

**THE PILGRIMS OF THE ROCK: AN ORATION
DELIVERED IN THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH, BEFORE THE SOCIETY OF THE SONS
OF NEW ENGLAND OF PHILADELPHIA, AT
THEIR SECOND ANNIVERSARY, ON THE 22D
DECEMBER, 1845**

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The pilgrims of the rock: an oration delivered in the First Congregational Church, before the Society of the Sons of New England of Philadelphia, at their second anniversary, on the 22d December, 1845 by Joseph R. Chandler

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JOSEPH R. CHANDLER

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"THE PILGRIMS OF THE ROCK."

AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED IN THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

BEFORE THE

SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF NEW ENGLAND

OF

PHILADELPHIA,

AT THEIR SECOND ANNIVERSARY

On the 22d December, 1845.

BY

JOSEPH R. CHANDLER,

ONE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENTS.



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PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY JOHN C. CLARE, 60 DOCK STREET.

1846.

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The text is mostly illegible due to fading and bleed-through, but appears to contain a name and a date.
(N. U. 1827)

CORRESPONDENCE.

Philadelphia, Dec. 22, 1845.

TO JOSEPH R. CHANDLER, Esq.

DEAR SIR,—At a meeting of the Board of Officers of the Society of the Sons of New England, held this day, it was unanimously

"Resolved, That the thanks of this Society be presented to Joseph R. Chandler, Esq. for the eloquent Oration delivered on the occasion of our Second Anniversary, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication."

In behalf of the Society, I take pleasure in communicating to you the above resolution, trusting you will comply with the request therein contained. I have the honour to be,

Very respectfully,

Your ob't. servant,

JOHN HANCOCK,

Recording Sec'y.

Philadelphia, Dec. 26, 1845.

DEAR SIR,—I have the pleasure to acknowledge your note, conveying a request of the Officers of the Society of the Sons of New England, that I would present for publication, the Oration which I had the honour to deliver at their recent Anniversary. The address, though hastily prepared, is the property of the Society, and is with deference, submitted to their disposal. Please to convey to the gentlemen whom you represent, my thanks for their kindness.

I am, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

JOS. R. CHANDLER.

JOHN HANCOCK, Esq. *Secretary*

Of the Society of the Sons of New England.

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THE PILGRIMS OF THE ROCK.

It was the evening of the Christian Sabbath; all Nature seemed to have rested from even the work of praise, and to have stood in silent beauty, musing its adoration.

The posthumous splendour of the retiring sun was gorgeously stretched along the western sky; and in the east the snow on the lofty headland seemed to liquefy in the retiring light which the shadows of evening had chased slowly up its sides; here and there around, jutting points of land were tinged with the hues of the western sky, or lofty isolated hills lifted themselves up from the plain in solitary grandeur, while embosomed by these was a broad bay, whose beautiful waters were mirroring the gush of the Northern Aurora, or reflecting the first lustre of the stars that were struggling into visible existence through the fading glory that lingered in the vault above.

On the outer edge of this beautiful sheet of water, under the lee of one of the many islands which then dotted its surface, lay a small shallop, the appendage of some larger mercantile vessel; its appointments were meagre at best, but a recent storm had swept away its masts and sails and rudder, and the little barque lay a sheer hulk, scarcely affording shelter from the piercing cold of a December night; yet, up from that almost wrecked shallop went notes of joy and thankfulness for deliverance, and prayers for the safety of those whom the worshippers had left a little behind; prayers for the safety of their companion pilgrims; for the comfort of the aged, the preservation of the wise, and the support of the weak. Their hearts and their affections were turned to the pilgrims they

had left in the *Mayflower*; their spirits went to commune with the crowded tenants of that Heaven-preserved ark, where lofty thoughts occupied the leader-men; where holy musing fixed the mind of the pious mother, while the wave rocked to sleep the sea-born and the sea-borne infant, whose only lullaby had been the tempestuous winds of the storm-enduring coast.

The day had ceased,—the voice of prayer and the notes of praise were hushed in the little shallop, and the first Sabbath of the Pilgrims in Plymouth bay had been spent in holy rest and hearty worship.

On the morrow the inmates of the shallop surveyed the coast, marked the channel, and then, on the 22^d of December, 1620, as we reckon time, they landed upon a projecting rock, and amid the ice and snow that had gathered upon its surface, they bowed in thanksgiving to Him who had directed them to a home by his providence, and made the winds and the storms the ministers of his will for their guidance.

Mr. President, Officers and Members
of the Society of the Sons of New England,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

To celebrate this *landing*, to mark our appreciation of the motives by which the actors were influenced, and to derive profit from a contemplation of their virtues, have we come up hither this afternoon.

We stand in the light of great names; and while we challenge for them the highest praise that has ever been bestowed upon the founders of a nation, we think ourselves able to trace up to them (as the source, or at least the channel,) those principles which fixed the true liberty of man on the foundation of virtue, and perpetuated freedom by the saving influences of piety. We affect to claim for these men no exemptions from the infirmities and imperfections of human nature, but we do believe that the errors in their conduct and plans which are now manifest, were then not perceptible to others, nor sus-

pected by themselves; and without incurring the risk of excusing uncharitableness, or pleading for intolerance now, we may admit it is not impossible that the rough moral climate in which the Fathers lived, may have rendered necessary some protection of the delicate principles they were rearing, as some of the most pleasant fruits are guarded by nature with thick and hirsute envelopes.

To judge correctly of the character and influencing motives of the first settlers of Plymouth Colony in New England, we must understand something of the history of the times in which they lived, something of the political and social condition of men; and could we descend into their family relations, and fully appreciate all the peculiarities of their domestic connexions, we should be yet better qualified to form a judgment of their acts, and refer those acts to their true motives. The political relations of man may change often and greatly, without affecting his conduct so much as a trifling movement in his domestic positions—there, at the centre, the least change works important aberrations at the extremity of the radii, and society has been convulsed, and governments disturbed, by circumstances that have had their origin in the narrowest relations of life; and philosophers and historians, astonished at *the results*, have vainly sought for the motive-cause, or pleased themselves with erecting theories of causes and effects, upon the movements, wishes, and fate of the rulers of nations.

The public change of religion in England, begun by Henry VIII. and consummated by Elizabeth, was marked by extraordinary convulsions, that had their origin not more in the opposition to certain doctrines generally prevalent and almost universal, than in the ceremonies and insignia by which the exposition of those doctrines were illustrated; and the forms and ceremonies came to be insignia of the doctrine, and the hostility to a creed was manifested by violence towards the outward ceremonies and decorations of its officers.

The consummation of the change under Elizabeth was short of the requirements of many; the revolution of *opinion* had