

Address

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No 24

Subject-
Independence Day

Officer

No 24

Inspector
Chapman

Independence Day.

1.

More than six thousand years ago a vast multitude of Israelites passed over the Jordan by a miraculous pathway.

Before the waters returned into their place, filling up this pathway and overflowing the river's bank, twelve stones were taken up from the river bed and carried forward to the neighborhood of Gilgal. From them the great general and leader, Joshua, caused a monument to be erected. He then said to the people: When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come saying, "What mean these stones? Then ye shall answer: "Israel came over this Jordan on dry land."

This simple monument and the speech of Joshua were for the purpose that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord; that it is mighty; and that they might fear the Lord their God forever.

The monument and the recorded speech have been the witness from that time to this of that marvellous day. They have been helps to fathers and mothers in the trans-

Remembrance

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 The monument and the recorded speech have been the witness from that time to this of that marvelous day.
 They have been helps to fathers and mothers in the trans-

mission to children and children's children of a fundamental principle, viz. That of loyalty to the Lord God.

The Declaration of Independence superior to Monuments

So to my mind, in a sense, the instrument which we call the "Declaration of Independence" stands as a perpetual memorila better than any monument. Joshua's structure inaugurated the very beginning of a nation. It was the corner stone of the theocracy; the harbinger of the kingdoms of David and Solomon. The very seed of loyalty to God and the fathers of Isreal.

So this, our declaration of human rights, approved by Congress the Fourth day of July, 1776, an extraordinary document, mulittudinous in distribution like the leaves of the forest, is at the very beginning of our Nation. It is the corner-stone of human liberty - human rights - as the Divine Master enunciated them. It was the earnest of a successful revolution, and the harbinger of higher and better things long afterward in the successful emancipation of human slavery.

The first statement of principle in the document has

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Declaration of Independence

the marks of inspiration: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inherent and inalienable 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; that whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and to institute new Government, laying its foundations on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

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And the closing words have a solemnity and impressiveness like Holy writ: "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor."

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Its items seem trite - yet in the
crucible.

4.

It is indeed very common-place to reiterate these old sayings, such as:-

"All men are created free and equal."

"God gave them inalienable rights.- Among them life, liberty and pursuit of happiness."

"Genuine Governments derive their just powers from the governed."

"And the people have a right to revolution, - to destroy an effete system, - and to build anew so as to secure their safety and happiness; and further, for the people to express a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence while they pledge to each other their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor!"

Yes, they perchance, seem to us trite sayings like tales an hundred times told. Yet ^{These recognized principles} ~~they~~ were once new; they fought long for existence, for expression. They lie at the very beginning of Constitutional Government; they strike at the very root of tyranny, of oppression, of misrule, serfdom and of slavery.

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The faithful Israelites, while they have not through the ages kept up the monument erected near the bank of the Jordan, have, nevertheless, done another thing, they have kept bright the record and the events ^{connected with} it; and they have answered the children's inquiry: What means this record? What means this fascinating story? What means this loyalty to the Father of all?

So it appears to me, in these days when men are devoting themselves so engrossingly to material thoughts, and material interests, and appear to care less and less for the record of fundamental principles, ^{— it seems to me} to be especially wise to pause and inquire why this National Holiday was ever established? What principles ^{were} enunciated on that day? Who were the great men assembled to legislate and publish a declaration which grows brighter and stronger and more helpful to our people and the rest of mankind as the years go by?

What Parents should tell their Children.

The answers to these questions are simple. It is what parents in America should always tell their children.

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What Parents Should Tell Their Children

Answers to these questions are simple. It is what parents in America should always tell their children.

FIRST:- This National Holiday was established to celebrate the independence of this Nation - the beginning of it. A Government unexampled in the security it gives to human liberty and human rights sprang, directly as the branch springs from the vine, from this declaration.

The Independence Day is intended to secure a happy recognition of the benefits and blessings of this superb Government.

SECOND:- The principles enunciated may be comprehended in Abraham Lincoln's concise statement, it is: "The Government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

Let the people rejoice, then, especially on this birthday, that they govern; that they govern themselves. Let the children rejoice that the inheritance of this self-government is rich, expansive, abundant; and that it is all their own.

