the dearest interests of man, through generations countless, by that unequalled security of peace and progress, the Union; the power of advancing the interest of each State, each region, each relation—the slave and the master; the power of subjecting a whole continent all astir and on fire with the emulation of young republics; of subjecting it through ages of household calm to the sweet influences of Christianity, of culture, of the great, gentle, and sure reformer, time; that to enable us to do this, to enable us to grasp this boundless and ever-renewing harvest of philanthropy, it would have been a good bargain—that humanity herself would have approved it—to have bound ourselves never so much as to look across the line into the enclosure of Southern municipal slavery; certainly never to enter it; still less, still less, to—

> "Pluck its berries harsh and crude,
> And with forced fingers rude
> Shatter its leaves before the mellowing year."

Until the accuser who charges him, now that he is in his grave, with "having sinned against his conscience," will assert that the conscience of a public man may not, must not, be instructed by profound knowledge of the vast subject-matter with which public life is conversant—even as the conscience of the mariner may be and must be instructed by the knowledge of navigation; and that of the pilot by the knowledge of the depths and shallows of the coast; and that of the engineer of the boat and the train by the knowledge of the capacities of his mechanism to achieve a proposed velocity; and will assert that he is certain that the consummate science of our great statesman was felt by himself to prescribe to his morality another conduct than that which he adopted, and that he thus consciously outraged that "sense of duty which pursues us ever"—is he not inexcusable, whoever he is, that so judges another?

But it is time that this eulogy was spoken. My heart goes back into the coffin there with him and I would pause. I went—it is a day or two since—alone, to see again the home which he so dearly loved, the chamber where he died, the grave in which they laid him—all habited as when—

> "His look drew audience still as night,
> Or summer's noontide air."

till the heavens be no more. Throughout that spacious and calm scene all things to the eye showed at first unchanged. The books in the library, the portraits, the table at which he wrote, the scientific culture of the land, the course of agricultural occupation, the coming-in of harvests, fruit of the seed his own hand had scattered, the animals and implements of husbandry, the trees planted by him in lines, in copses, in orchards, by thousands, the seat under the noble elm on which he used to sit to feel the southwest wind at evening or hear the breathings of the sea or the not less audible music of the starry heavens, all seemed at first unchanged. The sun of a bright day from which however something of the fervors of midsummer were wanting, fell temperately on them all, filled the air on all sides with the utterances of life and gleamed on the long line of ocean. Some of those whom on earth he loved best still were there. The great mind still seemed to preside, the great presence to be with you; you might expect to hear again the rich and playful tones of the voice of the old hospitality. Yet a moment more, and all the scene took on the aspect of one great monument inscribed with his name and sacred to his memory. And such it shall be in all the future of America! The sensation of desolateness and loneliness and darkness with which you see it now will pass away; the sharp grief of love and friendship will become soothed; men will repair thither as they are wont to com-

memorate the great days of history; the same glance shall take in and the same emotions shall greet and bless the Harbor of the Pilgrims and the Tomb of Webster.

ORATION ON AMERICAN NATIONALITY[1]

DELIVERED IN BOSTON ON THE EIGHTY-SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE, JULY 5, 1858

IT is well that in our year, so busy, so secular, so discordant, there comes one day when the word is, and when the emotion is, "Our country, our whole country, and nothing but our country."

It is well that law, our only sovereign on earth; duty, not less the daughter of God, not less within her sphere supreme; custom, not old alone, but honored and useful; memories; our hearts,—have set a time in which—scythe, loom, and anvil stilled, shops shut, wharves silent, the flag,—our flag unrent,—the flag of our glory and commemoration, waving on masthead, steeple, and highland—we may come together and walk hand in hand, thoughtful, admiring, through these galleries of civil greatness; when we may own together the spell of one hour of our history upon us all; when faults may be forgotten, kindnesses revived, virtues remembered and sketched unblamed; when the arrogance of reform, the excesses of reform, the strifes of parties, the rivalries of regions, shall give place to a wider, warmer, and juster sentiment; when, turning from the corners and dark places of offensiveness, if such the candle lighted by malignity, or envy, or censoriousness, or truth, has revealed anywhere,—when, turning from these. we may go up together to the serene and

[1]Used by kind permission of Little, Brown & Co.

secret mountain-top, and there pause and there unite in the reverent exclamation and in the exultant prayer, "How beautiful at last are thy tabernacles! What people at last is like unto thee! Peace be within thy palaces and joy within thy gates! The high places are thine and there shalt thou stand proudly and innocently and securely."

Happy, if such a day shall not be desecrated by our service! Happy, if for us that descending sun shall look out on a more loving, more elevated, more united America! These, no less, no narrower, be the aims of our celebration. These always were the true aims of this celebration.

