

**AN EULOGY ON THE
LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF JAMES MADISON**

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An Eulogy on the Life and Character of James Madison by John Quincy Adams

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AN
EULOGY
ON THE
LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF
JAMES MADISON,
FOURTH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES;
DELIVERED AT THE REQUEST OF THE
MAYOR, ALDERMEN, AND COMMON COUNCIL
OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON.

SEPTEMBER 27, 1836.

BY JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.



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CITY OF BOSTON.

In the Board of Aldermen, September 28, 1836.

RESOLVED, That the thanks of the City Council be presented to the Hon. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, for the eloquent Eulogy delivered by him, on the 27th instant, in the Odeon, at their request, in memory of the late venerable JAMES MADISON, and that a copy be requested for the press.

Sent down for concurrence.

SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG, *Mayor.*

In Common Council, September 29, 1836.

Read and concurred.

JOSIAH QUINCY, *Jr., President.*

A true copy.—Attest,

S. F. McCLEARY, *City Clerk.*



EULOGY.

WHEN the imperial despot of Persia, surveyed the myriads of his vassals, whom he had assembled for the invasion and conquest of Greece, we are told by the father of profane history,* that the monarch's heart, at first, distended with pride, but immediately afterwards sunk within him, and turned to tears of anguish at the thought, that within one hundred years from that day, not one of all the countless numbers of his host would remain in the land of the living.

The brevity of human life, had afforded a melancholy contemplation to wiser and better men than Xerxes, in ages long before that of his own existence. It is still the subject of philosophical reflection or of Christian resignation, to the living man of the present age. It will continue such, so long as the race of man shall exist upon earth.

But it is the condition of our nature to look *before* and *after*: The Persian tyrant looked *forward*, and lamented the shortness of life; but in that century which bounded his mental vision, he knew not what was to come to pass, for weal or woe, to the race whose transitory nature he deplored, and his own purposes, happily baffled by the elements which he with absurd presumption would have chastised, were of the most odious and detestable character.

* Herodotus.

Reflections upon the shortness of time allotted to individual man upon this planet, may be turned to more useful account, by connecting them with ages past than with those that are to come. The family of man is placed upon this congregated ball to earn an improved condition hereafter by improving his own condition here—and this duty of improvement is not less a social than a selfish principle. We are bound to exert all the faculties bestowed upon us by our Maker, to improve our own condition, by improving that of our fellow men, and the precepts that we should love our neighbor as ourselves, and that we should do to others as we would that they should do unto us, are but examples of that duty of co-operation to the improvement of his kind, which is the first law of God to man, unfolded alike in the volumes of nature and of inspiration.

Let us look *back* then for consolation from the thought of the shortness of human life, as urged upon us by the recent decease of JAMES MADISON, one of the pillars and ornaments of his country and of his age. His time on earth was short, yet he died full of years and of glory—less, far less than one hundred years have elapsed since the day of his birth—yet has he fulfilled, nobly fulfilled, his destinies as a man and a Christian. He has improved his own condition by improving that of his country and his kind.

He was born in Orange County in the British Colony of Virginia on the 5th of March, 1750; or according to the computation of time by the Gregorian Calender, adopted the year after that of his birth, on the 16th of March 1751, of a distinguished and opulent family; and received the early elements of education partly at a public school under the charge of

Donald Robertson, and afterwards in the paternal mansion under the private tuition of the Rev. Thomas Martin ; by whose instructions he was prepared for admission at Princeton College.

There are three stages in the history of the North American Revolution--The first of which may be considered as commencing with the order of the British Council for enforcing the acts of trade in 1760, and as having reached its crisis at the meeting of the first Congress fourteen years after at Philadelphia. It was a struggle for the preservation and recovery of the rights and liberties of the British Colonies. It terminated in a civil war, the character and object of which were changed by the Declaration of Independence.

The second stage is that of the War of Independence, usually so called—but it began fifteen months before the Declaration, and was itself the immediate cause and not the effect of that event. It closed by the preliminary Treaty of Peace concluded at Paris on the 30th of November, 1782.

The third is the formation of the Anglo-American People and Nation of North America. This event was completed by the meeting of the first Congress of the United States under their present Constitution of the 4th of March, 1789. Thirty years is the usual computation for the duration of one generation of the human race. The space of time from 1760 to 1790 includes the generation with which the North American Revolution began, passed through all its stages and ended.

The attention of the civilized European world and perhaps an undue proportion of our own has been drawn to the second of these three stages—to the