

EULOGY of Charles Carroll of Carrollton who died on November 14, 1832 at the age of 95. His Eulogy was Delivered by John Sergeant, December 31st of 1832.

and is today re-read as a way of remembering the great gift our founders Left us

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS ,

In the history of our Country, the most memorable epoch is that of the Declaration of Independence. The most illustrious assemblage of patriots, that which declared it.

The act, favoured by Providence, has become, as it were, immortal. Independence was established once and for ever. The men, by Whom it was achieved, have in succession obeyed the law of our nature, and we are now met to commemorate the event, which has finally closed the living record of that august body.

The last of the signers has been united to the mighty dead.

Long spared to receive the affectionate homage paid by a grateful nation to the single representative upon earth of the Congress of 1776, to witness the kindly and expanding influence of the institutions and principles which he had aided to establish, even to look upon three generations of his own immediate descendants, partaking, with millions, the blessings prepared for them by the toils and the dangers of himself and his contemporaries, he too has become one of “ the great majority” whom death always numbers on his side, and of him, as of the rest, nothing now remains but the memory. Thus has the Congress of 1776 again been united after a long separation.

Among the dead as among the living, they are associated, in our views and feelings, by their common title to pre-eminent distinction for wisdom, for patriotism, and for heroic courage, and by their common claim to our gratitude and veneration, for their virtues and their services.

If all have passed away, they have not done so, without leaving to us the possession of their pure fame to enrich us, their spirit to instruct, and their example to guide us.

Cherishing their fame, and resolving to preserve it unimpaired, counselling sincerely with their spirit and obeying its counsels, and truly following their bright example, we may hope, with the blessings of Heaven, to perpetuate the good work which they have handed down to us, and to continue long to enjoy its advantages.

At such a moment, it is natural to look back. The occasion invites us to reassemble the fathers of our nation, to place them again, to the eye of contemplation, in the Hall of Independence, to dwell upon their character and conduct, and to consider with deep and earnest attention, who were the men, and what were the means they employed, to lay the foundations of a great republic.

Hitherto, they have been among us. Not all of them. Of the fifty-six distinguished patriots, whose names are ineffaceably inscribed upon the monument they constructed, two were summoned from time to eternity, before a year had elapsed. Forty-seven survived the struggle of War with the parent-state and lived to witness the final consummation of their wishes, by an acknowledgement in the treaty with England. Forty three remained when the present Constitution was presented by the Convention to the People of the United States for their adoption.

Forty were still here to shed the light of their experience, and the influence of their spirit, upon the first movements of the government, when that Constitution went into operation.

From these, as the years rolled on, the sure arrow continued to select its object. But not with eager haste. At the end of fifty years, three of the venerable band were still among the living.

On the fiftieth anniversary, in the midst of the jubilee, when the nation with one voice was commemorating the day of the great national act which had made us independent, two of them gently sunk to rest, and their spirits departed. While the hearts and the voices of their countrymen were swelling With gratitude to them and their associates for the blessings secured by their services and their toils.

One only remained—the venerable Carroll. Fifty-six years were accomplished, and he too was removed, the last of the fifty- six who, in the sight of man and of Heaven, had solemnly pledged “their lives, and fortunes, and their sacred honour,” to abide the issue of their country’s fortune.

And who were these men?

What was the pledge they thus solemnly offered, and so nobly redeemed?

What were “ their lives, and fortunes, and their sacred honour,” which they staked in the cause of human freedom and of human rights?

What was that assemblage of patriots, who in proclaiming their determination to be free, proclaimed at the same time the great principles which are everywhere acknowledged to have the irresistible power of truth?

How did it happen that the youngest nation of the earth became the teacher of the World; that the true light of political philosophy broke forth from a region where the forest was not cleared, and the footstep of civilized man seemed scarcely to have made a sensible impression?

Where dwelt that informed and assured spirit, which, leading an infant nation, never hesitated and yet never erred—which in the face of difficulty and danger, through a new and untried path, always advanced, yet never missed its course; which by intrepid perseverance, accomplished its glorious purpose, so fully, so wisely, and so Well, that its friends had nothing to desire, and its enemies nothing to censure?

It was much to declare independence—it Was more to achieve it, in so unequal a contest—still more was it, by a display of Wisdom and firmness, never surpassed, to fix the attention of the world, to challenge its admiration, and command its respect, not only for the justice of our cause, but for the ability and virtue with which it was sustained—to exhibit popular representative government, at the outset, in its best form, and to give to mankind at once an example and an assurance of its capacity to fulfil all the just purposes for which government was designed among men.

In the sight of other nations, the glory 'of that illustrious Congress is sufficiently established by its public acts, already consecrated in the page of history.

For us, who, as their countrymen, are not only the heirs of their glory, but bound by every obligation, to them, to ourselves, and to our children, to preserve it in all its lustre,

and especially to maintain in purity and 'power, the institutions of free government they established for US, it may not be unprofitable to look carefully and closely into whatever belongs to its composition and character, in order that no circumstance, however minute, may escape our notice.

Reader 2

The present is a fit occasion for some attempt at such an examination, and, I am persuaded, that even if it should be found to be fruitless of instruction, it will certainly not have the effect of lessening our habitual respect for those whom we rightly consider the fathers of our country.

The common characteristic of the Congress of 1776 is Pure Public Virtue—the striking feature of its measures is mature wisdom.

Upon the foundation of Virtue and Wisdom, thus happily united, they built up the edifice of their own enduring fame, by achieving for their country what in all succeeding ages will continue to engage the unqualified respect and admiration of mankind’.

