

**AN ORATION DELIVERED
AT CHARLESTOWN,
MASSACHUSETTS, ON
THE 17TH OF JUNE, 1841**

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An Oration Delivered at Charlestown, Massachusetts, on the 17th of June, 1841 by George E. Ellis

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GEORGE E. ELLIS

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DELIVERED AT

CHARLESTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS,

ON THE 17TH OF JUNE, 1841,

IN COMMEMORATION OF

THE BATTLE OF BUNKER-HILL.

Delivered
BY GEORGE E. ELLIS.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS ORATION was prepared and delivered at the request of the Officers and Members of the "WARREN PHALANX," who celebrated this interesting anniversary in an appropriate manner, in conjunction with the citizens of Charlestown, whose participation they invited. In compliance with their wish, kindly and politely expressed, these pages are now published. Large portions, here printed, were necessarily omitted in the delivery. The author aimed to present a fair and minute account of the memorable action in this town which opened the American Revolution. He could find no nearer beginning for the details of the day, than in a statement of the preliminary measures of British aggression and Colonial resistance, and the appropriate conclusion of the narrative seemed to require an exhibition of some of the results of the bloody conflict. We are probably now in possession of all that ever will be known concerning it. One who searches deeply into its history, is led to ask some questions to which no living voice or written record can give an answer. The author has availed himself of all the known existing means for affording information and ensuring accuracy. The History of the Battle, by Col. Samuel Swett, is the most valuable of all the documents which relate to it. For a few particulars mentioned in the following pages, which are not derived from any public documents, it is to be understood that the author is indebted to some private sources of information.

O R A T I O N .

SOLDIERS AND FELLOW CITIZENS,—

By thus addressing the united and mingled throng before me, I can best declare the occasion and the result which we have assembled gratefully to commemorate. We have cause to congratulate ourselves that we live day after day upon a spot which is known over the world, to history and to fame. It is our privilege to behold, at our pleasure, the morning glories of a summer's sun from the beautiful summit which rises behind us, and thence to trace the land-marks and the water-lines signalized through all time, and for all people, by the action which we now celebrate. The name of that green eminence has already become familiar over the civilized world, and, saving the unchristian passions and sins which war necessarily involves, it has no association, record or story, which we may not remember and repeat with pride.

How beautiful, how sublime is the prospect which from that eminence greets our eyes! We occupy the central point of a circle over which nature and art, war and peace, the history of the past, the happiness of the present, and the hope of the future, spread an inexhaustible interest. The great features of a battle scene, which yields in importance to no other on the surface of the earth, scarred as it is all over its circumference with such

melancholy memorials, are before our eyes. Across those calm blue waves is the land of the ancient enemy; the land where a misguided and tyrannical Monarch, a proud and heartless Ministry, and a subservient Parliament devised their fruitless measures for the subjugation of a people who owed them nothing for debt or favor; the land whence had come the hired soldiery then quartered upon the forced hospitality, and riotously disturbing the peace of the town of Boston. In that secure and beautiful harbor floated the ships of war, and the transports just arrived from Britain, which sent their military crew upon this shore, only to die upon the first spot of American soil which their feet should touch. Then we survey the fair and diversified peninsula upon which we stand, comprehending with its summits and its levels, but a square mile of earth. The south-eastern slope of Breed's Hill divides the waters of the bay into two broad rivers, which indent the shore, and just beyond the western base of Bunker's Hill, approach so near each other as to allow scarcely four hundred feet of breadth to the neck of land which unites the peninsula to the neighboring country. The Mystic on the north, washes with its double channel the farther shore. On the south, the opposite side of the mouth of the Charles, which in its narrowest span is about three hundred yards across, we see the now crowded peninsula of Boston, similarly environed by the waters of the sea, and united to the main land by a narrow neck. Upon a sloping eminence of that peninsula where it approaches nearest to us, we discern a place of graves, amid which was planted the battery whence came the missiles that reduced this flourishing town to a desolation. Around us is a glorious amphitheatre of hill tops, which sixty-six years ago on this hour were alive with anxious crowds, now covered over with flourishing villages, intersected and bordered by the highest achievements of modern art and science. Nowhere else upon the face of the earth is there such a congeries of striking objects, written over