

**AN ORATION DELIVERED AT
PORTCHESTER, IN THE TOWN OF
RYE, COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER,
ON THE FOURTH DAY OF JULY,
1865**

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An Oration Delivered at Portchester, in the Town of Rye, County of Westchester, on the Fourth day of July, 1865 by Alexander W. Bradford

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ALEXANDER W. BRADFORD

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FOURTH DAY OF JULY,
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BY
ALEXANDER W. BRADFORD.

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ORATION.

MR. PRESIDENT, GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMITTEE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF RYE:

I thank you for the honor of being permitted to appear before this public assemblage; but I deeply regret that since I received your kind invitation, so brief space has been allowed me, adequately to perform my duty.

The occasion is one of absorbing interest. It is a crowning period in our history. In the present hour the transactions of centuries seem to culminate.

We are carried back to the time when all around us was an unbroken wilderness; when men crossed the ocean, to plant the germs of a great empire and a free people,

in a new world, reserved by Providence to receive them in the latter days of the earth.

We are reminded of the infancy of the Republic—of the Union which our ancestors established—of our gradual growth in national power and resources—of the spirit of discord suddenly let loose—and the agonies, throes and convulsions which lately threatened to shatter the body-politic.

The daily press supplies us constantly with military and naval exploits, and even children lisp the names of our battles, and of our heroes. The statistics of the war, the immense armies and navies, and muniments of war, the good Samaritans of the Christian and Sanitary Commissions, all these are household words—and I shall leave them, to spend a short time in some general reflections specially applicable to the present epoch.

In doing this, no regard shall be had to

politics. I have had none, since the 4th of March, 1861.

When the flames ascended from Fort Sumter, party hacks were discarded, and the people, rising in their might, became ONE.

Party lines and discipline, and maxims, caucuses and committees, all went down into one indistinguishable mass, and the nation was purified of parties.

In no respect has this been more eminently exemplified than in the case of the present administration. It is composed of men of every conceivable political origin, and yet is harmonious—harmonious because animated by a pure spirit of patriotism. And at its head presides Andrew Johnson, upon whom has fallen the mantle of Elijah, and who wields his vast power with dignity, wisdom unsurpassed, with wise discretion, gravity of judgment, and prudence, à due

regard to the peace of the nation and to constitutional government,—and with a clear head and a strong hand.

Nor is there time to devote to the philosophic inquiry as to the effect of these events upon foreign nations—except just to state two points.

First—That the inevitable influence of such an exhibition of the power and resources of a free government must amaze the peoples of the earth, and strike a chord of sympathy that will course like the electric fluid, and arouse them to action.

Second—That America stands to-day undaunted before all the earth, with no superior—full of glory—without reproach and without fear.

And what of the public debt? *Magna res.* It is a large thing. Some of the wise men call it a national blessing, some a national

curse; but honest people accept it, know it must be paid, and propose to pay it—to the last dollar.

Leaving these and other questions—Maximilian—damages for depredations on our commerce—negro suffrage and negro labor—to the certain solution of time, which always resolves all perplexities; let us turn for a few moments to ourselves, and the circumstances under which we are assembled.

What a day is this! How, filled to overflowing with joys and sorrows, with teeming memories of the past, and congratulations of the present; and although the storm be gone, yet as one smiles in tears, the sun paints upon the subsiding cloud the glorious rainbow of gladsome hope and precious promise.

*"They that sow in tears
Shall reap in joy."*

"He that goeth on his way weeping, and