In its origin, a recital or defence of the grounds and principles of the Revolution, now demanding and permitting no defence, all taken for granted, and all had by heart; then sometimes wasted in a parade of vainglory, cheap and vulgar, sometimes profaned by the attack and repulse of partisan and local rhetoricians; its great work, its distinctive character, and its chief lessons, remain and vindicate themselves, and will do so while the eye of the fighting or the dying shall yet read on the stainless, ample folds the superscription blazing still in light, "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable."

I have wished, therefore, as it was my duty, in doing myself the honor to join you in this act, to give some direction to your thoughts and feelings, suited at once to the nation's holiday and seasonable and useful in itself. How difficult this may be I know. To try, however, to try to do anything is easy, and it is American also. Your candor will make it doubly easy, and to your candor I commit myself.

The birthday of a nation, old or young, and certainly if young, is a time to think of the means of keeping alive the

nation. I do not mean to say, however, because I do not believe, that there is but one way to this, the direct and the didactic. For at last it is the spirit of the day which we would cherish. It is our great annual national love-feast which we keep; and if we rise from it with hearts larger, beating fuller, with feeling purer and warmer for America, what signifies it how frugally, or how richly, or how it was spread; or whether it was a strain on the organ, the trumpet tones of the Declaration, the prayer of the good man, the sympathy of the hour, or what it was which wrought to that end?

I do not therefore say that such an anniversary is not a time for thanksgiving to God, for gratitude to men, the living and the dead, for tears and thoughts too deep for tears, for eulogy, for exultation, for all the memories, and for all the contrasts which soften and lift up the general mind.

I do not say, for example, that to dwell on that one image of progress which is our history; that image so grand, so dazzling, so constant; that stream now flowing so far and swelling into so immense a flood, but which burst out a small, choked, uncertain spring from the ground at first; that transition from the Rock at Plymouth, from the unfortified peninsula at Jamestown, to this America which lays a hand on both the oceans,—from that heroic yet feeble folk whose allowance to a man by the day was five kernels of corn, for three months no corn, or a piece of fish, or a moldered remainder biscuit, or a limb of a wild bird; to whom a drought in spring was a fear and a judgment and a call for humiliation before God; who held their breath when a flight of arrows or a war-cry broke the innocent sleep or startled the brave watching,—from that handful, and that want, to these millions, whose area is a continent, whose harvests might load

the board of famishing nations, for whom a world in arms has no terror; to trace the long series of causes which connected these two contrasted conditions, the Providences which ordained and guided a growth so stupendous; the dominant race, sober, earnest, constructive,—changed, but not degenerate here; the influx of other races, assimilating, eloquent, and brave; the fusion of all into a new one; the sweet stimulations of liberty; the removal by the whole width of oceans from the establishments of Europe, shaken, tyrannical, or burdened; the healthful virgin world; the universal progress of reason and art,—universal as civilization; the aspect of revolutions on the human mind; the expansion of discovery and trade; the developing sentiment of independence; the needful baptism of wars; the brave men, the wise men; the constitution, the Union; the national life and the feeling of union which have grown with our growth and strengthened with our strength,—I do not say that meditations such as these might not teach or deepen the lesson of the day.

All these things, so holy and beautiful, all things American, may afford certainly the means to keep America alive. That vast panorama unrolled by our general history, or unrolling; that eulogy, so just, so fervent, so splendid, so approved; that electric, seasonable memory of Washington; that purchase and that dedication of the dwelling and the tomb, the work of woman and of the orator of the age; that record of his generals, that visit to battle-fields; that reverent wiping away of dust from great urns; that speculation, that dream of her past, present, and future; every ship builded on lake or ocean; every treaty concluded; every acre of territory annexed; every cannon cast; every machine invented; every mile of new railroad and telegraph undertaken; every dollar added to the aggregate of national or individual wealth,—

these all, as subjects of thought, as motives to pride and care, as teachers of wisdom, as agencies for probable good, may work, may ensure, that earthly immortality of love and glory for which this celebration was ordained.

My way, however, shall be less ambitious and less indirect. Think, then, for a moment on American nationality itself; the outward national life and the inward national sentiment. Think on this; its nature, and some of its conditions, and some of its ethics,—I would say, too, some of its dangers, but there shall be no expression of evil omen in this stage of the discourse; and to-day, at least, the word is safety, or hope.

To know the nature of American nationality, examine it first by contrast and then examine it in itself.

In some of the elemental characteristics of political opinion the American people are one. These they can no more renounce for substance than the highest summit of the highest of the White Hills, than the peak of the Alleghanies, than the Rocky Mountains can bow and cast themselves into the sea. Through all their history, from the dawn of the colonial life to the brightness of this rising, they have spoken them, they have written them, they have acted them, they have run over with them.

