

**DISCOURSE ON THE
SURVIVING REMNANT OF
THE INDIAN RACE IN
THE UNITED STATES**

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Discourse on the surviving remnant of the Indian race in the United States by Job R. Tyson

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JOB R. TYSON

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SURVIVING REMNANT OF THE INDIAN RACE

IN THE

UNITED STATES.

DELIVERED ON THE 24TH OCTOBER, 1836, BEFORE THE SOCIETY FOR
COMMEMORATING THE LANDING OF WILLIAM PENN.

"Tomorrow the traveller shall come; he who saw me shall come;
his eye shall seek me through the fields, and shall not find me."—CANTON.

BY JOH R. TYSON.

PHILADELPHIA:

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1836.

At a meeting of the "SOCIETY FOR COMMEMORATING THE
LANDING OF WILLIAM PENN.," held at Philadelphia, on the 24th
day of October, 1838,

On motion of John Vaughan, Esq., it was unanimously

Resolved, That the thanks of the Society be tendered to JON R.
TYSON, Esq. for his able and eloquent Oration, this day delivered, on
"The Surviving Remnant of the Indian Race in the United States,"
and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

From the Minutes.

JOSEPH PARKER NORRIS, *Pres't.*

J. FRANCIS FISHER, *Sec'ry pro tem.*

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DISCOURSE.

GENTLEMEN OF THE PENN SOCIETY :

The historical orator has a wide field open to his researches. But every portion is not alike productive or beautiful ; and when he reflects how many of its finest tracts have been explored, and their riches appropriated, he may well pause in the selection of his topic. He may alight upon an obscure and unattractive period to which no interest can be imparted, or upon dry and trivial events, which defy the utmost exertions of industry to enliven and exalt. The stream of time sweeps down to us, in its course, an intermixture of treasures and burthens ; it bears upon its pregnant bosom, shells as well as shell-fish, pebbles as well as gems. Examination only can ascertain the precise nature of its deposits, and show us which has value, and which is worthless.

Let me, however, venture to call your attention to a subject, which, if destitute of the charms of historical

attractiveness, possesses, at this moment, and on such an occasion, the merit of a peculiar adaptation, both with reference to its bearings upon the principles of Penn, and its importance to the national character. The theme addresses itself so directly to the feelings and sensibilities, that in the earnest wish to develop it, I almost forget my entire inability to do it justice.

There was no subject which clung to the heart of William Penn with a fonder tenacity and more lively fervour, than justice to the original proprietors of this country. It had a place in his affections equal, if not superior, to those other distinguishing features of his policy—I mean religious freedom and penal clemency. Permit me, then, to trace, with a feeble hand, the high and conscientious course, which, in imitation of the founder of Pennsylvania, this nation is called upon to adopt, towards the surviving remnant of the Indian race, by every impulse of virtuous sentiment, by every motive of honourable ambition.

The origin of the great Indian family, the languages of the different tribes, their habits and antiquities, have each been canvassed by learned enquiry and ingenious speculation. In this ardour of research, conducted by the master spirits of the age, it is natural to expect that the attention of men will be directed not merely to the philosophy of Indian life and manners,

but to every portion of his living history. Mankind will be curious to know the story of the Indian, not only as a solitary being, in his lonely and sequestered haunts, but in his intercourse with those by whom his country has been invaded and overrun. They will scan with a critical eye the character of that intercourse; and in pursuing the causes of his degeneracy and decline, they will estimate, at their proper value, an imputed voluntary debasement on the one hand, and the baneful arts of superior cunning on the other. Let us, then, be true to ourselves; and with the high-minded honour of an enlightened and Christian community, prevent the extinction of a race, the history of whose downfall would involve the history of our own craft and perfidy.

The American Indian is sometimes regarded as a being who is prone to all that is revolting and cruel. He is cherished, in excited imaginations, as a demoniac phantasm, delighting in bloodshed, without a spark of generous sentiment or native benevolence. The philosophy of man should teach us, that the Indian is nothing less than a human being, in whom the animal tendencies predominate over the spiritual. His morals and intellect having received neither culture nor development, he possesses, on the one hand, the infirmities of humanity; while on the other the divine spark in his heart, if not blown into a genial

warmth, has not been extinguished by an artificial polish. His affections are strong, because they are confined to a few objects; his enmities are deep and permanent, because they are nursed in secret, without a religion to control them. Friendship is with him a sacred sentiment. He undertakes long and toilsome journeys to do justice to its object; he exposes himself, for its sake, to every species of privation; he fights for it; and often dies in its defence. He appoints no *fecial* messenger to proclaim, by an empty formality, the commencement of war.* Whilst the European seeks advantages in the subtle finesse of negotiation, the American pursues them according to the instincts of a less refined nature, and the dictates of a less sublimated policy. He seeks his enemy before he expects him, and thus renders him his prey.

No better evidence need be adduced of his capacity for a lively and lasting friendship, than the history of Pennsylvania, during the life time of the founder. It is refreshing and delightful to see one fair page, in the dark volume of injustice and crime, which American annals, on this subject, present. While this page reflects upon the past an accumulated odium, it furnishes lessons for the guide and edification of the future. Let me invite the philanthropist to this affecting story.

* See Appendix. Note 1.