Passing in a moment from a state of colonial dependence into the new condition of an independent nation—making this transition, too, in the midst of a sanguinary and unequal struggle already begun, and at the certain hazard of a war of undefined duration, brought to their Very doors, and threatening to deal with them not as fair combatants, but as traitors and as rebels, it is amazing.

Indeed, it argues a depth of intellectual and moral energy of which history has furnished no parallel, that at such a time, they should not only have been fully equal to all the pressing exigencies of the crisis, but even more than this, that they should have been able to make an accurate survey of the condition of our country, to look forward to its future destinies, to combine into one great republic, and at the instant when they firmly but solemnly declared they had “counted the cost,” should have announced those great principles of free government which were to enter into all our constitutions.

To call this heroic, would be to associate it in our imaginations with the fabulous achievements of a remote antiquity, and thus to disfigure and degrade it.

To compare it with what the great lawgivers of antiquity have done, would be entirely inadequate. To confound it with what accident has produced at other periods, and in other quarters of the World, would be to sink it far below its proper level for foresight and deliberate conclusion.

Whatever there is that is worthy of praise in the heroes of fable or of history, whatever there is that commands our approbation in the works of lawgivers, whatever of good there is that patriotism has been able to accomplish, —all these combined, and purified by the spirit of philanthropy, and governed by consummate skill, and sustained by unconquerable fortitude, make up the true portrait of that august assembly.

The honour we derive from these our ancestors, who carried our country triumphantly through the perilous trials of the war of independence, and established for us the principles of free government, which are now pervading the World, consists not simply in the reflection upon us of the lustre of their wisdom and their virtue, glorious and inestimable as it is.

There is much more for us to rejoice in—much more to convey to us a deep and salutary lesson. That Congress was a popular representative body, freely chosen by the people of the thirteen colonies, and sustained by that people in its decisions and its acts.

At the first meeting in Carpenter's Hall, on the 5th September 1774, eleven of what in the Journal are denominated "the several colonies and provinces in North America" were represented. On the 4th July 1776, the whole thirteen were present by their delegates. The selection of such a Congress is a manifest proof of wisdom and virtue in the people; and the spirit and the energy with which they sustained the measures of Congress under all the trials and sufferings of a protracted and cruel War, establish forever, that they too understood and appreciated their object, and were one and all resolved to accomplish it, or to perish in the attempt.

The representative body was in this respect the image of their constituents. They were selected for their worth, and that worth was made up of a heart entirely devoted to the common purpose, and of a mind so instructed as to be capable of executing it.

Of the composition and character of such a body, its acts may be considered in general as a sufficient exponent. It is perhaps enough for History. But we may be excused, if with the affectionate veneration of children, proud of the inheritance of a parent's fame, anxiously desirous to exhibit and to preserve it in all its lustre, and to transmit it in the clearest light to our descendants.

We dwell for a moment upon the particulars of the title, convinced as we are, that the closest scrutiny will only more distinctly reveal its strength. Nor is this all. We may deduce from the inquiry lessons of us to institute, or how shall we conduct it? The occasion necessarily limits us to a few particulars, but those it is hoped will be sufficient at once to gratify and to instruct us.

It is natural to begin then with the places of their birth.

A few words will suffice. Of the fifty-six members who signed the Declaration of Independence, ten were natives of Massachusetts, —nine of Virginia, — five of Pennsylvania, —five of Maryland, —four of New Jersey, —four of Connecticut, —four of South Carolina, —three of New York, —two of Rhode Island, —and two of Delaware.

Making altogether forty-eight, who were born in the colonies.

Of the rest, two were natives of England, —two of Ireland, --two of Scotland, —and one of Wales.

Of the remaining one I have not met with an account which enables me to speak.

We are anxious next to know something of their age.

Were they in the ardour of youth, when zeal is apt to outrun discretion, and a romantic spirit prompts to undertakings of danger, from the mere love of adventure or the influence of a heated imagination?

Nothing could be more distant from the truth.

There sat the venerable Franklin, in his seventieth year, and Hopkins within a few months of the same age, grasping the pen to assert their country' s independence with a heart as resolute and a countenance as firm as Rutledge or Lynch, the most youthful of the body. Samuel Adams, too, and John Hancock, excepted in the offers of mercy held out by the crown, as the unpardonable ringleaders in rebellion, were not so young as to be unable to count the cost, or to be hurried into danger from want of reflection.

The one was fifty- four, the other was about forty.

John Adams was forty, and Thomas Jefferson was thirty-three.

There were in the whole convention but two who were under thirty, Rutledge and Lynch of South Carolina. They were twenty-seven.

To sum it all up in a single word, which conveys at once a distinct conception of the finest combination of deliberate gravity and manly resolution, **the average age of the whole assemblage was about forty-five.** ‘

Reader 3

Nor were they men tossed up in the whirl of a revolution, distinguished chiefly by revolutionary audacity, and that audacity itself owing to the knowledge that they had nothing at stake, and nothing to lose.

Among them were many who had all that as individuals they could desire, and little to hope, for themselves, from a change.

Indeed, I doubt not that the observation might be applied universally. John Hancock, signalized, we have seen, as an unpardonable rebel, and the first of the signers, was in the enjoyment of the largest estate in Massachusetts. Charles Carroll of Carrollton was the heir of perhaps the richest man in Maryland. Heyward, Middleton, Lynch, Floyd, Nelson, and many more, were gentlemen of independent fortunes, to which they had been born. Others, by their talents and their industry had gained a commanding position in society; and in their private condition, might be considered amongst the happiest of men.

Would you desire to know in what proportion the different professions and pursuits of life contributed from their numbers to form this Congress? It is not easy to ascertain it with precision. Of a part, however, an account can be given. There were sixteen lawyers, —nine merchants, —five physicians, —five planters, --three farmers, —and one divine.