In all stages, in all agonies, through all report, good and evil,—some learning from the golden times of ancient and mediæval freedom, Greece, and Italy, and Geneva, from Aristotle, from Cicero and Bodinus, and Machiavel and Calvin; or later, from Harrington, and Sydney, and Rousseau; some learning, all reinforcing it directly from nature and nature's God—all have held and felt that every man was equal to every other man; that every man had a right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and a conscience unfettered; that the people were the source of power, and the good of the people was the political object of society itself.

This creed, so grand, so broad,—in its general and duly qualified terms, so true,—planted the colonies, led them through the desert and the sea of ante-revolutionary life, rallied them all together to resist the attacks of a king and a minister, sharpened and pointed the bayonets of all their battles, burst forth from a million lips, beamed in a million eyes, burned in a million bosoms, sounded out in their revolutionary eloquence of fire and in the Declaration, awoke the thunders and gleamed in the lightning of the deathless words of Otis, Henry, and Adams, was graved for ever on the general mind by the pen of Jefferson and Paine, survived the excitements of war and the necessities of order, penetrated and tinged all our constitutional composition and policy, and all our party organizations and nomenclature, and stands to-day, radiant, defiant, jocund, tiptoe, on the summits of our greatness, one authoritative and louder proclamation to humanity by freedom, the guardian and the avenger.

But in some traits of our politics we are not one. In some traits we differ from one another, and we change from ourselves. You may say these are subordinate, executory, instrumental traits. Let us not cavil about names, but find the essences of things. Our object is to know the nature of American nationality, and we are attempting to do so, first, by contrasting it with its antagonisms.

There are two great existences, then, in our civil life, which have this in common, though they have nothing else in common, that they may come in conflict with the nationality which I describe; one of them constant in its operation, constitutional, healthful, auxiliary, even; the other rarer, illegitimate, abnormal, terrible; one of them a force under law;

the other a violence and a phenomenon above law and against law.

It is first the capital peculiarity of our system, now a commonplace in our politics, that the affections which we give to country we give to a divided object, the States in which we live and the Union by which we are enfolded. We serve two masters. Our hearts own two loves. We live in two countries at once, and are commanded to be capacious of both. How easy it is to reconcile these duties in theory; how reciprocally, more than compatible, how helpful and independent they are in theory; how in this respect our system's difference makes our system's peace, and from these blended colors, and this action and counteraction, how marvellous a beauty and how grand a harmony we draw out, you all know. Practically you know, too, the adjustment has not been quite so simple. How the constitution attempts it is plain enough. There it is; *litera scripta manet;* and heaven and earth shall pass before one jot or one tittle of that Scripture shall fail of fulfilment.

So we all say, and yet how men have divided on it. How they divided in the great convention itself, and in the very presence of Washington. How the people divided on it. How it has created parties, lost and given power, bestowed great reputations and taken them away, and colored and shaken the universal course of our public life! But have you ever considered that in the nature of things this must be so?

Have you ever considered that it was a federative system we had to adopt, and that in such a system a conflict of head and members is in some form and to some extent a result of course? There the States were when we became a nation. There they have been for one hundred and fifty years—for one hundred and seventy years. Some power; it was agreed

on all hands, we must delegate to the new government. Of some thunder, some insignia, some beams, some means of kindling pride, winning gratitude, attracting honor, love, obedience, friends, all men knew they must be bereaved and they were so.

But when this was done there were the States still. In the scheme of every statesman they remained a component part, unannihilated, indestructible. In the scheme of the constitution, of compromise itself, they remained a component part, indestructible. In the theories of all publicists and all speculators they were retained, and they were valued for it, to hinder and to disarm that centralization which had been found to be the danger and the weakness of federal liberty.

And then when you bear in mind that they are sovereignties, quasi, but sovereignties still; that one of the most dread and transcendent prerogatives of sovereignties, the prerogative to take life and liberty for crime, is theirs without dispute; that in the theories of some schools they may claim to be parties to the great compact, and as such may, and that any of them may, secede from that compact when by their corporate judgment they deem it to be broken fundamentally by the others, and that from such a judgment there is no appeal to a common peaceful umpire; that in the theories of some schools they may call out their young men and their old men under the pains of death to defy the sword-point of the federal arm; that they can pour around even the gallows and the tomb of him who died for treason to the Union honor, opinion, tears, and thus sustain the last untimely hour and soothe the disembodied, complaining shade; that every one, by name, by line of boundary, by jurisdiction, is distinct from every other and every one from the nation; that within their inviolate borders lie our farms, our homes, our meeting-houses,

our graves; that their laws, their courts, their militia, their police, to so vast an extent protect our persons from violence, and our homes from plunder; that their heaven ripens our harvests; their schools form our children's mental and moral nature; their charities or their taxes feed our poor; their hospitals cure or shelter our insane; that their image, their opinions, their literature, their morality are around us ever, a presence, a monument, an atmosphere—when you consider this you feel how practical and how inevitable is that antagonism to a single national life, and how true it is that we "buy all our blessings at a price."

