

DANIEL DOUGHERTY

DANIEL DOUGHERTY, American lawyer and orator, was born of Irish parents at Philadelphia, Pa., Oct. 15, 1826, and died at New York, Sept. 5, 1891. After studying law he was admitted to the Bar in 1849, and soon attained prominence in his profession. He was a well-known and popular speaker on the Democratic side, but being a strong Unionist he broke with the Democratic party in 1861, and in 1864 worked with the Republicans in order to secure the reelection of President Lincoln. In 1876, he returned to the Democratic camp, and in 1880 nominated Hancock for the Presidency in a remarkable speech. Other much admired oratorical efforts of his include an address before the literary societies of Lafayette College in 1859, a speech of welcome to Lincoln in Philadelphia (1864), and an oration at Baltimore, Nov. 11, 1889, before the Roman Catholic lay congress. Mr. Dougherty's orations display both power and finish, and he was nearly if not quite as popular on the lecture platform as when making political speeches. He never held office and his latest years were passed in New York, to which city he had removed, and where he gave himself almost entirely to the pursuit of his profession.

ORATION ON DEMOCRACY

DELIVERED IN PHILADELPHIA, JULY 4, 1856

THERE are a few spots about the earth, some separated by seas and distant thousands of leagues from others, which the voice of the world has proclaimed holy and around which the memories of mankind will cling with everlasting reverence.

Such is Sinai, where God proclaimed to man the rules of human action.

Such, too, is Calvary, where, amid the darkness of the sun, the rocking of the earth, and the rising of the dead, the Saviour died, even as the portals of heaven opened.

After these, sanctified by the Divine Presence, may be mentioned Marathon, where the dauntless soldiers of glori-

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ous Greece achieved the liberty of Athens and won imperishable renown.

Runnymede, where the English barons wrung from a tyrant king the Magna Charta. The Pilgrim's Rock, where the founders of New England sought a shelter from the religious persecutions of the Old World. The quiet town of St. Mary's, where religious freedom first found a foothold in the new.

And that other spot—the spot that made this day immortal, where, Pallas-like, a new-born nation sprung into giant life—where man reclaimed his long-lost prerogatives and asserted the justice of heaven in his own equality—where freedom made her last and noblest stand against the encroachments of time-covered and world-cursed tyranny—where the great work was begun in which Americans will ever toil and never tire until wrong is righted, every throne levelled with the dust, oppression swept from the earth, the world regenerated, and mankind free.

Upon this hallowed spot, this heaven-smiling morn, we meet to bow our heads and hearts in humble adoration to the Almighty Power, on whom we relied in the hour of our extremest need and whose protecting care we implore now in the day of our abundance—to reaffirm our never-dying gratitude to our departed fathers—to renew the holy vows of political equality and declare our fixed resolve to transmit unimpaired to posterity the inestimable heritage bequeathed to us.

When first through chaos rolled the voice of God, "Let there be light, and there was light;" when the Omnipotent spoke, and this beautiful world, obedient, sprung into its fixed existence—then in the image of his Maker—with a soul that shall never die,

"In beauty clad,
With health in every vein,
And reason throned upon his brow,
Stepped forth immortal man."

Yes; for man God called forth the new created world and gave to him and his posterity perpetual "dominion over the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air and the beasts and the whole earth and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth."

Thus, to the morning of creation, to the threshold of time, to God himself, can man trace back the title of his nobility.

It was the divine economy that all men should stand forth erect and free, bound as one people in the ties of endless brotherhood, each striving for the general good, the earth bountifully yielding her luscious fruits, all created things subject to their control, and they to God alone.

But man, though clothed with an eternity of bliss, listened to the voice of the tempter, yielded and fell from his high estate,

"Brought death into the world and all our woe."

The designs of heaven were thwarted—fierce contention and inveterate hate usurped the seat of love—justice affrighted, fled—crime mocked at mercy—might triumphed over right—custom sanctioned wrong, and man became a slave to do the bidding of his master. And thus through thousands of years the innumerable hosts that spread themselves over the world, formed in the same mold with us, of the same majestic presence, with minds to ponder, and hearts to feel, and arms to strike, bowed their heads in abject submission to succeeding tyrants, and made their existence but to live, labor, and die.