Of the remaining seventeen, no single word will characterize them.

What, for example, should we denominate the venerable Franklin?

Even at the period we are treating of, with the snow of seventy winters on his head, and a reputation which extended over all Europe, his triumphant career was not ended, nor the versatility of his mighty powers fully developed. He was yet to conduct the most important and delicate foreign negotiations of his country, and to sit down at table with kings, honouring them by his presence more than they could honour him.

We must call him Franklin---a name that requires no addition, but is itself an epitome of the achievements of sagacious wisdom, applied in almost all the departments of life, and from their variety become familiar to every class of men.

There is one point still to be adverted to in relation to this distinguished assemblage. It may be stated in a very few words. The greater part of those who composed it had been liberally educated.

Of the fifty-six members, eighteen were graduates of Colleges in this country. Three were graduates of the University of Cambridge in England—and one, of the University of Edinburgh. Seven had received their education at other public seminaries. Fourteen had been instructed in liberal learning by private tutors or intelligent parents. Eight had received some elementary education, and of three the early history has not been learned. But nature was not entirely without her witnesses upon this eventful occasion.

Two there were, who were literally self-taught—Who had never received the least instruction from others, and, yet,‘ overcoming the difficulties of their early condition, had accomplished themselves in knowledge by their own unaided exertions—become distinguished in a learned profession, and qualified for association with the selected wisdom of the country.

These were Sherman and Walton, one of whom was originally a shoemaker, and the other a carpenter.

In the whole number there was not a single titled personage, nor one who in the established language of Europe would have been called a statesman. Perhaps there were few, if any, who, according to the settled arrangements of European etiquette, could then have been received at court. Several there were, such as Hancock, Carroll, and others, who had visited foreign countries, and enjoyed the opportunity of observing society in its different forms.

One too had occupied a sort of semi-diplomatic station, as agent in England of several of the colonies, and even in that humble character had found occasion to manifest and to exercise his transcendent abilities, and with keen and penetrating glance to discern and seize upon the occasions for serving his country.

When Franklin stood before the collected wisdom of the British House of Commons, as a witness, he exhibited a wisdom above them all. When he stood alone, and in the midst of enemies before the Privy Council, he was as unmoved by the deliberate and pitiful sarcasm of Wedderburn, as when he drew down the lightning from the clouds—in both instances, with an intrepidity equal to his deep sagacity, coolly gathering instruction from the raging tempest, which seemed to be bursting upon his head.

Vain, indeed, was the expectation that he, who had invited a personal communication with the forked thunderbolt in its greatest fury, should be intimidated by the tongue of man, or disturbed in his purpose by impotent abuse, though studiously envenomed with all the poison that could be extracted from the stores of classical vituperation.

If from the period on which our eye has been fixed, We follow the members of that illustrious Congress through their subsequent lives——see them in arduous foreign employment, managing the most intricate negotiations with the trained and experienced statesmen and diplomatists of Europe, in high and responsible stations at home, speaking the language and maintaining the rights of their country, or perfecting the institutions of her freedom—or in subordinate offices, administering and executing the laws——nay, if we look even to their individual labours and occupations——we shall then be prepared to admit, that in all which constitutes the real Worth of man—in the gifts of nature —in the advantages of education and culture——even in the lighter acquirements which give currency in society—as men, as patriots, and as gentlemen, it is but the simple truth to say, that, **as a body, the Congress of 1776 never was equalled.**

Besides this, however, there was an instruction they had received, without which, all else might perhaps have been of little avail. These colonies had, in substance, been free representative republics from the beginning—subject in name to the dominion of Great Britain, but actually managing their most important concerns by their own assemblies, with little interference on the part of the parent state.

They had constantly present to their View the image of republican government.

Republicanism was thus become habitual, a part of the nature of the inhabitants of the colonies, —an inbred feeling, which was always prompt to assert the rights of the colonists, and to resist every attempt at encroachment or oppression in Whatever form it presented itself.

Reader 4

From the first effort of Great Britain to exercise an unwarranted authority over these colonies in the year 1765, the nature of their rights and the limits of the just authority of the parent state, had been the subject of continual and earnest discussion, in the course of Which, under the quickening influence of a deep and powerful feeling, the minds of men became rapidly enlightened as to the true state of the question, and along with the lingering doubt of their ability to sustain a contest, and a full sense of the horrors of a war brought to their doors, there could still be discerned, in every quarter of the country, a fixed determination, at every hazard, to assert and to maintain their freedom.

It was this spirit which the members of the first Congress carried. with them to the place of assemblage—it was this spirit which presided over their councils—and it was this same spirit, Which, when memorial and remonstrance had been exhausted, solemnly proclaimed from the Hall of Independence, that the colonial condition was ended—that in its place a nation had come into existence, ready to follow the example of the patriots who had bled at Lexington and at Bunker's Hill, and, feeble, inexperienced, undisciplined, and unprovided as it was, to maintain the justice of its cause, and relying upon favour of Heaven, to meet in hostile combat the gigantic power and veteran arms of England.

From that day, this nation dates its existence.

The Declaration of Independence is the authentic registry of its birth.

This common and pervading love of freedom—this deep-rooted determination to submit to no encroachment upon their rights, this universal and clear perception of the consequences of submitting to an attempt on the part of Great Britain to usurp the province of their own immediate representatives, this it Was, with the natural and unavoidable conclusion that in union alone there was strength and safety, which caused the colonies first to meet in Congress, by delegates charged with their authority and instructions.

These delegates first met at Philadelphia on the 5th September 1774, when, as has already been stated, eleven, of What are . called in the Journal “ the several colonies and provinces’ in North America,” assembled at the Carpenter’s Hall.

