern country, in the cabin of the good old *May Flower*, with none other than themselves and the omnipotent presence of the great God of Heaven and earth, who rules alike upon the land and the seas, to witness it, they made a solemn compact which became a part of the government of the early colonies.

And now, standing upon the rock-ribbed coast of an unknown wilderness to which they had fled—they could only look back through the dreary, terrible past, and into the dark and awful present, but to realize and know that they had hardly

commenced to pay the price that must be paid before they could obtain the prize for which they sought—but they were not despondent—for they possessed hearts and souls that glowed and burned with the living fires of freedom, fires which could never be quenched, but with adversity, famine and death, only grew and blazed the brighter. Failure to them was a word unknown: victory or death for Liberty's sake, was their battle cry, and so they and their sons and daughters through the long, weary years pressed forward toward the goal with that grand determination that can only be inspired by duty to one's self, duty to country, duty to God.

Separated from their mother country and so far away from crowned heads, and titles, and thrones, they began to lose respect for them; and having governed and defended themselves so well, they commenced to talk of independence.

England looked on amazed, but the irrepressible conflict was at hand. There was no place for a throne, no place for the palace of a king, prince or royal family in this great western wilderness, dedicated to free government and to liberty. These principles which had taken possession of them who, through so many years, had breasted the storm, stood like an impregnable fortress to shield and protect the young nation.

Better to them was the shrill war whoop of the merciless savage—the crackling flames that burned and consumed their homes—aye even the sight of their dead and dying wives and children, as they lay upon the blood-drenched floors of their little cabins in the wilderness, than the monarchica oppression of the old world. With such willing hearts and strong hands to hold up the banner of hope, and fan the fires of freedom, there could be no question about the result.

England was then the strongest of nations, and the Mistress of the Seas, but there was a land away in the wilderness of the New World that she could not conquer. She might take away the lives of her citizens, but the beacon fires of liberty would still blaze and burn, and with tongues of fire speak to all the nations of the earth, this our sentiment which would never die, but grow brighter and stronger as time counted off the years: "All men are created equal, they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

The trial of self-government had proven so great a success, and their fondest hopes seemed so possible to be realized that they were unwilling longer to pay tribute to useless royalty. And when England persisted in taxation which could not be borne, and spurned with contempt their petitions asking for relief, these brave men arose in their might, and with one accord answered back to their mother country. *These colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent States*, and with this utterance, accompanied with a refusal to longer pay tribute to King George and England, comes the crisis. Oppressive and insulting measures were passed by the English Parliament, and when disregarded by the colonists, British troops were quartered upon our shores to enforce obedience to the mandates of royalty. Depredations were committed, intimidation was resorted to, but all to no avail.

Our forefathers saw the black dread storm cloud of war fast gathering; its mutterings spoke no uncertain language. And when it seemed to envelope the whole land within its dark and terrible shadow, and was ready at any moment to burst upon them they began to gather ammunition and munitions of war, and as best they could prepare for the result.

And as we stand here to-day looking back upon those scenes, what a picture is presented to us; on the one hand we see the brilliant, well organized, well equipped army of England—comparatively speaking a host backed by a strong government with inexhaustible resources—on the other a handful of men without organization, without arms, except as they could pick them up here and there, without money. Looking at it by the light of these facts we can but exclaim what an unequal contest, how hopeless the chances of success. But how true the sentiment that fell from the lips of the immortal Henry, "The victory is not to the strong

alone but to the vigilant, the active, the brave."

This was the situation of affairs when England ordered her troops to at once destroy the stores of ammunition and supplies at Concord. They attempted it, and on the 19th day of April, 1775, the guns of Lexington called a new born nation to regenerate the world. The rubicon had been passed, there was now no escape. To be defeated was but an ignominious death, to be victorious was life and everlasting honor.

The principles for which they contended and the sentiment, "Give us liberty or give us death," was to them a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, and by it they were led from the field of Lexington, where a nation was baptized in the pure blood of freemen—through that midnight darkness of despair at Valley Forge, where, but for God's overruling providence, in which they alone trusted, they must have gone down forever; on and on through terrible scenes of carnage, sacrifice and death, out into that glorious light of victory which broke upon them on that cloudless day at Yorktown, and established for them and for us, and forever, a nation free and independent.

On this the anniversary of that immortal 4th of July, 1776, when there was given to this nation and to the world that divine-inspired document which has been read in your hearing, the Declaration of Independence, it is not only our right but our duty to talk over the events which culminated in the establishment of this nation.

To-day we should gather around us our children and tell them the story of the great struggle for freedom, that they may know and realize what the liberty they enjoy and the possibilities that are vouchsafed to them, cost. Let them know and understand that these ceremonies by which we celebrate this our nation's birthday are not idle and meaningless; teach them that they live in a country where merit and true worth is rewarded, and not royal blood; teach them that because of the results of the struggle for independence; which to-day we remember with glad hearts the possibilities are rendered alike to all, whether it be the child of the millionaire of high birth, or the child of the poor man of humble parentage.