But there is another antagonism to such a national life, less constant, less legitimate, less compensated, more terrible, to which I must refer,—not for reprobation, nor for warning, not even for grief, but that we may know by contrast nationality itself,—and that is the element of sections.

This, too, is old; older than the States, old as the colonies, old as the churches that planted them, old as Jamestown, old as Plymouth. A thousand forms disguise and express it and in all of them it is hideous. *Candidum seu nigrum hoc tu Romane caveto.* Black or white, as you are Americans, dread it, shun it!

Springing from many causes and fed by many stimulations; springing from that diversity of climate, business, institutions, accomplishment, and morality, which comes of our greatness and compels and should constitute our order and our agreement, but which only makes their difficulty and their merit; from that self-love and self-preference which are their own standard, exclusive, intolerant, and censorious of what is wise and holy; from the fear of ignorance, the jealousy of ignorance, the narrowness of ignorance; from incapacity to abstract, combine, and grasp a complex and various object,

and thus rise to the dignity of concession and forbearance and compromise; from the frame of our civil polity, the necessities of our public life and the nature of our ambition, which forces all men not great men—the minister in his parish, the politician on the stump on election day, the editor of the party newspaper—to take his rise or his patronage from an intense local opinion, and therefore to do his best to create or reinforce it; from our federative government; from our good traits, bad traits, and foolish traits; from that vain and vulgar hankering for European reputation and respect for European opinion, which forgets that one may know Aristophanes, and Geography, and the Cosmical Unity and Telluric influences, and the smaller morals of life, and all the sounding pretensions of philanthropy, and yet not know America; from that philosophy, falsely so called, which boasts emptily of progress, renounces traditions, denies God and worships itself; from an arrogant and flashy literature which mistakes a new phrase for a new thought, and old nonsense for new truth, and is glad to exchange for the fame of drawing-rooms and parlor windows, and the sidelights of a car in motion, the approval of time and the world; from philanthropy which is short-sighted, impatient, and spasmodic, and cannot be made to appreciate that its grandest and surest agent, in his eye whose lifetime is eternity, and whose periods are ages, is a nation and a sober public opinion and a safe and silent advancement, reforming by time; from that spirit which would rule or ruin and would reign in hell rather than serve in heaven; springing from these causes and stimulated thus, there is an element of regions antagonistic to nationality.

Always, I have said, there was one; always there will be. It lifted its shriek sometimes even above the silver clarion

tone that called millions to unite for independence. It resisted the nomination of Washington to command our armies; made his new levies hate one another; assisted the caballings of Gates and Conway; mocked his retreats, and threw its damp passing cloud for a moment over his exceeding glory; opposed the adoption of any constitution; and perverted by construction and denounced as a covenant with hell the actual constitution when it was adopted; brought into our vocabulary and discussions the hateful and ill-omened words North and South, Atlantic and Western, which the grave warnings of the Farewell Address expose and rebuke; transformed the floor of Congress into a battlefield of contending local policy; convened its conventions at Abbeville and Hartford; rent asunder conferences and synods; turned stated assemblies of grave clergymen and grave laymen into shows of gladiators or of the beasts of gladiators; checked the holy effort of missions and set back the shadow on the dial-plate of a certain amelioration and ultimate probable emancipation many degrees. Some might say it culminated later in an enterprise even more daring still; but others might deny it.

The ashes upon that fire are not yet cold, and we will not tread upon them. But all will unite in prayer to Almighty God that we may never see, nor our children, nor their children to the thousandth generation may ever see it culminate in a geographical party, banded to elect a geographical President and inaugurate a geographical policy.

"Take any shape but that, and thou art welcome!"

But now, by the side of this and all antagonisms, higher than they, stronger than they, there rises colossal the fine sweet spirit of nationality, the nationality of America! See there the pillar of fire which God has kindled and lifted and moved

for our hosts and our ages. Gaze on that, worship that, worship the highest in that.

Between that light and our eyes a cloud for a time may seem to gather; chariots, armed men on foot, the troops of kings may march on us, and our fears may make us for a moment turn from it; a sea may spread before us and waves seem to hedge us up; dark idolatries may alienate some hearts for a season from that worship; revolt, rebellion, may break out in the camp, and the waters of our springs may run bitter to the taste and mock it; between us and that Canaan a great river may seem to be rolling; but beneath that high guidance our way is onward, ever onward; those waters shall part and stand on either hand in heaps; that idolatry shall repent; that rebellion shall be crushed; that stream shall be sweetened; that overflowing river shall be passed on foot dry-shod in harvest time; and from that promised land of flocks, fields, tents, mountains, coasts and ships, from north and south, and east and west, there shall swell one cry yet, of victory, peace and thanksgiving!