It is not necessary now to occupy your time with an inquiry When, or Where, or how, the idea of independence and a separate existence first began, or by what means it finally obtained the sanction of the 4th July 1776. The history of this momentous period of our country enables us to discover two leading truths, of far greater importance in the present times.

Freedom Was the end and object of our forefathers, and independence was the means to attain it, when everything else had failed.

This is the first of these truths. “Nor have we been wanting,” says the Declaration of Independence, “ in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time, of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us.

We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here.

We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connexions and correspondence.

They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity.

We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we do the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace, friends'.

The other is not less 'obvious nor less entitled to our deep and solemn attention.

As independence was necessary to freedom, so was union necessary to independence. Independence was not declared till a thorough union was established. As long as the Congress was composed only of the representatives of colonies, continuing to acknowledge their dependence, and humbly petitioning for a redress of grievances; as long as redress was looked for, with any hope of obtaining it; as long as any intention remained of returning to their allegiance, if their grievances were redressed; so long was the union of their counsels but temporary, to cease when the occasion for it should no longer exist.

But when the patriotic sages intrusted with the care of their country's freedom, began to perceive "the necessity which denounced a separation," they felt that the union must be drawn closer, and be made perpetual—till that was effected, independence could not be asserted, nor freedom secured. **They saw distinctly that union was as necessary to independence, as independence was to freedom, and in their enlightened view they were but one.**

They did not, therefore declare independence till they were ready also to announce an union, and when they proclaimed the existence of the nation, they proclaimed it with the inseparable and indissolutable attributes of union, independence and freedom.

Up to the date of the Declaration of Independence, the members of Congress, as we have seen, were the representatives of Colonies, and not of States. Till then, no States existed.

In that instrument, they style themselves, for the first time, the Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, and they declare that these “United Colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent States.” **From this it is evident, as would naturally be supposed, that the union of the colonies actually preceded the Declaration of Independence, and the existence of States, and is in truth the oldest of our rights.**

It was the Union that created the States, and not the States that created the Union. It is the Union too, be it ever remembered, that was as much Wrested from England, by force of arms, as Independence itself.

Union, Independence, and Freedom, are What that illustrious body of sages and patriots established for us, as the lasting pillars of our happiness. Union first, and then Independence.

It no more entered into their minds to conceive that the one could cease, than the other. For both they toiled and suffered. For both our fathers fought and bled, and both they have delivered to us, as the common right of every free citizen of the United States, which no power on earth can justly require him to part with or surrender.

Union, as well as Independence and Freedom, is the birthright of every child born in these United States.

He is born to the inheritance of a nation's glory, to the enjoyment of a nation's protection and power, to the high privilege of a nation's name, to something to love and to honour, to a country upon which he can proudly fix his affections, in whose prosperity he can rejoice, towards which he can direct his eye when abroad, and to whose avenging power he can appeal when menaced with insult or danger.

Reader 5

The favour of Heaven—signal as it has been, and claiming at all times our most devout gratitude—has been in nothing more manifest than in producing this Union. The wisdom and patriotism of the first Congress were above all conspicuous in the means they employed to cherish, to strengthen, and consolidate, what the hand of Providence had offered to their acceptance.

From the moment of their first assembling, it was the dearest object of their concern and care, and when, having indissolubly bound it together, they pledged “ their lives and fortunes and their sacred honour,” they did so in the name of one united people, who were henceforth to take their equal rank among the nations of the earth. “

When,” says that cherished instrument, “ in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with ‘another, and to assure among the nations of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature’s God entitle them.

And again it says “appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of ones intentions, we do, in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare,”—thus in every emphatic passage, when it addresses mankind, and when it invokes the aid and favour of Heaven -in its resolutions, its appeals, its prayers, speaking with the tongue and breathing the devout aspirations of one people, and that one, the people of all these colonies.

From that time forward, from the great epoch of the 4th of July, 1776,

We have been one people, and blessed be the great Dispenser of human events, we are still one people. The articles of confederation, which followed not very long after the Declaration of Independence, are in the same spirit.

They are styled in the preamble “ Articles of Confederacy and PERPETUAL, UNION.”

And to establish at once, for every individual, the sure ground of national character, and of right throughout the Union, they declare that “the free inhabitants of each of these States shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of free citizens in the several States >>>>>

If more were wanting to illustrate the Wisdom and patriotism of that matchless representative body, and to endear their memory to our hearts, we should find it- in the fruits of their labours.

Scarcely had the annunciation gone forth, till this Union was formally received into the family of nations, and treaties formed with one of the oldest powers of the world— treaties, be it remembered, perpetual in their terms and obligations, and such as a perpetual Union could alone enter into. Union gave to our country consideration and respect abroad, and entitled her to take her place among the nations.

Listen to the language of Congress, when presenting the articles of “confederation and perpetual union,” in their circular, dated “ Yorktown, November 17th, 1777.”

“ Let them be examined with a liberality becoming brethren and fellow-citizens surrounded by the same imminent dangers, contending for the same illustrious prize, and deeply interested in being for ever bound and connected together by ties the most intimate and indissoluble; and finally, let them be adjusted with the temper and magnanimity of Wise and patriotic legislators, who, while they are concerned for the prosperity of their own more immediate circle, are capable of rising superior to local attachments, when they may be incompatible With the safety, happiness, and glory of the general confederacy.”

“ More than any other consideration it will confound our foreign enemies, defeat the flagitious practices of the disaffected, strengthen and confirm our friends, support our public credit, restore the value of our money, enable us to maintain our fleets and armies, and add weight and respect to our councils at home, and to our treaties abroad.”

