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ASHLAND TIDINGS.

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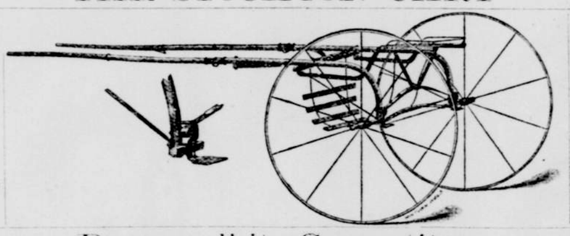
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INDEPENDENCE DAY ORATION.

Delivered in Ashland, July 4th, 1889 by Hon. Binger Hermann, Oregon's Representative in Congress.

Following is a partial report of the able, patriotic and eloquent oration delivered by Hon. Binger Hermann in Ashland on the 4th. Mr. Hermann said:

Ladies and Gentlemen:—I have the honor to appear before you in obedience to arrangements of the day—this ever-welcome day of jubilee, this glorious anniversary of the freedom of our country—and to participate with you in its festivities. But in doing so—in thus rising to discharge the pleasing duty so kindly imposed upon me—I must be permitted to assure you that it is with no affected degree of diffidence—I must confess that I feel much embarrassed. And well I may; for as I pause here and for a moment reflect upon the patriotic, national and world-renown achievements of the period, which gave birth to the anniversary we have assembled here to-day to commemorate—and then to cast a glance over the broad expanse of our country to behold the full measure of its power, its influence and its progress—development—so many emotions of admiration of gratitude and joy arise within me that I am overwhelmed with the consciousness of my total unfitness for the task. But it is right there should be such feelings. It is right and proper that everything connected with the welfare and grandeur, or the calamities and misfortunes of this great and magnificent republic—that everything relating in the remotest degree to that long and arduous struggle of the revolution, which at length, under the leadership of Washington, terminated so auspiciously in the complete establishment of our independence, and our elevation to a high and commanding position among the nations of the earth—it is right and proper, I say—that all of these should excite within us emotions of the deepest, liveliest and most fervent character. With uncovered heads and in devout thanksgiving let us listen to the century hour which has just been striking the anniversary of our constitutional government, and as we gaze backward over a hundred years we are dazzled by the magnificence and glory of our nation's march.

[Here the orator eloquently characterized the "day we celebrate," comparing it, as our nation's chief memorial day, with the gala days of classic Greece and proud Rome, and the Paschal feast which celebrated the deliverance of the Children of Israel out of bondage.]

"We have assembled," said the speaker, "to celebrate this occasion as it was celebrated by our fathers in years gone by. We have assembled here upon the broad platform of national fellowship. All sectarian and partisan warfare we have left behind us, to be resumed upon occasions less sacred than this."

[Succinctly but vividly the origin and progress, the trials, the doubts, the tragic, heroic struggles, and the glorious triumph of the revolution were sketched by the orator. The lessons of the past were briefly drawn and then the speaker turned to the problems of state demanding solution to-day and held in the already clearing mists of the future. This part of the oration, dealing as it does with living issues of the highest interest, is given in full, as follows:]

