

SENATOR CARPENTER

MATTHEW HALE CARPENTER, an American senator and lawyer, was born at Moretown, Vt., Dec. 22, 1824, and died at Washington, D. C., Feb. 24, 1881. He was educated at the United States Military Institute, then studied law at Waterbury, Vt., and was admitted to the Bar in 1847. In the following year he removed to Beloit, Wis., where he soon rose to prominence in his profession. In 1856, he made Milwaukee his home, and when the Civil War broke out he travelled widely in the west, making speeches in behalf of the Union cause. He received the appointment of judge-advocate-general of Wisconsin, and in 1868 was engaged as government counsel in the famous McArdle case, which involved the legality of the Reconstruction Act of 1867. His success in this instance brought him into such notice that he was soon after elected to the United States Senate, serving there from 1869 to 1875. After practicing his profession for a few years, he was in 1879 again returned to the Senate, but did not live to complete his term of office. Senator Carpenter was known politically as "a war Democrat," opposing the Fugitive Slave Law at the outset of his career, advocating emancipation of the slaves as early as 1861, and in 1864 declaring that they must be enfranchised. Among his best-known oratorical efforts in the Senate are his speeches on Johnson's Amnesty Proclamation, on the bill to restore Fitz John Porter, and his defence of President Grant against the attack of Sumner.

MISSION AND FUTURE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES

DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION OF MEMORIAL HALL, BELOIT
COLLEGE, JULY, 1869

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—
The American people have just emerged from the thick darkness of national distresses: emerged, as no other nation could reasonably have expected to from such dangers, triumphant, though bleeding at every pore. The first impulse of a great people on being delivered from eminent perils is that of joy and thanksgiving; then comes gratitude for those by whose guidance, under God, safety

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has been attained; then a sad reflection upon the fearful sacrifices by which success has been purchased and a tender recollection of those who have fallen in the strife; and finally the composed mind gathers up the teachings of such a fearful experience,—wisdom for the guidance of future years. On the surrender of Lee and Johnston in 1865 our people gave themselves up to the wildest rejoicings; for a time the toils, the trials, the sufferings of four dreadful years were all forgotten; business places were closed, our people rushed out of doors, impromptu processions filled the streets, music led our exultant emotions as far as musical sounds could conduct them; and then the roar of cannon and the shoutings of the multitude took up the joyful strain and bore it in tumult to the skies. Our people are fond of excitement and may be aroused to enthusiasm upon slight provocation. But then the grounds for national rejoicing were adequate and philosophical. Such dangers as had never threatened any government had been averted; such a rebellion as the world had never seen had been suppressed; such results as had never before been accomplished by war had been achieved. We plunged into the war cursed with the institution of slavery,—three millions of our fellow creatures held in bitter bondage; we came forth a nation of free men, equal in civil rights, no longer recognizing any distinctions of caste or color. Our young Republic had successfully ended the experiment of its existence and for the first time took its place—a full, round, high place—among the powers of the earth. We had to thank God, after the storms of war had passed, that we at last possessed what our fathers had hoped and prayed for, "a country, and that a free country."

Our people had shown their gratitude to their leaders in works more substantial than words. They have raised Grant

above the army to the chair of Washington. Sherman they have made their chief captain; an appointment for life with annual salary second only to that of the president. Sheridan they have made the worthy lieutenant of such a captain; and others have been rewarded, and are still to be honored according to their great merits. The widows and orphans of the war have been generously provided for. Everything that could be has been done to smooth the scars of a frightful struggle. We have demonstrated that a great people know how to be both just and generous.

And now, four years after the war and after the immediate and pressing demands upon us have been fully satisfied toward those who survived and came back to us from the battle-field, we have come in the midst of profound peace and general prosperity, on this beautiful day of teeming summer, to show our reverence for those who came not back from the war; and to dedicate to their memory the beautiful hall which you have erected, monumental in form, and useful in fact; thus uniting the memory of the departed with one of the great facilities for acquiring knowledge, a college library.

Pericles delivered his great oration, which Thucydides has preserved for us,—one of the grandest specimens of ancient art,—standing by the unburied remains of those who had fallen on the field and surrounded by weeping mourners whose anguish had not yet been soothed by the healing power of time. Nevertheless, by far the greater part of that oration is devoted to an examination of the character of Athenian institutions; to show that those who had fallen for Athens had not died for a vain or useless thing.