“ It seems essential to our very existence as a free people, and without it, We may soon be constrained to bid adieu to independence, to liberty, and safety—blessings, which, from the justice of our cause, and the- favour of our Almighty Creator, visibly manifested in our protection, we have reason to expect, if, in an humble dependence upon his divine providence, we strenuously exert the means which are placed in our power.

Union emboldened our countrymen to enter upon the hazardous conflict.

Union enabled them to carry it triumphantly through.

When Washington left the hall of Congress in June, 1775, unanimously elected to command the armies of our country, he carried with him a commission from “ the delegates of the United Colonies. ”

“ Supported,” to use his own words, “ by a confidence in the rectitude of our cause, the ‘support of the supreme power of the Union, and the patronage of Heaven,” he drew his sword in the name and the service of the Union; and when, having accomplished the glorious purpose for which he had taken the field, he restored that sword to its scabbard, he returned his commission, in December, 1783, to the representatives of the sovereignty of the Union—to “ the United States in Congress assembled,” then acknowledged by the whole world to be a sovereign and independent nation.

When, in the progress of time, the articles of confederation were found to be insufficient, and especially when it was seen that they did not adequately secure the Union, the people of the United States, in the same spirit which from their first existence as a people had governed and guided their feelings and their councils, framed the present Constitution of the United States, declaring its first object to be “ to form a more perfect Union.”

Reader 6

In Union, we have found safety, prosperity, and honour. With it, we have enjoyed the fullest measure of the blessings of independence and freedom.

By it, we are the heirs of the fame of our ancestors, which equally enriches us all, and partake of the common glory of being the countrymen of those who have earned unfading renown. **Union** is connected with every eventful period in our history—it is inscribed upon every glorious achievement in our annals—it is the very condition of our existence as a nation—it is the condition upon which we hold whatever we venerate in the past, whatever we enjoy in the present, and whatever we hope in the future for ourselves and our children.

Union is our country.

We have never known another. Without it—the vision of patriotism cannot endure the contemplation of such a scene, but turns from it with dismay and horror—without it, we may have a spot to live upon, a place to breathe in, comforts perhaps even greater than we deserve—but we cannot have that country which has been the object of our affections and respect—that glorious country, which our fathers redeemed from bondage and raised up to be the admiration of the world—that country by which we are associated with the heroes and sages of the Revolution, and are enabled to say, that we are the countrymen of Washington and Franklin—that country, which makes us partakers of the favours and blessings vouches her in such rich abundance, by a gracious Providence, in all the times that are past.

We may have another—but never, never, never, such a one as God in his goodness has given us in the day of our fathers. *

That such a representative body was assembled as the one our thoughts have been directed to, must be ascribed to the character of the people by whom they were selected. Wisdom and virtue in the representative, where the choice are an argument of wisdom and virtue in those by whom he is chosen. Nor is this all.

As the measures in succession were adopted by Congress, derived their support from the people, and that support was cheerfully granted, at whatever cost, it cannot be but that the same sentiments which governed the proceedings of the public councils, reigned also in the hearts of the people, and reigned with undivided sway.

Happy, indeed, must they be esteemed, whose fortunate lot it is to act in times when one great overruling purpose governs all desires, and that one purpose such as justice and patriotism can Warmly espouse.

Happier still are they who are enabled to accomplish What justice and patriotism command them to undertake. Happiest of all, when this successful purpose, looking beyond the generation which effects it, seems to find its chief inducement in the accumulation of blessings for future ages.

The Way of the patriot then, though it may be rugged and toilsome, and surrounded with many dangers, is cheerful and onward. Animated by the encouraging countenance and support of his countrymen, he has also the approbation of his own conscience, and can appeal with confidence to the protection and favour of Heaven.

And when his labours are ended, he retires with the feelings of satisfaction which belong to any who has been a benefactor of mankind, and with the soothing hope—it cannot be called an infirmity—that his memory will be cherished with kindness by a grateful posterity, and his example be a guide to the footsteps of those who may come after him to take charge of the destinies of his country.

The history of the blessings dispensed to our country and to the first Congress, is not yet complete. It seems, indeed, as if that era in our annals had 'been permitted by a gracious Providence to be crowned with every distinction that could command admiration and respect, or endear its memory to the ages that were to come.

In other revolutions, of any continuance, it has been remarked,

that those who began the Work have generally fallen victims to the fury of the storm they had been instrumental in raising. Even, when they have escaped with their lives, they have generally lost their popularity and their power, and often have been doomed not only to suffer degradation themselves, but to witness also the destruction of the hopes they had conceived for the cause which incited them to action.

We are not surprised at this. When We consider the nature of man and his passions—the nature of faction, its headlong rage, and its mad inconstancy—how, when the public feeling is highly Wrought, fits of blind confidence are rapidly succeeded by fits of equally blind hatred and suspicion—

how, in moments of disappointment, vengeance seeks for objects upon which to indulge itself--how, in the midst of excitement, irregular ambition, with the mask of patriotism, is prowling about to take advantage of men's weaknesses, and lurking treason watches its occasions to inflict a Wound—how too, the hand becomes familiar with the sword, and how the sword, wielded by a strong arm, is apt to make itself the arbiter, and with one confounding blow, under pretence of terminating the reign of disorder, to crush the hopes of freedom by silencing its advocates—when we consider these things and consider too that the strength for our independence lasted nearly 10 years---language is too feeble to express the emotion we feel of astonishment, and gratitude, and virtuous exultations, when we find that the patriots who began the revolution were those who carried it through.