Open the pages of history, trace back the course of empire

even to Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon, whence it is lost in the twilight of fable, and what is it but a story of uncounted and never-ending wrongs?

Does history describe in glowing language the pursuits of prosperous people? How governments spoke by the voice of the governed? How justice and equality reigned supreme in council? How virtue was respected—the domestic ties regarded—merit and mind the only steps to distinction, while peace, with its attendant blessings, crowned a happy world?

Ah, no! It tells how nations rose by conquest to renown and sunk by servility to oblivion. How oppression, despotism, and cruelty covered the earth. How generation after generation, century after century, mankind was stripped of every prerogative and robbed of every right, while wars, waged for mad ambition, shook the earth and sent their shrieks along the sky.

History, with minutest skill, describes a man miscalled monarch. The millions are forgotten. It fills chapters in narrating the prowess of the victor. The people are never named save to tell the number of the slain, or captives chained to the chariot wheels to grace the triumph of the conqueror.

Liberty became a homeless wanderer through the world. True, for a time, she flashed her glories over Greece. In after years she dimly shone along the plains of Italy and over the waters of the Adriatic. She sought the Alpine hills of Switzerland, and where'er she rested for a day her presence shed joy and gladness, but never found a fast and fitting home.

Thus oppression spread its iron sway over a prostrate world. Each century served but to rivet the tighter and shackle the stronger the will and might of enslaved man.

His mind, his very soul, was not his own. If he but breathed the name of country the tyrant called it treason and struck his head from off his body. To worship his God was to mount from the funeral pile through the flames of martyrdom to heaven.

But even then, in the darkest hour, the high court of eternal justice decreed the liberation of mankind and the doom of its oppressors.

The curtain of the deep was drawn aside, and beyond the blue waves that dashed their white spray upon Europe's shore, far away toward the setting sun, lo! a continent appears! where nature herself assumes a grander air, and speaks in sublimer tones the wonders of the Deity.

Here, on the unpolluted soil of America, a bright existence was to dawn upon down-trodden man — here should he assume the authority delegated to him in Paradise — here should the big waters of a people's might be let loose, and in the great flood of freedom perish the last vestige of governmental wrong.

From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, the religious strifes, the civil broils, and bloody wars that made Europe one Golgotha served to scatter along these eastern shores a brave and hardy people, who, in a common hatred of oppression, forgot the differences of country, race, and religion, to rejoice in the native liberty of the new-found land.

Such was the people appointed to carry out the great work of man's political regeneration — such the people whom heaven decreed should fight the great battle on which was staked the freedom or slavery of the world. And, to make the victory grander, they were matched against the mighty power that claimed jurisdiction over earth and sea — who boasted her banner played in every breeze — that the sun

never sunk on her possessions — that her arms were invincible, and her name the synonym of victory.

The people of the American colonies accepted the high trust delegated to them. It was not for themselves they fought — it was for their children's children to the remotest posterity; it was for the cause of freedom all over the world.

Everything considered, they were as favorably circumstanced as any people. They groaned under no galling yoke of oppression — no wail of woe sent a shudder through the land — they were not compelled to stand abashed beneath the gaze of a superior, or brook the presence of a master. They were the favorites of the mother country, had their colonial assemblies, and made their local laws. They enjoyed personal security and private property.

But the hour had arrived when a pernicious principle was to be crushed, lest it might enslave their children. They denied the right of a distant Parliament to legislate for them. They refused to compromise an eternal truth. They were willing to spend "millions for defence, but not one cent for tribute." Rather than submit to the Stamp Act, they were ready to bleed. Sooner than yield to the encroachments of a king, they were prepared to die.

In yonder venerated Hall they deliberated and decided. Upon this immortal spot they startled the tyrants of the earth from their long sleep of security by the declaration of a principle never before successfully asserted since the fall of Adam, that liberty and equality were the birthright of all men and linked inseparably to their nature. They declared that these were colonies no longer, but sovereign States, and, with the approving smiles of God, should continue so forever.