We stand here to-day not in the freshness of individual grief; not to pay the last sad offices of respect to the out-

ward material forms of those we have loved. Over their graves the green grass is waving and tropical flowers are cheerfully blossoming. Time has dried our tears and composed our emotions. The sister comes not to weep for the brother; the father comes not to bend over the ghastly remains of his first born, not yet committed to sepulture. But we come as American citizens to thank God that in our deepest need the patriotism of our people was equal to the hour; we come to reflect rather than to weep; we come to gather up the lessons taught by their example; to consider the fruits of the victory they have secured for us, and hence to deduce our duty as a nation in the great future which opens before us with immortal splendor.

You have just been addressed by Professor Emerson, specially upon the character and services of those whose names are to be engraved upon the tablet of honor in this memorial hall. He knew them personally, loved them well, and has spoken of them with the tenderness befitting his theme, and an earnest eloquence becoming to himself. I shall therefore devote the short time allotted to me to a consideration of the character of our government and its duty in the immediate future.

God never made a man for the sake of making him; nor that he might amass wealth and corrupt himself with its enjoyment. Every man is sent into the world with certain qualities to be cultivated and developed; charged with duties to be performed, and clothed with responsibilities commensurate with his power; sent into the world that some other may be better for his having lived. So with nations; they grow up not for themselves alone; they are ordained of God; they are the instrumentalities by which God accomplishes his purposes towards the human race. They who study

human history, they who believe in the Gospels of Christ—believe that the very hairs of our head are numbered and that not a sparrow falls without his notice—cannot doubt that empires come and go, and states are born and perish, in obedience to his sovereign will. . . .

A little band of patriots, of God-fearing men, lovers of liberty because lovers of God, too few to stand upright in England, too resolute of purpose to submit to tyranny, turned their steps, still westward, and in mid-winter planted the empire of freedom upon this then unpromising continent. It is quite unnecessary, for you are as familiar with it as I am, and time would fail me to dwell upon the details of that settlement, and the settlement of other colonies upon these shores. I only refer to it to ask you, who protected them from famine, from dissensions internal, from dangers external, from the inclemency of the elements, and the hostility of savages? Who gave them the courage and inspired them with the faith equal to their great task? Turn over in your own minds, for I have no time even to refer to the strange incidents in their wonderful history, verifying our belief that God superintends the founding of States; follow the colonies through their infancy, down to the commencement of the revolution which ultimately separated them from the parent State and made us an independent nation, and then say, do you believe God had no part, no design in all those wonderful events? He saw the end from the beginning; and the beginning would not have been if the end had not been intended.

It is true that the love of liberty in their hearts, the tyranny of their king, their fleeing to these shores, their founding of a free commonwealth, their growth to power as a people, were all natural events. No supernatural inter-

vention attests God's purpose in their case. No thunders rolled down the mountains, no summer led them over the wintry sea, no law of nature was reversed for their aid or protection. If we were about to send a colony to take possession of a distant continent, we should make great display about it; have long processions and longer orations. When we send an envoy extraordinary to a foreign power we send him in a government vessel, we land him from beneath the star spangled flag and amid the roar of cannon to notify our foreign neighbor that the United States has sent him to her shores. But God's "ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts." He "speaks in his work." Jesus came an envoy from heaven to earth, not in the glory which he had with his father before the world was; not by angels attended through the opening heavens; but he came not the less directly from the Father. . . .

On the 4th of July, 1776, our fathers met in solemn council and promulgated to the world the principles which were to be our chart as a nation and assumed a place among the nations of the earth. To that event and that day we refer our birth as a nation. Let us consider for a moment the great distinguishing principle upon which our institutions were based. We boast that that was the commencement of a new order of political things. Let us see for a moment in what that declaration differed from prior fundamental articles of political and governmental faith.

The brotherhood of man, the absolutely equal rights of all men, the right of all to participate in the privileges and benefits of civil government, as they share its burdens, although to our minds familiar and self-evident truths, have dawned gradually upon the world and made their way slowly into creeds of men. The Jew denied to every one not a Jew

not only the rights of citizenship in temporalities, but all hope of enjoying the blessings of heaven.

The Gentile might indeed be adopted into the Jewish commonwealth, but as a Gentile he was nobody. When Pericles boasted that in Athens all men enjoyed equal privileges and were preferred for their merits and not for their birth, he spoke in a city of which no inconsiderable portion of its inhabitants were slaves. By all men he meant all Athenians; he did not recognize that any but Athenians were men. Jesus first burst the bonds of national selfishness. He came to establish a kingdom that should know no end, be united with the destinies of no nation, which should survive all and supersede all; and its foundations were laid broadly accordingly.

