Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections

http://archives.dickinson.edu/

Documents Online

Title: "Democratic Passion," by Samuel H. Reynolds

Format: Commencement Oration

Date: July 11, 1850

Location: Orations-1850-R465d

Contact:

Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

69

Democratic passion.

for

Commencement

1850

Samuel Henry Reynolds.

of

Danville or Bell-Fonte.

July 1st 1850.

58

Democratic passions

That human affairs are continually undergoing great changes, that old institutions and old forms of government are being overthrown or displaced by some expansive force from within is a fact that is generally well known. Still the world is ignorant to a greater or less extent as to the ultimate results that will follow such vast changes. Whilst some view them with delight, and believe them to be necessary for our final happiness, and are perhaps to assure us that ~~are~~ by our world will be entirely freed from feudal tyranny & oppression — the Conservative sees them as omens of coming evil — and as fraught with the worst effects to society & to freedom, But whilst these different parties are engaged debating whether these changes be for good or evil "Time still rolls on his ceaseless course" leaving the victory sometimes on the one side and again on the other.

The great main spring of this feeling is democracy. the grand characteristic of which is energy, energy that not merely wakes the dormant strength of a whole portion of society, but that wields alike with lightning speed the hoe of the peasant and the opera-hat of the rich. producing not merely the christian men of the proud character — but awakening anxiety from their lethargy! & to a sense of their dependency

From the action of this principle have arisen the greatest achievements of lit. genius and the noblest efforts of heroism that have ever decked the glowing pages of Ancient or Modern history. It was demo-spir that carried with a vast Chasm the slopes of the Alps, the energy that bridged & subdued the stormy seas of the German Ocean, impelled the fleets. Armies & Retreats plunged their sandy cups into the breast of the Caspian. And unfurled the flag of freedom in the streets of Sparta & Paris.

Why on the shores of the Mediterranean the scene to which the pilgrim from every quarter of the globe journeys to visit at once the cradle of civilization the birthplace of arts of arms of Philosophy, and the scene of their highest and most glorious achievements. Because the sons of Athens and Sparta lie in it. Majestic where the passions of democ. once flourished & now lie in greatest perfection.

At last glorious Rome the Empress of the world. & brought the eagles bearing the words "Senatus Populusque Romanus" to the ends of the Earth and Atlantic? Demo. spir.

Best of all instances either in Ancient or Modern times our own Country stand pre-eminent. It is here we find the energy & vigor & energy of demo. char. exhibited in every peculiarity. here we find it duly regulated & restrained.

The force of this passion cannot be better illustrated than by referring to the stern puritan of the age of Charles 1st

What was it that impelled him to cross the Atlantic, and with naught but his gun on his shoulder & a bible in his pocket to pierce the primeval solitude of the American forest? It was the prin. of Christianity exploded by Democracy. It was this that drove him from the comforts of his own native land that impelled him to leave friends and everything behind, to desert from his mighty land and be content with naught but the broad canopy of heaven for a roof & his blankets or the green leaf for his couch. Frequently this pious. our forefathers laid the foundation of our ~~[illegible]~~ Republican institutions, and planted in the mind of America the tree of liberty, the fruits of which we so much enjoy - long may we be remembered - ~~And that~~ When ~~[illegible]~~ all the nations of the world shall have sunk into their primitive oblivion, when the temples erected to perpetuate their memory shall become the haunt of the screech owl - when the wild beast of the forest shall have made his lair in the standing and the serpent ~~shall~~ cling to the mouldering ~~[illegible]~~ marble - then & not until then shall their deeds be forgotten

The effects of this pious. heroism are not always followed by such good results - If the actors who are engaged on by this pious. be not actuated by the purest motives results will follow, that will not only render man more miserable but that will destroy every vestige of liberty ~~[illegible]~~ This pious. as it prevailed in France in 1830 was in many respects injurious to the French people - yet it had some

good effects - it gave them a foretaste of liberty - and not being content with merely a foretaste, they again snatched the sceptre from the hand of their oppressor & threw off the yoke that bound them in slavery. And they are now free - May they ever be urged on by the passion of venice. And may Kind Heaven enable them to form a government as firm & prosperous as our own glorious Republic.