Third. The great men who, under God, made the Declaration, were in Congress assembled in Independence Hall of the

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Third. The great men who, under God, made the Declaration, were in Congress assembled in Independence Hall of the

old Pennsylvania State House, Philadelphia. The first name signed is the President of the Congress, JOHN HANCOCK, who, at the peril of his life, wrote his name in such plain letters that it could not be mistaken by friend or foe.

A list of names follows his, such as: SAMUEL ADAMS, JOHN ADAMS, ROGER SHERMAN, CHARLES CARROLL, THOMAS JEFFERSON? RICHARD HENRY LEE, BENJAMIN HARRISON and others down to THOMAS HEYWARD, Jr. Fifty-six in all, noble names, worthy sires of a strong nation.

They had the courage of Joshua, whom the Lord strengthened when in the face of vast and unknown perils, He said to him: Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

JOHN ADAMS of Massachusetts, one of the signers, thinking the declaration would be made two days sooner, wrote: "The Second of July, 1776, will be the most mem-

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orable epoch in the history of America; to be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great American festival, ^{me}commerated as the day of deliverance - from one end of the continent to the other,- from this time forward forevermore." But the Declaration was not adopted till the 4th of July. Hence the prophetic day, the day of power and glory, passed on from the Second to the World-renowned Fourth of July.

Genl.
The news affects Washington

In 1776 it took a longer time for news to pass from Washington to Boston than it does now, even by steamers, to go from New York to London or Paris.

After Washington had taken command in the vicinity of Boston and put every thing in that neighborhood into safe condition for the future, he turned his face toward the Hudson to meet new difficulties and dangers in that quarter.

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He was in the city of New York about the 1st of August, 1776, and there first received the gratifying intelligence that Congress, representing the people, had actually broken loose from the mother country, and that

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the independence of the United States had been declared by a public resolution on the preceding Fourth of July. Though every thing depended on the success of his arms in the defence of this new position, yet the Declaration of Independence itself appeared to him a vantage ground and greatly rejoiced his patriotic heart.

The Day before the Civil War.

Before the Civil War, from my youth, I recall the rejoicings of the people as the happy day came round. It was celebrated in churches, in schools, in special public assemblies, in military parades, in family and neighborhood picnics on the banks of running streams and in beautiful, shady groves; on land and on sea; at home and abroad, wherever the proud American citizens could find a few comrades or friends to unite with them in celebrating the joyous occasion. There was our Nation's festival.

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There was always a feeling of dissatisfaction, more or less pronounced, on the part of many people of the free States, in the presence of the reading of the Declaration of Independence and the proclamations from public official

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and the orations and poems delivered in connection therewith.

Their excessive praise of the Government, their excessive claims for the happiness of the people when they could almost hear the clanking of the chains of servitude, smote every conscience and appeared a travesty of right and truth.

It was no wonder that orators like RUFUS CHOATE should declare the clauses of the Declaration of Independence but "glittering generalities!" It was nothing strange that men like GARRISON and PHILLIPS and MAY and LOVEJOY and DOUGLASS should cry out "sound! mere sound and bombast!" but the Declaration ^{itself} has remained intact; while falsehood and the folly of human conduct which preceded the reality, have ^{unwillingly} brought us to a new and wholesome dispensation and a new and truer interpretation.

We care little for reciting ^{year by year} the usurpations of "King George"; but we have come to the period of time and history where there is actual "liberty and union one and inseparable" from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

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Southern feeling.

11.

During the Civil War, while the Southern States were striving for secession and for a new independence, they shut their eyes against the old Declaration, the old Charter of liberty.

