

**WEBSTER'S FIRST
BUNKER HILL
ORATION, 1825**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649325986

Webster's First Bunker Hill Oration, 1825 by A. J. George

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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A. J. GEORGE

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BY A. J. GEORGE, A.M.



- WORDSWORTH'S PRELUDE. With Notes.
- SELECTIONS FROM WORDSWORTH. With Notes.
- WORDSWORTH'S PREFACES AND ESSAYS ON POETRY.
With Notes.
- SELECT POEMS OF ROBERT BURNS.
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WEBSTER'S
FIRST BUNKER HILL ORATION

1825

WITH

PREFACE, INTRODUCTION, AND NOTES

BY

A. J. GEORGE, A.M.

INSTRUCTOR IN RHETORIC AND ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE
NEWTON, MASS., HIGH SCHOOL.

"The front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars to threaten and command;
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man."

BOSTON, U.S.A.

D. C. HEATH & CO., PUBLISHERS

1896

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JUN 7 1921

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PRESSWORK BY C. H. HEINTZEMANN, BOSTON, U.S.A.

TO
MY FRIEND AND ASSOCIATE
EDWARD J. GOODWIN

"BLEST Statesman He, whose Mind's unselfish will
Leaves him at ease among grand thoughts: whose eye
Sees that, apart from magnanimity,
Wisdom exists not; nor the humbler skill
Of Prudence, disentangling good and ill
With patient care. What tho' assaults run high,
They daunt not him who holds his ministry,
Resolute, at all hazards, to fulfil
Its duties; prompt to move, but firm to wait;
Knowing, things rashly sought are rarely found;
That, for the functions of an ancient State —
Strong by her charters, free because imboud,
Servant of Providence, not slave of Fate —
Perilous is sweeping change, all chance unsound."

PREFACE.

WHEN we study the history of those nations which have given to the world models of art in literature, we are surprised often at the meagreness of the literature of oratory in these nations. Numerous as are the occasions when great audiences have been moved to thought and action by the words of a leader, very few are the instances where these words have been so treasured by time that they hold a place among the great classics; whereas the literature of poetry in the same nations is abundant in evidence of immortality. This apparent discrimination in favor of the poet is evidently due to the fact that the occasional oratory, effective as it may have been at the time, did not approach near enough to great poetry to possess the element which the Germans call *unendlichkeit*, infinitude, or universality; it did not rise out of the limitations of time and place into the sphere of great truths where all art must live and move and have its being.

It is interesting and profitable to compare the poetry of oratory with the oratory of poetry. Such a study reveals the kinship of poet and orator, that in the infancy of literary art the two are one in virtue of the shaping and transforming power of imagination, — "the vision and the faculty divine" — which protests against the unreality of a life in which the senses are supreme.

In that distant past, when our Saxon forefathers — story-loving, story-telling people —

“Went about their gravest deeds
Like noble boys at play,”

poetry, philosophy, and oratory were born from a common parent; they have now wandered so far from their old home that they hardly recognize it; nor do they treat each other as children of one household. The Gleeman stood forth in the assembly of the tribe on the forest hill-tops — or in the mead-hall hung with glittering armor, shield, spear, and coat of mail — and tuned his harp and voice to the wild passion of victory, or to the pathetic wail of defeat; or with eager joy sang the praise of some hero, strong in body and great in soul, and wove a tale that inspired his listeners to grasp their armor with a determination to do and to be, as he uttered that note of freedom, when

“Woe, woe to tyrants! from his lyre
Broke threateningly in sparkles dire
Of fierce, vindictive song.”

In these modest, sincere, artless, and impassioned songs we have the secret of the poet, the philosopher, and the orator; the secret which baffles analysis and defies definition. These ballads — sung *by* men whose only motive for singing was to reveal bravery and nobility, sung *of* men whose interest in life was loyalty and trueheartedness — still remain models of

“Truth-breathed music, soul-like lays;
Not of vain-glory born, nor love of praise,
But welling purely from profound heart-springs,
That lie deep down amid the life of things,
And singing on, heedless though mortal ear
Should never their lone murmur hear.”