Hungary too caught the inspiration - but she failed - Her little but noble band - was no match to cope with the combined forces of Russia & Austria - Her mourn on her misfortune, her weep for the fate of a Poseuth, And the friends of freedom with one voice call down the vengeance of divine wrath upon the heads of her oppressors - Long may the curses of hate & the hiss of scorn fall upon them -

And blend on their name forever be hurled
The laughter of triumph, the jeers of the world.

Eng. & France will yet make the attempt. This fire lies not - Arise lying dormant in the breast of the Eng. & French people -

"Oh hasten the day just dawn
Accomplish thy design
And let the blessings thou best poll gain
Long on our name shine -
Let equal rights be equally enjoyed
And human power for human good employed

Yet law and not the sovereign rule sustain
And peace and virtue undisputed reign"

Our country has not been unnoticed – And the time will soon come when Kings and Princes shall be hurled from their regal seats, when the rights of the Aristocrats & the people shall be placed on equal footing. Then will the flag of freedom wave in every breeze up in Europe, The last link of tyranny be broken asunder – And the people be free. Republicanism & democracy.

Commencement Oration of Samuel Henry Reynolds, Class of 1850
Transcribed by Tristan Deveney, May 2008
Edited by Sarah-Hazel Jennings, June 2008

Democratic Passion

That human offices are continually [one word illegible – encouraging?] great changes, that old passions and old forms of government are [two words illegible – bring/being altruism?] as displaced by some [one word illegible] force from either is a facet that is [one word illegible] will know, Still the world is ignorant to a [one word illegible] a lies extant as to the acclaim [one word illegible] that vice follow such vast changes. Whilst some [one word illegible] them with delight and believes them to be messages for an final happening, and I [one word illegible] to assure by that [one word illegible] lays his world vice be eating food from feudal tyrannys & oppression – the Causation vice thus as may of coming Erie --- and as fraught with the most [one word illegible-efficient?] to deceit go to to freedom, But while these of feasting can they engaged [one word illegible – fatally? Debating?] whether these changes be for good or evil Desire still sully as by ceaseless cause being the victory something or this our pride and of aim or the other

The great [one word illegible] offering of this [one word illegible] is democracy. The grand characteristic of which is energy, energy that not [one word illegible] very the dormant strength of a [one word illegible] pristine of society, but that every [one word illegible – author?] with lighting offend the heart of the peasant and the offended leave of the rich – producing not only the [one word illegible] races of the proud [one word illegible] – but [two words illegible] from this lethargy, so to a saver of this displeasing

From the action of this principle. Peace arises the [two words illegible – spirited?] of lit. giving feed the holliest effects of [one word illegible] that leave ever [one word illegible] the Saving [one word illegible] of Ancient a modern history , it was [one word illegible] that [one word illegible] with a [one word illegible – recent?] Careful-- the slopes of the Alps, the [one word illegible – enduring?] that [one word illegible] subdued the slimy seas of the German [one word illegible], Impressingly his fears. [three words illegible] plunged thus seemly [two words illegible] the heart of the [one word illegible – Reservation? Conversation?] find [one word illegible – unfurled?] the flag of freedom in the [one word illegible] of Senora [two words illegible].

Why are the [one word illegible] of the Mediterranean the same to which the pilgrim from [one word illegible – Eup. abbreviation?] greater of the [one world illegible] journeys to to visit [two words illegible] the cradle of civilization the birthplace of axis of Army of Philos. [one word illegible] lead the scurry of this highest and most pleasing achievement Because the hurry of Athens and Sparta lie as if massive – when the passion of Greece once flourishing grew to th greatest [one word illegible].