Some of them, as we have seen, died before its termination. But, not one of them perished in any strife with his countrymen—not one of them lost the confidence of his country, nor did one ever desert her interests, or even incur the suspicion of want of zeal in her service.

Of all indeed, who were intrusted in any department, there was but one who proved a traitor. With that solitary exception of a miserable profligate, whose name has become synonymous with infamy, and unworthy to be mentioned, all, who were living, lived with honour. All who were dead, slept in honoured graves.

One radiant light shone upon them all, when the voices, which in the beginning had joined in supplication for aid and favour in the hour of trial, ascended together, at the end, in praises and thanksgiving to Him who had given the victory. Still the aggregate of their felicity is not fully disclosed. Something remains yet to be said, to exhibit the full measure of the reward of their patriotic wisdom and constancy.

Many of them were permitted to live, as it were, with their posterity—to enter with them into the enjoyment of the fruits of their toils-- to witness the growth of their country, and the expanding influence of her free institutions—and to receive the unaffected homage of the increasing millions made happy by their patriotic labours.

How they were honoured, I need not tell you. How they were confided in, you well know. Of the members of that Congress, six were members of the convention which formed the present Constitution of the United States. Two were Presidents of the United States. One was Vice-President, and many others were appointed to stations of the highest trust and confidence.

Reader 7

~Their' country never grew weary of exhibiting her grateful sense of their services and their virtues. Shall we here conclude this slight and imperfect sketch of the extraordinary happiness, which was the reward of these illustrious men?

One yet remains, greater than all the rest. They lived in the faith, and they were permitted to die in the persuasion, that whatever other chastisement might befall their beloved country, she was not doomed to suffer the affliction of disunion. The father of his country, in the inestimable legacy of advice and instruction, he bequeathed to us when he took leave of public employment, dwelt with parental solicitude upon the vital topic of union.

He warned us that it would be assailed “ by internal and external enemies, constantly and actively, though often covertly and insidiously.” And while he warned, he exhorted us “ to frown indignantly upon the first dawning of every attempt to’ alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties that now link together its various parts.”

He could not but feel assured that such advice would be obeyed, and that one indignant and withering frown would settle on him, who openly and directly, or “covertly and insidiously ” under whatever name or pre- text, should aim a dagger at the heart of his country, by seeking to destroy or to “ enfeeble” the Union.

Adams and Jefferson, though they lived until the end of the fiftieth year, breathed their last breath among people firmly united, and rejoicing their union. And Carroll---he who outlived them all—was he in this respect less happy than the rest ?

Was his aged heart disturbed by the fear that the exhortation of Washington might prove to be unavailing? Was the dim sight of the venerable survivor afflicted with visions of ruin to his country—his ear invaded with strange Words, of spurious coinage, and of evil augury, unknown to the vocabulary of the patriots and sages of the Revolution?

Believe it not.

The last pulsation of that heart had in it a remnant of the vigour of the Congress of 1776. That eye had been accustomed to look through gloom and darkness, and see beyond, a glorious light. That ear had heard the threats of confiscation and the halter, and did, not heed them.

Standing upon the rock of the Union, with Washington and Franklin and Hancock and Adams and Jefferson and their illustrious associates, he had braved the power of the British empire in arms against his infant country, and in Union had found safety and triumph. The storm had raged around them, but the rock was immoveable. Could such a man be suddenly persuaded, that madness had overtaken one portion of his countrymen, and degenerate fear another?

I say again, believe it not.

Let us be assured, that he too was permitted to depart with the unshaken and firm conviction, that there was still enough of the spirit of the Revolution to preserve its work.

In this imperfect and hasty glance at the composition, character, and services of the illustrious band, who stood forward as the representatives of the Union, to assert, and at every hazard to maintain the independence of our country, it will at once be perceived, that little more has been attempted than to point to the sources of information, and to invite to a more thorough examination of them.

It is well for us to dwell, and to dwell frequently and earnestly, upon all that belongs to that period—to study it, to fill our minds and our hearts with it, not as a theme of discourse and panegyric merely, but as a living principle of action, a deep and fixed instruction, something entering into our very organization, and made a part of our nature, so as to determine instinctively all our conduct in relation to our country.

Nothing else will secure to us the continuance of the blessings we enjoy.

Without it, the forms of free government may be but a dead letter. Look at our nearest neighbour, a nation, which, like our own, has passed from a colonial state to independence, and framed for herself a constitution as nearly as possible resembling that under which we are in the possession of peace and freedom.

Can you discern in her present condition anything which deserves to be called the working of a free constitution?

At this very moment, the question of 'who shall wield the power of the State, is depending not upon the result of an election by the citizens, but upon the issue of battles between contending armies.

The sword, instead of the ballot box, is again to decide the controversy, as it has done twice within the last five years. How different has been the lot of that happy country which we are permitted to call our own. The sword has never been drawn in it, but against a common, public enemy.

Wherever arms were seen, the flag of the Union floated over them, and was the sign in which all conquered. In every victory that has been gained, all could rejoice, for it has never been a victory over our own countrymen.

We have differed about men, and we have differed about measures, but always in a spirit of submission to the Constitution, and of attachment to the Union. And when, according to the fundamental law of free government, the will of a majority has been constitutionally declared, as to men or as to measures, we have peacefully acquiesced.

The voice of everyone is heard, but the voice of the majority must govern.

This is the great pervading vital principle of all our constitutions. Whatever may be the distribution of powers, however they may be modified in their investment or exercise, from one great source, they are all derived—from a majority of the people.

That such a government, so simple in its structure, so clear in its purpose, should be found adequate to all the legitimate objects for which government is instituted among men, who can doubt?