How they met the shock of arms history delights to tell;
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what they suffered will ever be the theme of speech and story.

Through five long and dreary years, enduring hardships of the severest kind, frequently without the necessities of life, they bore themselves as freedom's soldiers alone could do. Though many were the acts of cruelty which disgraced the British arms and cried aloud for vengeance, yet they chained their just resentments and no cruel or ignoble act stained the pure record. But one traitor dimmed the glory of their arms. Even when defeat followed defeat and despair seemed to cover their cause, confiding alone in heaven, they clung as brothers to each other until the tyrant's hordes shrunk from our shores to leave the land forever free.

Oh, Americans! my countrymen! how deep and profound is the debt of gratitude we owe the men of '76. How our hearts should swell with emotion at the bare mention of their honored names and our lives be devoted to the preservation of their priceless boon.

Yet even now, when the last of that noble race still lingers in our midst; when the forms of many still live in our recollection; when that Hall stands untouched by time, there are Americans — degenerate sons — cursed with ingratitude; "the marble-hearted fiend," who would desecrate the memories of the dead, destroy the happiness of the living, and wither the hopes of the future by dashing aside as a worthless toy that which was achieved at the price of rivers of blood and mountains of slain.

To have stopped with the Revolution would have been to risk if not to have lost all. Perhaps for a time we might have been spared a foreign yoke, but internal differences and domestic jealousies would have engendered conflicts that might end again in monarchy. The struggle had been severe

— the victory grand; to have risked the prize would have been an insult to heaven, a crime against humanity.

Therefore the American fathers met in council to establish a lasting peace where they had met to wage a glorious war. Even in Independence Hall the representatives of the old thirteen States, headed by Washington, in a spirit of mutual concession and lofty patriotism, dictated the sacred instrument that makes us one people, enabling us to guard with jealous care the rights of the humblest citizen at home and maintain the nation's honor against an embattled world.

Mark its language and contrast it with the documents of kings:

"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America."

And may that constitution, and every letter and line, be preserved unaltered and untouched, and the blessings of liberty shall endure until the earth shall crumble and the stars be plucked forever from the sky.

Then for the first time a government was formed that derived its just powers from the consent of the governed.

Liberty achieved, independence acknowledged, the constitution adopted, the United States took her place in the Olympian race, to contend with the nations for the prize of pre-eminence.

The titled minions of the earth scoffed aloud at what they conceived to be a chimera of democracy, but soon a look of dread came o'er them as they beheld rising the magnificent reality.

In the short space of time spanned by a single life, as if by "the touch of the enchanter's wand," the people have built a government before which the mightiest realms of the earth pale their splendors as do the stars of night before the refulgent glory of the coming day. Population has increased from three to thirty millions. Instead of thirteen, thirty-one stars now shine in the clear blue of this glorious flag. The multitudinous pursuits of enlightened life are cultivated to their highest pitch. The press is mighty and free. Peace and contentment smile alike around the poor man's hearth and the rich man's hall. Education scatters its priceless gift to every home in the land. Religion gathers around its altars the faithful of every creed. Statesmen have arisen "fit to govern all the world and rule it when 'tis wildest." Orators have appeared who have rivalled the great masters of antiquity. The doors of the American Parthenon are ever open to invite the humble but aspiring youth to enter and fill the loftiest niche. The highest dignity is within the grasp of all; for the lowly boy born and reared in our own sweet valley of Cumberland shall when the spring comes round again be clothed by the people with the first of mortal honors—that of guiding for a time the American republic upon her highway of glory.

The European emigrants leave their native fields for the American forests, and soon become life-long devoted to the country that adopts them as her own. Commerce with its golden chains links our shores with the farthest corners of the earth. The Alleghenies are climbed by the steam-car, or dashed aside to make way for the channel upon which trade floats her inland argosies.