What gain Rome the Empire of the land & brought the [one word illegible] brasing the [one word illegible] "*Senatus populus seu romanus*" to the [one word illegible – banks?] of the Eupehrates and Atlantis? [two words illegible- Dreme?].

Much of all [one word illegible – distances?] Either in Ancient or Modern times in an County stayd preeminent – It is him we find this undying eyes so enough of [one word illegible], Chas, exhibits in says preaches of him [one word illegible] find it – day argue and so restrained.

The force of this passion cannot be [one word illegible – better?] illustrated than by referring to the thin [one word illegible] of the life of Charles [one word illegible]

What by is that [one word illegible – emperor?] seem to [one word illegible – even?] the Atlantis, and with maybe but his [one word illegible – face?] on his [two words illegible – successes?] a bille in his pocket to [one word illegible – prize? price?] the [one word illegible – premise? permanence?] solitude of the [one word illegible] tried ! It was the [prin.? Prince?] of Christiany [one word illegible] by compass. It was this that drew him from the Compass of his own native land that compelled him to leave Spring and luxury behind, to oreient from his mythes [one word illegible] and be Content with naught but the broad [three words illegible] for a lass so his [one word illegible – flaskes?] on the same day for his [one word illegible]. Frequently this pass. on forgeting laid the foundation of an ~~[one illegible word]~~ Republican instability, and Beautied as the mind of [Amss?] the tree of bliss, the fruit of which is as much envying – Say since they be remembered – ~~[three words illegible]~~ when all the beating of the world [three words illegible] with their minted [affirm?], When the tempes wicked [Opportunate?] this memory shall [hone?] the friend of the [one word illegible] out – When the dried braed of the final shall lean made by lain in the [one word illegible] and the Serpens ~~shall~~ cling to the mouldring mastes – then so and until then shall this [creed?] be forgotten.

The efforts of this fears., however, and not always focused by each good scurry – if the actors who are raged on ly this fears. In such actualities by the fewest nothing [one word illegible] nice found, that nice nothing [one word illegible] man from nueisance, but that mi. [one word illegible] say [one word illegible] of liking ~~And~~ This leaes. as it [one word illegible] in France in 1830 any in may [one word illegible] injuring to the French keeper – Yrs. it had semed

good offers it gave their a fantaem of [one word illegible] and not being content with seeing a fantaem, they again situated the septer from the hand of their offenses & then off the [one word illegible] that hand them in slavery. And they Can now see – May they see be eased on by the passion of democ. And may [one word illegible] Hiram [two words illegible] to form a government as kings & prosperous as an even sensing [one word illegible].

Hanging to caught the infessation – but she failed – Her little but noble land was too small to cap. with the combined forces of Russia & Austria – the main in his misfesting, He says of for the face of a Russian, and the final a freedom with one [one word illegible] down the magniec. of divine wrath when the heads of her oppressors – Say may the curses & hate & the hisses of scum fall upon theirs –

And proud o'er their main forces be hisse'd

The layttie of [one word illegible], the [one word illegible – jury?] of the missed. Eng. & Ireand since next month the attemps. This pass. leas. not [one word illegible – knowingly?] dormant within breast of the Eng. & their prayer –

"Oh leash the day just [one word illegible]
Accomplish thy reign
[one word illegible] the blessings then hastful gain
Going on all [two words illegible]
This equal lying – be squary engaged
And human kind for human good [one word illegible]

This can and not the sovereign shall sustain
And peace and justice undisputed riegn"

Our country has not been unnoticed – but the time since soon came when Whigs and Princes shall be hushed from their royal seats, When the novice the Aristoeians so the people shall be placed on equal footing, then will the flag of freedom wave in every [two words illegible] in Europe, The last [one word illegible – build?] of tyranny be broken asunder – And the people be goo. & Repub. mistaking & some principles.