The Jew, the Gentile, the Scythian, the Barbarian, the bond, the free, the black, and the white, were invited to equal benefits in his kingdom. He first taught principles broad enough to include all nations, races, and colors in a common benefit. The Declaration of our Independence, the cornerstone of our nationality, was man's first attempt to introduce the liberality of Christian principle into the framework of civil government; it was a declaration—not that all Americans, all Englishmen, all Frenchmen were equal—but that all men were equal; no matter where born, no matter whether learned or ignorant, rich or poor, black or white.

It deduced the right to equality before the law, the right to participate in civil government, not from the accident of birth or condition, nor yet from race or color, but from the fact of manhood alone.

Upon this principle, as the one great faith of our people, the ideal we intended to realize, the consummation we pledged ourselves to the accomplishment of, our fathers ap

pealed to the God of battles, and succeeded. A more solemn covenant was never entered into between a nation and the God of nations. Upon that principle we stood through eight years of bloody war against one of the most powerful nations on the earth. Without an army, without a navy, without an exchequer, we stood, and withstood all the power of England, because truth will always stand, and right triumph over wrong, while God sits on the throne of the universe.

But after war had established our right to self-government, and we came to fashion a government, this principle was not fully carried out. Slavery existed as a fact, and our fathers temporized with the condition of things. In the constitution they virtually secured the slave-trade until 1808 and substantially guaranteed slavery in the States until the States should abolish it. It is due to our fathers, however, to say that they expected slavery would soon be abolished by the States. No man who signed the constitution expected slavery would survive thirty years. But—and perhaps to show the sad consequence of ever compromising with evil—the event did not realize the expectation.

The introduction of the cotton plant made slavery profitable; and gilded vice too often finds favor. The South first excused, then justified, then clamored for the extension of slavery; and down to the commencement of the rebellion of 1861 no man could see how the nation could purge itself of this monstrous sin. By civil means it could not. The constitution had put it out of the power of the nation by committing it to the States where slavery existed; and those States would not abolish it. Our statesmen in 1850 resolved to cure the evil by wholly ignoring its existence. They solemnly resolved that the subject should never again be alluded to in or out of Congress. That all agitation should

cease. This was securing to the country peace according to the wisdom of time-serving politicians; but their wisdom was quite different from "the wisdom that is from above (which) is first pure, then peaceable."

The so-called "compromise measures" of 1850 were designed to secure peace; but they were a solemn prediction of war. From that moment it was evident that no peaceful measures would be adopted to redress the great wrong of three millions of our people; and then it became evident also that the whole country must soon become slave country or free country. And after ten years of preparation on the part of the South and of criminal inactivity on the part of the North, the two sections drew the sword to determine the question of liberty or slavery for all the States; and during four bloody, dismal years "hope and fear did arbitrate the event."

Grievously had we sinned and grievously did we answer it. Army after army rushed to the conflict; hundreds after hundreds were laid in their graves; the land was baptized with blood. It was in this strife that your companions, whom to-day you honor, went forth with faith in their hearts, prayers on their lips, and the sword in their hand to stand and to fall for truth, for justice, for liberty, and for God. Often in the darkness of those fearful years our sight failed us; we could see no light; but our people stood up strong in faith that God ruled the universe and that our cause was safe.

This faith carried us through the gloom. And finally in God's good time we emerged into the light of a triumphant and honorable peace. In this war our people expiated the sin of slavery and then the curse was withdrawn. And our nation stands to-day regenerated and renewed; won by fearful evidences back to its first love,—universal liberty. Now for

the first time in the history of our nation it is true as a fact, what our fathers announced as a theory, that all men are created equal.

Now our reconstructed Union takes its place among the nations, the standard-bearer and the champion of the rights of man. Our infancy is over, our pupilage past, our manhood attained. We are no longer to flee from city to city to escape observation, no longer to bid men not to mention our works, no longer to feed on the wild figs of Bethany; we have come into our own kingdom, and are ready to make up our jewels.

Let me pause in thought one moment at the close of the late war, and asking you to recall your emotions as the war progressed, your doubts, your fears, the magnitude of the conflict, the bitterness of our enemies, the unfriendly attitude of foreign nations, all the obstacles overcome, the dangers past; then let me ask if you do not believe that the hand of God in an especial manner led us through this sea of troubles to the dry land of peace? If you believe your Bible you do believe that God interfered by special providences to secure the deliverance of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt.