The American advances westward and the wilderness falls, and on its ruins rise splendid cities and cultivated fields. He

reaches the broad river, and soon its glassy surface is cleft by a thousand keels. He strikes the quarry and the white marble comes forth to beautify cities and to be chiselled into monuments to commemorate the mighty deeds of the nation and to transmit to posterity the features of the great. He perforates the mountain and drags to the sunlight the inexhaustible treasures of its mines. He searches the stream, and behold! its waters run bright with shining gold. The metallic rod is raised aloft, and the storm is robbed of its terrors; the wires are thrown about the land, and the lightning leaps to do our bidding.

Our statesmen dictate new rules for the peace of nations and freedom of the seas. Our soldiers—may they never fight but in a righteous cause—have planted our banner in triumph upon foreign strands. Our sailors land upon the shores of Japan, and its gates are open the first time for centuries.

The sun of American republicanism looms proudly up in the western sky, and shedding back its rays over the darkened plains of the Old World, beholds the millions rising and preparing to demand a restoration of their natal rights. Europe already quakes to its centre with the throes of a gigantic revolution. It may be stifled for years, perhaps for generations, but it will come as sure as the day follows the night.

The people are thinking. Education is being diffused among the masses. Intolerance is departing; the Irish Catholic is emancipated; and the Protestant worships in his chapel beneath the shadow of the Vatican.

Ireland, Poland, Hungary, and Italy have raised aloft the angry arm of rebellion. It has been stricken to their side by treachery, but the life-blood still warms its veins and feeds it

with strength for another and successful blow. France has twice burst into a flame; the flame again is smothered but the fire still burns. In England the Chartists gather a hundred thousand strong on Kennington Common to petition Parliament for universal suffrage and the press thunders at the throne the demand that England's councils and England's arms shall be led by men of mind, not those whose only merit is titled blood.

These, these are the fruits of the seed sown in the soil beneath our feet. These are the achievements wrought by the people—they alone who really rule by "divine right," and are the "Lord's anointed."

Our past is but a life—a day in history. Our future—when all over this broad continent our institutions shall have peacefully extended—each year new States rising and rushing to join the happy throng—sister republics seeking the shelter of our flag—a hundred millions of freemen speaking the same language and obeying the same laws! O! to sketch the future of our beloved country would require the pen of an angel dipped in ethereal fire!

Should not a contemplation of these things make our hearts leap beyond the barriers of party, to link in love all who claim America as their home and acknowledge allegiance to the constitution?

But how intense our delight, how unbounded our joy, who can this day proudly boast that we are a part and portion of the democracy of America, the instruments with which heaven has worked these blessed changes in the past and to whom alone is entrusted our country's mission in the future.

Let our aim be to smooth down the asperities of party feeling—to frown upon the turbulent spirits who seek to widen the political differences of the people. Let our hearts expand

with an enlarged patriotism. Let us respect the opinions of others and seek to win them to our side by the dear memories which cluster around this holy spot.

As each grave political question presents itself for our consideration let us weigh it in the scales with democracy and the constitution; if it balance with these let our every effort be devoted to its triumph; if not, let us wage honorable war against it until we have accomplished its destruction. Let the "Farewell Address" be revered by us and our children be taught to obey its sacred injunctions. Let us not be tempted to our fall by the demon of discord who seeks, Lucifer-like, to have us driven from this political paradise—or if you do

"Let me prophesy,
The blood of Americans shall manure the ground,
And future ages groan for this foul act;
Peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels,
And in this seat of peace, tumultuous wars
Shall kin with kin, and kind with kind confound;
Disorder, horror, fear and mutiny,
Shall here inhabit, and this land be call'd
The field of Golgotha, and dead men's skulls;
O! if you rear this house against this house,
It will the wofullest division prove
That ever fell upon this cursed earth;
Prevent, resist it, let it not be so,
Lest child, child's children cry against you—woe!"

But confiding in the principles of democracy, cherishing as holy the constitution of our common country—like to the Pontic Sea—no—rather let me say like our own Mississippi, whose waters indissolubly link the North and the South together—the American Union, unchecked by a returning flood, shall flow forever on through the countless ages of the future until it, with all, is lost in the great gulf of eternity.