Defeats, like those of Gettysburg and Vicksburg, meeting them on or near the Day of Independence, the birthday of the national existence, caused them depression and often great bitterness; and it is understood that the celebration of the Fourth of July has not yet been resumed to any great extent among those who were destined to suffer disappointment and defeat; yet I do hope as loyalty has already revived, as the flag is again waving brightly, with undiminished grace and beauty from every capitol and from every public building, and, as little by little, a conviction comes upon even the vanquished themselves as well as upon others, that the results of the Civil War have indeed been but blessings in disguise - yes admitted blessings to those who suffered most by the war; that among them, slavery with all its concomitant evils has departed; that

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blessings to those who suffered most by the war; that

slavery with all its concomitant evils has departed; that

freedom has come in and become universal; and that prosperity has by no means been confined to the conquering hosts; ^{in view of these results,} I do hope, that there will be a speedy and glad return to Independence Day in every Southern community.

Our common inheritance

The principles of the Declaration of Independence are a common inheritance to the whole people; and nothing can be wiser or better than our annual feasts of joyful reminder; nothing more likely to assuage the pain and irritation of old wounds and do away with all bitterness;; nothing better than a common, happy, universal celebration of this National Holiday. It will educate the children of the late slaves; it will enlighten the children of the foreign born; yes; it will enlighten all who participate in the gala exercises and intellectual feasts of the occasion.

Possibly for a time it may be best to have a more serious and thoughtful celebration than formerly.

Possibly we might by a common consent revamp, abridge or modify, as they do in the Revised Statutes, some old forms for public recital.

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for public reading.

But On this day I would make prominent the great wisdom of our fathers, - A wisdom passing human knowledge, when they united in the Declaration of the principles that are bound, sooner or later, to prevale throughout the earth; among them the greatest, that all Governments, God given Governments, are based upon the consent of the governed.

Problems solved in due time.

True we have had dissensions, contentions, strifes, civil upheavals, and what nation has not; but under the guidance of Him who moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform, we have already eliminated from our system the principal causes of human disturbance. We have already solved problems that at one time seemed to require for their solution, some thing more than the finite mind.

There remain a few problems extremely difficult to the eyes of our best seers. They pertain to how we shall deal with certain gigantic evils that are suggested by the ~~words~~ words, social vice, intemperance, excessive immigration, prejudice of race, prejudice of cast, fiat-money, enormous monopoly, ^{boy-cotting & strikes,} persistent and insidious efforts of

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Problems, solved in a new line.

True we have, had dissensions, contentions, strifes, civil upheavals, and what nation has not; but under the guidance of Him who moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform, we have already eliminated from our system the principal causes of human disturbance. We have already solved problems that at one time seemed to require for their solution, some thing more than the finite mind. There remain few problems extremely difficult to the eyes of our best seers. They pertain to how we shall deal with certain gigantic evils that are suggested by the words, socialistic, interference, excessive taxation, from prejudice of race, prejudice of cast, first-money, enormous monopoly, persistent and insidious efforts of

secret bodies to undermine and destroy the public schools, ballot-corruption, and a thousand other ills that we need not emphasize.

As in the days of the Revolution, the Lord raised up men like Washington and those who ⁵sined the Declaration of Independence, to solve the questions ^{questions involving life & death} submitted to them; as in the days of 1812, He gave us leaders like Madison and Harrison and Perry, and Andrew Jackson to solve the problem of a proper inter-national intercourse; as in the days of the Mexican War, He raised up men who, like Polk and Marcy and Zachary Taylor, were to solve the intricate problems concerning our boundaries, and fix the proper limits of this Nation; and as in the days of our great Civil upheaval, He raised up men like Lincoln, Chase, Seward, Stanton, Grant, Sherman and Thomas, who were able to deal with the most troublesome questions of secession and slavery, and solve them without losing a star from our National Crown;

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So, with the clear seeing of this 11th National

Birthday, we can confidently predict, that He who has brought us thus far will raise up men of purity and ability and wisdom, adequate to the solution of every remaining problem.

So, let us then, in conclusion, lift up our minds and hearts, and contemplate the wonderful wisdom of the Ruler of Nations; and while we magnify our past achievements, give to Him the glory that is His due, with a confident faith that if, as a people, we do the best we can to extend His ^{gl}riteousness, He, ^{on his part,} in His mighty power, will keep us safely till our destiny shall be accomplished.

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