Look around upon this land—trace its progress from the moment when it shook off the trammels of colonial subjection, and started in the career of independent national existence—what has the world ever seen that can be compared to it ?

What does the world now contain that bears any resemblance to 'it'?

The eyes of mankind are fixed upon us with earnest attention,

Watching the great experiment. Will it succeed?

Reader 8

For more than fifty years it has succeeded. It has outlived the longest liver of those who united to establish it. They are now all in their graves. Their work still survives them—the same which they created, and bearing the same impress as in the beginning :

Union, Independence, Freedom.

Why shall it not stand?

We are stronger than they were in numbers and in wealth.

Are We weaker in wisdom and in virtue?

Are we less able to appreciate the blessings provided for us, less Willing to make the exertions necessary for preserving them?

A doubt implies degeneracy. It supposes a Want of enlightened patriotism— an unaccountable blindness to our own true interests—an incredible indifference to the happiness of those who are to come after us—an unheard of insensibility to the great trust committed to our keeping.

For sure it is, that if ever this glorious fabric should fall to ruins—Which may Heaven in its mercy forbid—it must be because there is not Wisdom and virtue enough to support it.

The age in which it perishes, will be the opposite of that in which it Was constructed; and as the one has earned undying fame, the other will merit universal execration.

From thoughts like these, let us endeavour to find consolation and assurance in the careful and constant study of the past—applying our hearts to extract from it lessons that may keep alive our vigilance, and in every exigency remind us of our duty.

Our greatest danger may perhaps be found to lie in what would seem to be our chief happiness. Our ancestors had to struggle with adversity. We are to guard against the seductions of prosperity, an enemy not less to be dreaded. It blinds and lulls us with a false security, and thus enfeebles and unnerves us, until, at last, nothing is desired but ease.

It is not in the order of Providence that blessings should be secured or preserved, without exertion and watchfulness. The moment when they are most to be lost, is in which, with a slumbering and imperfect sense of their value, there is an utter want of all sense of their exposure to risk.

Perhaps it may be a new mercy to our country, if occasionally we should be aroused by some alarm, requiring us to examine more carefully into our condition, to cling more closely to the spirit of the institutions which are the foundation of our happiness, and to endeavour to inspire our hearts with that true and active and enlightened patriotism, which shed its benignant influence over the early history of our nation.

If such a period be now come, who can deny that it is accompanied with the most affecting and impressive circumstances?

The cloud seems to be gathering directly over the grave of the last of the signers, as if it had waited till death had closed his eyes, leaving the past all bright and radiant, and over the future, stretching a curtain of darkness.

It would ill befit the present occasion to inquire how this sudden change has been wrought.

We are assembled for other purposes. We are here to commune with the illustrious dead, whose names are associated with the bright period of our history, and especially to commemorate that one of them who was permitted to outlive the rest, and, as the survivor, for years beyond the ordinary period of man's life, to enjoy the undivided reverence and affection of a grateful country.

Of the men who have acted a distinguished part in public affairs, no one can be selected, who, looking only to his personal condition, would seem to have had less motive for desiring a change, than Charles Carroll of Carrollton. He was born at Annapolis in Maryland, on the 20th September 1737. His grandfather, an Irishman by birth, came to this country in 1691. His father was a man of great wealth, and Charles Carroll of Carrollton was born to an inheritance, which might well be called princely. His education was luxurious, if such a term can ever be applied to what is bestowed in the culture and discipline of the mind or the formation of character—it is meant however only to denote, that the judicious affection of his father, provided for him every advantage which seemed to be proper for enabling him to enter upon life as became the position he was to occupy.

At a very early age he was sent to Europe.

There he was placed in a college of English Jesuits at St.Omers. After remaining in that institution for six years, he was placed in a college at Rheims.

Thence, in about a year, he was sent to the college of Louis Le Grand. From Louis Le Grand, at the expiration of two years, he went to Bourges to study the civil law, and after remaining there for one year, returned to Paris, where he remained till 1757. In that year he went to London, and commenced the study of the law in the Temple. In 1764, he returned to his native country, at the age of twenty-seven. Soon after this period, the questions between the colonies and the mother country began to be agitated. The pen of Carroll was among the first that were actively and successfully engaged on the side of the colonies. After the stamp act was repealed, there was a moment of seeming calm.

But even then it was easy to perceive, that the spirit which had been raised, was to by no means quited. There was a watchful jealousy awakened, and though the great point which had first roused it into action was Withdrawn, yet it manifested itself continually, upon every occasion when the liberty or rights of the citizen seemed to be encroached upon.

Such was the occasion which gained for Mr. Carroll his first signal of distinction. The Governor of Maryland undertook to settle a table of fees by proclamation. It was supported by its friends as a just exertion of prerogative. On the other side, it was opposed as an attempt to tax without the consent of the people's representatives, and an arbitrary and unjustifiable assumption of power.

Among its advocates was one, who, in the form of a dialogue between two citizens, the first of whom opposed the proclamation, and the second supported it, gave the whole argument, and of course the victory, to the latter.

Mr. Carroll took up the argument which had thus been purposely betrayed, and under the signature of the “ First Citizen,” exhibited a power and a patriotic energy which immediately engaged universal attention. One sentence particularly, which is quoted in his biography, shows how his mind was already ripened in patriotic decision, and impressed with that deliberate firmness which characterized the subsequent proceedings of our country.

“ What was done?” he exclaims “ The authority of the chief magistrate interposed, and took the decision of this important question from the other branches of the legislature, to itself.

"In a land of freedom, this arbitrary exertion of prerogative, will not, must not, be endured.”