So long as our nation is enlightened—it will be free. The expansive force of education will burst the contracted bonds of personal slavery. The common schools of America are the nurseries of liberty. Here we prepare the boy for the citizen, the voter, the juror, the magistrate, the statesman. In the language of the illustrious Washington: "Promote then as an object of primary importance institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structures of a government give force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened." Springing out of and closely allied with the preparatory schools of the nation as an inseparable offspring is first the knowledge and then the love of country. The more we learn of the mutual compromises, as well as the necessities which unite the original columns in the formation of our present form of government, the self-sacrificing devotion, the keen thought, the labored consultation and the painful anxieties of the revolutionary architects, the more deeply we cherish the hallowed structure. A comparison with the system of other governments, and our experience of a century, lead us to observe how carefully guarded are all the approaches to the Temple of Liberty. Each column and capstone in this wonderful edifice represents not only strength but beauty. One column is dependent on the other and over all rests the arch of the Union. Agriculture, manufacture, commerce, art, science, education, morality, religion and fraternity are the chief elements of strength. Remove either one of these strong supports, and you weaken the precious foundation, and lower the arch. Almost every possible danger is anticipated. Created as an asylum for civil and religious liberty for endless ages, and embodying within it the inspiring germs of nations yet unborn, how infinitely great the conception! How much more nearly the handiwork of the Supreme architect of the Universe! Its ample folds invite the way to every dutiful son of the Republic. Individual excellence and merit stand for higher passports than the hereditary nobility and acquired riches of other lands. Poor indeed, is that individual who has not some aspiration coupled with the genius of his county. The humblest citizen of the Union may cherish a well founded hope that either himself or his child may reasonably aspire to the highest honors of the state, or to share in the social distinction of his country. The password, "I am an American Citizen," is, in one and the same sentence, both a shield of protection and a badge of respect. Insult this citizen, though he may wander to the uttermost confines of the earth, and at once the mighty nation resents the indignity. And now with the foregoing as the history, the principles and practice of the nation, we open the books to-day and take a retrospect through the one hundred and thirteen years which have passed. We place our experts upon the temple, and they examine every column in the structure and sound the arch, and again proclamation is made to the world. "Republican government is not a failure, and man is capable of self-government." The great volumes of the century are again opened, and we behold the mighty progress of a free people. We find that no sooner did the American governments display themselves to the world than despotism felt a shock, and man began to contemplate redress. We find from our example and teaching, Europe with its entire population has ever since been in commotion, seeking the overthrow of abuses, and the establishment of systems with objects like our own. Except in a few spots, slavery has been wiped from the face of the earth. Reforms have entered the asylumns and penitentiaries and the refining influence of philanthrophy follows in the close wake of destructive war. Arbitration is now universally accepted as a settlement for international disputes rather than the once ready resort to war and carnage. Treaty stipulations have removed unreasonable restrictions to a free commerce with many ports which were double-locked and sealed to the traffic of the world, and whose rich products were lost to commerce. Greater than all has been the effect of our example on the domestic policy and jurisprudence of individual nations. The Mexican, Central and South American states have undergone a radical reorganization, the old forms have been entirely annihilated and republics built upon the ruins with forms like our own. In others radical changes in parliamentary representation, in popular elections, in abridgment of the arbitrary power of the monarch, as well as those of the petty prince and land owner. The right of free speech and the liberty of the press are better protected; as well as the personal liberty and happiness of the individual. The power of the people is now everywhere a formidable element, tyrannical rulers are forced to answer to this power, and already that old dogma the "King can do no wrong" is obsolete, and soon kingcraft itself will be consigned to the wreck of kingdoms and principalities. These changes speak a language not to be mistaken. They plainly say to the people of this country, if true to yourself, the force of your example will in time regenerate the world! Such a result cannot be contemplated without feelings of the deepest gratitude to Him, who has, I sincerely believe, destined us as the light by which the down-trodden and oppressed of every land can see the way to universal freedom. One hundred years ago it was predicted that we should have wars, and thus we should fall to pieces. But how is it? We have had in all the century but two foreign wars, one with England in 1812, and another with Mexico in 1848, and in both we were successful. England during this time has had five foreign wars of great magnitude; France, eleven; Prussia, seven; Russia, ten; Austria, five; Italy six. This shows that Republican institutions have secured a longer period of unbroken peace than others. It was also predicted that we should be torn asunder by domestic violence. We have had but one serious Civil war, and it was overcome. But during the same time England has had two insurrections, Prussia one, Austria two, Russia two, France seven, Spain and Italy many, and each time these governments have been more or less changed. Our government has never been overthrown, although tested by one of the mightiest Civil wars known to history. In other nations the sovereigns have been forced to abdicate, and in 1848, even Russia changed from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy, and still later in another upheval became merged in the Germanic confederation; while France has experienced almost every change known to man. During the one hundred years scarcely a foreign nation but what has lost some territory, while with us, we have acquired the empires of Louisiana with 877 square miles; the Floridas with 64,000 square miles, Texas with 262,000 square miles, New Mexico and California 614,000 square miles, with the immense domain through the Oregon and Alaskan treaties and to-day we find ourselves with a mighty area of 3,501,409 square miles, being four times larger than one hundred years ago! Our area then was 819,815 square miles. One of our states (Texas) is alone greater in area than the Austrian Empire, and double the size of Great Britain and Ireland. We began as a nation with only 3,000,000 people, and to-day we number 65,000,000, being the greatest next to Russia of the nations of Europe, greater by 15,000,000 than that of the whole German Empire, double that of France, and of Great Britain and several times larger than that of Spain. One year from to-day 40,000 enumerators will have entered every state, county, town and precinct of our nation and made record of our marvelous advancement. So rapid is our expansion that we can predict that the child is now living that will behold this nation with a population of 200,000,000 of people, and all under one flag, one constitution, and one indivisible and glorious Union of states! We are to-day the greatest manufacturing nation, as we are also the greatest agricultural people on earth. We are the most inventive of all nations and the operatives in our factories exceed 3,000,000 people, being greater than all our population at our revolution. An intelligent Englishman in commenting on our wonderful growth says: "The United States were at first behind us in invention, but they soon caught up with us. Europe teems with the material products of American genius. American patents print English newspapers, and sew Englishmen's clothing. A Briton goes to work timed by American clocks and warmed by American stoves, and English farmers harvest their grain with American reapers, bind it with American binders, and thresh it with American threshing machines. The United States is now the richest country in the world. With 33,000 miles of railways twenty years ago, there are now over 150,000 of completed railroads, or nearly one-half of all in the world. The increase in our iron manufactures in seventeen years has been from 931,582 tons to over 600,000 tons at present. The increase of our grain production has been from 32 to 52 bushels per capita, and the capital invested in milk cows alone, exceeds the entire capital of all the national banks.