But while we remember with pride and gratitude, the grand results and brilliant achievements of our illustrious forefathers in their struggle for liberty, with charity toward them, but with justice for those who following have preserved to us a nation, we must not forget that when they had wrenched from England her acknowledgement of their independence, and established for themselves a government; though they had fought for freedom and equal rights, and had broken the shackles from their own limbs, they allowed them to fall upon and be riveted to the limbs of others.

America was not what she boasted to be, the land of the free—all men within her borders did not enjoy the unalienable rights, that they had declared was the privilege and right of all men—life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Upon the fair fame and name of America there was left a foul and ugly stain, and it grew and spread, and almost overshadowed her, until it assumed such proportions and strength that it threatened the destruction of the nation.

We had grown to be powerful, but in excusing and conciliating the monstrous institution—American slavery—that had been fostered and protected by the government we had taken within our bosom the viper that was with its poisonous fangs to rend us; and while basking in the apparent sunshine of peace and security, the thunderbolts of a civil war were hurled into our very midst by the hands of those who in the past had been our brothers.

The events of that terrible struggle are still fresh in the memory of most of you. You heard the call coming up from the nation's capital for the help of strong arms and brave hearts in that hour of need. And, Oh! how it aroused the whole nation from her lethargy!

The appeal came home to every loyal heart individually, and most glorious was the response.

Who can describe the rally? Young and old, from the city and country, rushed to the nearest rendezvous, and offered their services to government, and the streets of our principal cities, which but a short time before had been disturbed only by the peaceful pursuits of

trade, were born into a new life, and now resounded to the marching squadrons.

He who had been the mother's pride and the object of the father's fondest hopes, with his life in his hand, went forth to battle for the right, and if need be to sacrifice all upon his country's altar. The pale-faced clerk and school boy left their counters and desks, their yard sticks and their books, and marched away to the field, shoulder to shoulder with the brawn and muscle of the country.

The farmer boy left the land he plowed, the mechanic dropped the saw and hammer, the minister left the sermon half finished, the lawyer laid aside books and briefs, and all rushed to their country's rescue while old age, with faltering step came to utter "God speed."

Day after day, month after month, year after year, we watched and prayed and fought, quota after quota was filled, and you bade farewell to some of the brave and the best. And oh what partings these years of struggle saw. I speak the experience of any of you my brave fellow soldiers when I say that the fiercest battles were fought within your own breast, as you received the last farewell from those near and dear to you, and left them standing almost motionless, stricken with grief and anguish?

But for four long, weary years you witnessed these partings in your very midst, and in many, oh how many cases, when there was to be no more meeting this side eternity, until a wail of anguish ascended to heaven in piteous accents. How long, oh Lord, how long! But who can pronounce a fitting eulogy upon our fallen comrades. Ah, how vivid is our recollection of them. In our imagination we can follow them, now in the rendezvous, now in camp, on the march, at the front, on the battle field, where amid the din of battle they go down to death, not down to death, but up to glorious immortality, as to us physically asleep, aye dead, but in our hearts, and the hearts of their countrymen, to all the grand principles of truth, justice and liberty. Adieu, and not only now, but forever and forever.

"When the years of earth are over and the cares of earth are done;
When the reign of time is ended and eternity begun,
When the thunders of omni cleges on our wakened senses roll,
And the sky above shall wither and be gathered like a scroll;
When among the lofty mountains and across the mighty sea,
The sublime, celestial bugler shall ring out the reveille,
Then shall march with brightest laurels and with proud victorious tread,
To their stations up in heaven, our grand army of the dead."

But the eulogy is not to be given alone to the brave soldiers of the war, for there were a thousand "Florence Nightingales" all over this broad land who not only gave their sons, their brothers, their husbands to battle for the right, but they themselves might be seen almost in the very thickest of the fight. Oh! I can never forget the brave-hearted Christian-spirited women of the war, how I have seen them standing over the brave soldier boys, both in field and hospital, now telling them of the Christ that died on Calvary, now staunching the blood from some ghastly wound that must soon pass its possessor up higher, to be mustered into that soldiery around the throne of the Great Eternal. Oh! women of America, thy memory will ever be bright in the history of your much loved country, and especially in the hearts of the soldier boys of '61.

Thy mission was a mission of love and you performed it not only in the name of liberty and equal rights but in the name of humanity.

But thank God these days of carnage have passed away, and our country is not only free but her institutions in being protected have been purified, and to-day she is indeed the land of the free, for there is not within her vast domain a serf, a bondman or a slave. Though once divided we are now a united people. None of whom do not so knowledge, and would not to-day carry at the head of the ten thousand processions who are marching to the music of the Union that grand old emblem of freedom for all.

But I have not spoken of America's greatest achievements, nor can I at this time in detail, but we must not forget that while her brave sons and daughters have established here upon our soil these noble in-