Reader 9

Thanks from all quarters were addressed to the virtuous champion of the rights of the citizen, and Mr. Carroll rose at once to the highest station in the confidence of the people. In this resolute determination he continued. The accomplishments of education, the goods of fortune, the rank they enabled him to assume, were devoted for his country, with an entire disregard of the sacrifice his devotion might require, of ease, of enjoyment, of wealth, perhaps even of life itself.

In a letter to a member of Parliament, who, in writing to him, had asserted that six thousand English soldiers would march from one end of the continent to the other, he made this memorable reply.

“ So they may, but they will be masters only of the spot on which they encamp. They will find nought but enemies before and around them. When we are beaten on the plains, we will retreat to the mountains, and defy them. Our resources will increase with our difficulties. Necessity will force us to exertion; until tired of combating in vain, against a spirit, which victory after victory cannot subdue, your armies will evacuate our soil, and your country retire, an immense loser, from the contest.

No sir- we have made up our minds to abide the issue of the approaching struggle, and though much blood may be spilt, we have no doubt of our ultimate success.”

Nursed as he had been in the lap of tenderness, he was made of the hardy material which forms a patriot, and willing with his country to abide the issue of her struggle for freedom. In January 1775, he was appointed a member of the first committee of observation established at Annapolis, and in the same year was elected a delegate in the provincial Convention. In February 1776, his talents and his services in the general cause being well known, Congress conferred on him, though not a member, the distinguished honour of associating him with Doctor Franklin and Samuel Chase, as Commissioners to Canada to endeavour to induce the inhabitants to join in opposition to Great Britain.

The nature and importance of that commission, and the magnitude of its powers, sufficiently attest the extensive confidence reposed in him. From Canada he returned to the Convention, and there exerted himself with all his power, to obtain a withdrawal of the instructions by which the delegates of Maryland in Congress had been forbidden to concur in declaring the colonies free and independent States. They were withdrawn, and on the second of July 1776, the delegates from Maryland were in possession of authority to vote for independence.

In July 1776, he was elected a delegate to Congress, but before he left the Convention to take his seat in that body, he had the satisfaction of seeing the declaration of the Convention of Maryland published to the world, associating her fully with the other colonies in the great contest for independence.

But why should we further pursue this detail?

His highest eulogy is pronounced in saying he was a signer of the Declaration of Independence—his character and his services are best portrayed by the statement, that he was worthy to be associated with the body from whom that declaration issued. To that eminence, as we have seen, he fairly won his Way by his talents and ' his patriotism—by a career of animated and perilous exertion, beginning with the first attempts upon the freedom of his country, and continued throughout with unabated zeal and perseverance.

The reputation of wealth, and even his unusually protracted life, may have in some degree obscured his just fame. There may be those, Who, looking carelessly into the history of the past, are induced to believe, that riches were his chief distinction, and the tranquil repose of his long serene evening, extending so far beyond the common length of life, characteristic of his former habits. Nothing can be more erroneous.

In personal qualities and exertions, Charles Carroll of Carrollton was of the full stature of the eventful times in which he acted.

In zeal and determination he was unsurpassed. He neither sought repose, nor shrunk from danger, nor clung to his possessions, nor listened to the seductive temptations to enjoy in indolence his individual advantages—but with the steady and uncompromising spirit which distinguishes the period, could sincerely join with the patriots,

Who declared,

“ We have counted the cost, and find nothing intolerable but slavery.”

He is entitled to a full portion of our gratitude. As he was for many years the single representative on earth of the Congress of 1776, his grave seems to be the grave of the whole, It is finally closed, and we are assembled around it for the last time.

What they have left to us, is now entirely ours—ours to enjoy, and ours, be it remembered, with the favour of Providence, to preserve.

It becomes us seriously and earnestly to consider What this great inheritance is, and 'with resolute firmness to determine that what we can do, and all over resplendent with the light of Union.

That is the light which embraces us all, and belongs to us all, and exhibits us to the World as the " One People" who declared themselves an independent nation.

That it may be resolved into its elements, and these be hurled in mad confusion against each other, destroying and destroyed, until chaotic darkness become again, is as true as that Heaven for our sins may withdraw from us protection and support, and leave us to our own blind weakness.

But that man can do this, and not be an enemy of his country, is as difficult to conceive, as that he can do it and not undo the work of the Revolution—as that he can do it and not destroy our hopes, and bring upon us a train of dire affliction and calamity, of which even the child unborn is to taste the bitterness.

If blood be shed again, except under the flag of the Union, it can never mingle with that blood, which consecrated our land when men marched to battle with Washington to lead them.

It will not produce the same fruits. Armed men will grow up out of 'this peaceful' soil—not such men as put on armour to establish the union, the independence, and the freedom of their country, and laid it down when her liberties were secured—but men supplied with fury's arms, With the destroying rage, called military ambition, with the lust of dominion, and its dismal progeny, whose procession is closed with the despot and his bloody sword. Brother will be seen fighting against brother, and father against son, all wounding the bosom of their parent country, and with every blow striking down her constitution, her laws, and her freedom. '

Our part is clear. Union is our country, and we are on the side of our country, her constitution, her authorities, and laws. Within the temple of Union are the graves of our ancestors.

We will not consent that the glorious fabric shall be torn down—we cannot consent that the graves of our fathers shall be divided.

No: Let us supplicate the continued protection of Heaven, with a devout and earnest spirit, and let our prayer be, that our "descendants, to the remotest posterity, may be able, together to make their pilgrimage in peace, as We have this day done, to the tombs of the departed patriots, and find them still united, in one country, and in one Union, watched over, and guarded, and revered by ONE PEOPLE.

God in His mercy forbid that more should be required of us,

But if the extremity must come, the voice from those tombs will tell us,

That UNION IS OUR COUNTRY