It is now conceded that with the daring and energy of the American, he is now without a parallel in the history of the human race. No obstacle can withstand the limit of his ambition. It has crossed the continent and united the two great oceans with the iron rail and the telegraph wire. He has even laid his cable at the bottom of the great ocean and communicates his thoughts in minutes of time between the new and old worlds. Beginning with feeble sparks drawn from the clouds by old Ben Franklin, and the crude little steamboat launched by the trembling hand of Robert Fulton, how incredible and vast has since been the progress of American science and improvement. The last act is close at hand. We have penetrated the most inaccessible territory, have tunnelled the Rocky Mountains, have erected elegant cities on their silvery slopes, have conquered the desert places, and have planted the vineyard and orchard where before grew the cactus and sage brush, and have shed the light of civilization and freedom with no barrier but the ocean's everlasting wave.

In the language of the poet, Berkley:

"Westward the star of Empire takes its way.
The four first acts is already passed:
A fifth shall close the drama of the day,
Time's noblest offspring is the last."

And thus it is that we proudly trace the origin, growth and development of our country through all its stages, its trials and its triumphs to its splendid career as the first nation on earth.

We now turn our faces toward the still further future, and as a prudent and cautious people, consult with one another as to the policies and principles which shall preserve and maintain this magnificent heritage of the fathers. If Greece and Rome had been as zealous to preserve their glorious republics as they had been to establish them, they would exist to-day to delight and to instruct the world.

Viewing the states of our Union as separate nations, and adding the four soon to be admitted, we have 42 large nations of one people, and all under one government, and one common head.