Turn to that history once more and read again of the successive plagues that fell like so many blows upon the heart of Egypt before she would consent that her slaves might go forth. Then consider the similar conduct of the South; how without war, slavery would have been continued; how long after the war had begun the South might have laid down their arms and kept the slaves; how after the war was ended the South might have determined the question of negro suffrage; and how by repeated obduracy, amounting to absolute stupidity, the South has forced the government to free the slaves and finally raise them to the full enjoyment of legal and political rights; then let me ask, do you see no parallel?

Another coincidence and I will leave this part of the subject. It would be interesting to consider, but time forbids, the analogies that run through the universe, moral and material; and to point out how strangely, if it is mere accident, similar things, though ages distant in point of time, are similarly surrounded.

Jesus was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." His public ministry was one of toil and trial. He was bearing the world's burdens, touched at its sorrows, and suffering for its sins. We read of him walking up the mountain, walking on the waters, agonizing in prayer, and weeping at the grave of him whom he loved.

On one occasion, and on one only, he employed the semblance of a triumph. Once he rode into Jerusalem; rode over a way sprinkled with the garmets of his disciples and the green branches of Judean palms; rode in triumph, amid the shoutings of the multitude, "Hosanna to the son of David." The day upon which this event transpired is celebrated by the church, and for designation it is styled "Palm Sunday." On the next Friday—"Good Friday"—Jesus gave up his life and was laid in the tomb.

I am not appealing to any superstitious feeling, nor drawing any irreverent comparison; merely noting a remarkable coincidence. President Lincoln took the helm of state amid the storms of war. For four years he suffered the anguish his situation imposed, he mourned with the mourners, he wept and prayed for the deliverance of his people. But finally, on a bright Sabbath morning in April, 1865, Lee surrendered the rebel hosts to Lincoln's captain and the war was ended. The news flew on the wires all over the land. That was a day of national rejoicing. None of us will ever forget it.

On that day the clergy ministered in the usual way at the

altar. And old deacons, accustomed by life-long discipline never to turn their backs upon the "illuminated temple of the Lord," remained to attend the morning and evening sacrifices as usual. But where were the people? In the streets, wild with excitement of joy. There are times when the Christian heart is too full for mere utterance; times when the roar of cannon and the shoutings of the multitude are as genuine—may they not be as acceptable—praise as the chanted psalm or the whispered prayer. So Miriam went forth, celebrating the deliverance from the Red Sea, and led the women of Israel with timbrels and dances, chanting that immortal song of human exultation, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

This first happy day of President Lincoln's official life, the first happy day of our people for four long years, chanced to fall on the "Palm Sunday" of 1865. The next Friday—"Good Friday"—Lincoln was shot. Mere coincident; mere accident; yes, but human history is full of such suggestive accidents.

In passing from our first proposition, that God has established this nation, watched over it in an especial manner, and protected it by special providences; it is encouraging to think that such is the belief of our people. It crops out everywhere; from the pulpit, in the press, in the speeches of our public men, in the conversation of our people. All speak the language of hope, of young, ardent hope, and faith in God's superintending providence. In no other nation is this so eminently true.

Look at the condition of old England to-day and read the suggestive debates in the House of Lords on the Irish Church bill. The lords speak as though they were oppressed with the

belief that there is no future for the monarchy. England stands to-day in the decrepitude of age, folding about her the shabby robes of worn-out custom; "perplexed with the fear of change;" unable to advance; unable to suppress the influences which are advancing step by step to throw open the temple of exclusive and hereditary privilege to the admission of the profane populace. "The voice of the people," when it utters the settled faith of a nation, "is the voice of God." . . .

The brave young men who went forth from this college to suppress the slaveholders' attempt to reverse the decree of God and exalt slavery above liberty, sleep in bloody graves, yet live in our tender and our grateful remembrance. Their example appeals to our manhood and our conscience. They helped to carry our government through a crisis in its existence; to establish it firmly upon immutable truth; and give it the grandest opportunity a nation ever had to benefit mankind. It now devolves upon us who survive to determine whether their lives were laid down in vain. And in no way, I conceive, can we so truly honor them as in studying well and performing faithfully the duty they have helped to cast upon us. If we prove equal to our opportunity, if we stand firmly for justice and for equality among men, if we keep the lamp of liberty trimmed and burning, and allow its light to shine from our altitude throughout the world, we honor them; they have not died in vain; therefore it seems to be appropriate to this occasion to inquire into our new duties and gird ourselves for their performance.

They died for others, not for themselves; and let us so live as to exert the influence of the exalted position they have conferred upon us for the welfare of mankind and not for the attainment of selfish ends.