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Liberty for ~~Mankind~~ ^{IN L.A.} ~~the~~ ~~Goal~~ American Patriotism Should Seek to Attain

Abstract of an Address Delivered at Tecumseh, July 4, by George W. Berge.

This is an inspiring occasion with inspiring surroundings. This multitude before me; this silent but most eloquent language which Old Glory speaks while waving over our heads; this martial music stirring the depths of our souls, awakening the sacred memories of the past and at the same time inspiring our future hopes, all proclaim the feeling which this day excites within us. The significance of our National Independence Day is more far reaching than the world has yet believed. Independence on American soil is not the result of the Revolutionary war alone.

As I look upon the stars and stripes I am reminded that their crimson is the blood of martyrs for 1900 years. I am reminded that during all that time the human race has been suffering, bleeding and dying upon the world's great battle-field. Liberty and equality has always been the goal of mankind. Whatever else you may read in history, this one thing has always been the fixed and steady ambition of every people in every clime. Little by little progress has come. Little by little the people gained more liberty. Little by little greed and selfishness lost their power. Independence was not attained at a single bound, but is the growth of centuries. It is the product of the ages. The American people enjoy today the sum total of all human achievements. If in this generation we are faithful to our trust, American liberty will become universal and light the dark places of all the earth, but if selfishness and greed be substituted for patriotism, and if we fritter away this blood-bought heritage, then humanity will again be exiled into monarchy and popular government will receive a set-back from which it will take centuries to recover.

Perhaps at no time since the nation's birth has there been greater need for the American people to arouse themselves than now. We seem to be forgetting all else except the pursuit after wealth. The standard of public morals seems to be at a very low ebb. Corruption in high places and a total disregard of law were never so rampant as now. It is true the petty thief is still punished, but the betrayer of the people, the jobbers who make merchandise out of people's liberties and who play treason to cities, states and the nation go unwhipped and unpunished. So many public officials everywhere are in a conspiracy with corporate wealth to defeat popular government. You cannot read a morning paper without reading of treason to the people and to our liberties. My friends, I sound the note of warning. Even this government cannot long endure such conditions.

But I am glad that there is an awakening. I can see the silver lining on the clouds. To desponding patriotism I call to look hitherward. On this the nation's natal day I call you back to the people who gave us independence and upon whom we must rely for its preservation. There are signs everywhere that the people are again asserting their powers. The foundations of our national power are not weakened. The love of the people for popular government and American institutions is stronger today than ever before. We are just on the dawn of a new day. I predict that the immediate future will write the brightest page in the nation's history.

In all governments there are always two forces contending with each other for supremacy. One of these forces is always striving to enslave and the other to make free. Despotism has always been relentless in its pursuit to enslave, while liberty has always

defended itself by sacrificing millions of human lives upon its altars. But my friends, the thought that makes us glad today is that these millions have not died in vain. History assures us that the righteous cause of liberty is always stronger than the sordid selfishness of despotism. If I could I would proclaim this truth from every platform, I would write it in every book; I would print it in the skies until every American citizen believed it, and never again despair while the forces of greed and selfishness play about us.

We celebrate this day because we believe this to be true. Let us look at only one short span in history. Go back with me to the fourteenth century. America was not yet discovered. What suffering, what misery, what a dark picture. But at that very time the torch of liberty was being lighted. The time had come when the world should take a step in advance and when the chains which held millions in bondage should be broken. The curtain was drawn aside and America revealed to the world. As we read history now we are almost compelled to believe that America was hidden away for just the emergency. The time, however, had come when the human race needed it and God called a Columbus to man three vessels, and to him he gave the key that should unlock this new world and let in the oppressed of all nations. American soil became "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Hither flocked the oppressed from every clime. And despotism came also. But despotism, the hardships of pioneer life, Indian butcheries, disease and famine, all combined, could not destroy the heart's desire for universal liberty.

When the Indian massacres were an every day occurrence; when starvation threatened them; when death was carrying away whole colonies; when the sky above them was the darkest, it was at such a time that despotism demanded submission from the colonies. What a dark, starless night it was! But did the cause of freedom ever languish? No. It was stronger at that very hour than ever before. From the depths of their gloom and almost despair there went up from this enslaved people a prayer that surely reached the skies. Their struggle with tyranny only kindled afresh the fires of patriotism. While every bloody footprint was made on the battle-fields of Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill and Yorktown; during every heart throb of that patriotic people during all those long years of revolutionary resistance to tyranny, there was heard everywhere the echo of the martyr's prayer: "Give me liberty, or give me death." That holy prayer rode every wind that swept the colonies until heaven answered it at Yorktown with a new baptism of freedom.

We celebrate this day in vain if we do not catch the spirit of our Revolutionary sires. Are there people today who despair of the republic? Are there people in all this land who waver in the struggle now on between the people on the one side and this same despotism, which our fathers fought, on the other? If there be, I beg of such to breathe one breath of the spirit of '76. The patriotism of our forefathers could not be bribed with money. We needed not a trained standing army. The best training a soldier can have is to love the principles for which he is fighting. Men left their plows in the fields and hastened to the defense of their liberties. They were willing to give their lives for a principle. Mothers pressed their boys to their bosoms and prayed that the war cloud might pass, but when their country needed them they willingly