This great confederacy is bound together not by force or by mighty armies, but by common interests and mutual confidence. The great motive is the enjoyment of a free government. The government will be free so long as the people are pure and free, and so long as the wishes of the people have expression at their elections, and in the halls of legislation, in state and nation. This only will insure a direct relation as well as a mutual confidence between the people and their representatives, through whom they speak. The more you circumscribe the expression of the popular wish, and the more you delegate the authority of the people, the further you remove them from a purely republican or representative government. This is at present the case in the election of President and Vice-President and United States Senators. There is a sentiment abroad that this system is not in keeping with the fundamental theory that this is a government of the people, for the people and by the people, but that it often denies the right of the majority to rule. The present tendency, especially as to the election of U. S. Senators by middlemen, and not directly by the ballots of the people, too often leads to the selection of plutocrats, and of men not the popular choice, while it also induces unworthy means and often invites to the struggle the power of money rather than pure merit and patriotic services. So far this has not applied to Oregon, but it may ere long. In the immense operations of the present age wealth rapidly increases, great corporations and sordid syndicates and monopies find it essential to their purposes to obtain special legislation favorable to their own pursuits, and too often these purposes are in conflict with the interests of the people, or a conscientious regard of public duty. They naturally desire their own special advocate in the halls of legislation. It is more difficult to mislead or to deceive the entire people of a State than the few men who constitute a majority of a state legislature—who do elect the United States Senators. The whole people of a state choose their representative in the U. S. Congress. Are they not just as competent also to choose the Senators in Congress? Are not the voters of Jackson county as well qualified to vote for U. S. Senators as the four men whom they elect to the State Legislature? The less the population of a State or the more limited the Legislature, the greater the necessity for the people to elect, for it is among the smaller number where the intrigues of the ambitious and the temptations of the rich have easier conquest of the public wish. It is as true now as when Hamilton said it: "that the elective mode of obtaining rulers is the characteristic policy of republican government." The people can safely be entrusted with this discretion. No people will knowingly betray their own interests. The further you remove the choice of officers from the body of the citizens the more you lessen the security as well as the purity of our country's safeguards. It is like the unfastening of a ship from her moorings. There must be a close communion of interest as well as of sympathy between the people and their Representative. Pride as well as gratitude and self-interest always remind him that his honors and distinctions are conferred upon him by the people. If these prove deficient we have the additional security of frequent elections, where the vigilant and manly spirit of our people have a ready and full relief against their faithless Representative, or the betrayer of their constitutional rights.

Another matter of grave concern affecting the public interests, and a most formidable evil following the aggregation of capital, is the creation of Trusts. These may be defined to be a combination of trades or persons for the purpose of monopolizing a special industury in a few hands and advancing prices at the expense of the many. The tendency is to enrich the few and impoverish the many, and the aggregation enables a particular traffic to regulate and restrict its particular industry, and, if necessary, to crush out and destroy all competition and opposition. A Trust is nothing more than a conspiracy against the freedom of trade and commerce. It benumbs and paralyzes the energy and hope of the man of small means, arrogantly bankrupts and drives him from the market, while it levels and lowers the wages of the toiling poor.

Its first effect is to make the producer the master of the consumer; second, to enslave both the producer and consumer in the relentless grasp of iron-clad syndicates and tyrannical monopolies.

During 7 years the Standard Oil corporation, having only nine-tenths of the trade, and not being a producer of oil, obtained the monopoly of the oil refining business of the country, while nearly all the independent refineries who formerly owned nine-tenths of the business, and who did not sell out to the Standard Company, were made bankrupt and ruined. During the seven years its profits are estimated at from $100,000,000 to $260,000,000, and in the Pittsburgh district the losses of the independent refineries amounted to $17,000,000. Seldom have honest and industrious citizens of any country suffered so great a destruction of property by an arbitrary exercise of power, and seldom has their been such an acquisition of ill-gotten wealth in a few hands. Nor were the people benefitted by lesser rates, but beheld before them only a mighty monopoly with no competition to make it afraid.

These combinations are in violation of our constitution as well as our common law. They are also deadly enemies to republican government. If despots can be permitted to dictate to our people what prices shall be imposed upon what we eat, drink and wear, they can soon ordain the limits of our political and religious liberty. You trench close on the family altar of every citizen when you touch the necessaries of life. One of the fundamental guarantees of a republican government is, the greatest possible good to the greatest possible number. This is impossible so long as the few can oppress and control the many. Industrial slavery is only the first degree of political slavery. There should be no restriction on competition. Illicit combinations should be dealt with as crimes against personal liberty as as well as commercial liberty. Almost every day we hear of some new combination. Already we have the gigantic monopoly of the coal oil trust, the sugar trust, the beef trust, the cotton seed oil trust, and anthracite trust, with the railroad rings, the cattle, lumber and wheat rings; and it is now said that an English trust is now here proposing to buy up the breweries of the country.

The price on the few bushels of wheat and few head of cattle sold by our small farmers is now regulated by scoundrelly rings in St. Paul, Kansas City and Chicago.

England is the head center of trust iniquities, and her hand is fast taking hold of many of our own industries. The basis of the English commercial policy encourages the growth of these trade monstrosities. So long as the object of a combination is to secure to its members a reasonable and proper protection it is not within the province of the law to restrict, but when the purpose is to unreasonably advance the price of any comodity, or to destroy the business, or injure the property of a competitor, it then becomes a criminal conspiracy, and its members should be followed individually, and they should be indicted and convicted of a crime. But there is now a growing demand in our country for the suppression of these trusts—a vigorous public sentiment has at last entered the halls of Congress, and a loud call is made that they be dealt with as robbers on the public highways. While warding off the foreign trusts let us also tear up by the roots the enormous combinations in our own land. Railway combines and pools have already been throttled by a positive law. It now remains to exterminate other combinations which exist by trust extortions on the production and consumption of our land.

With the annihilation of these syndicates a formidable danger will disappear. In the meanwhile let us be admonished that liberty is not so much in peril from its occasional abuse as in the absence of any remedy to prevent it.

Another danger to which we can on this day safely refer—the ownership of American soil by alien landlords—Over 20,000,000 acres of our domain is now held by rich nabobs of Europe, they who express no desire to assume the duties of citizenship or assimilate with our people but who maintain their allegiance to foreign dynasties and contribute an exclusive moral and material support to the power, the advancement and glory of a foreign flag and an unsympathetic nationality. The Earl of Dunraven owns 4,500,000 acres, the Duke of Sutherland 3,000,000 and other foreign noblemen and millionaires great estates in proportion, and all this in the very face of the fact that there are to-day five million of American farmers who own not one acre of the lands they till. There is a growing sentiment among our people that this broad license should cease and that the acquisition of our soil should hereafter be limited to those only whose hearts are in sympathy with our institutions, our policies and our patriotic hopes. Much has been accomplished by recent legislation and more remains to do.

As the liberty of a country can not long survive where its votaries are of a dissolute, debased and anarchial character it behooves our people to see that the gates of Castle Gardens are carefully guarded against the emigration to our shores of the nihilist, the anarchist, the criminal, the pauper and the social out-cast. They bode no good to the republic. While one division walk the highways to extort and to plunder and even assassinate, and others to drift into the penitentiaries, the asylums and hospitals, another division find their way in the witness stands, to the jury boxes of the Courts, or engage in angry speech upon the street corners of our crowded cities and there incite their ignorant followers to acts of riot, destruction of property, or assaults upon the officers and guardians of the law. Indifferent to the obligation and solemnity of an oath they not only pollute the fountains of justice, but they also invade the elective franchise—America's dearest bulwark—and there become ready machines of demagogues and incendiary villians, thus overcoming the patriotic wishes of the quiet, the law abiding and property holding citizens. It was not the design of the fathers of the Republic that our hospitable shores should welcome the plotters against our domestic tranquility, the destroyer of governmental order, or that we should become an almshouse for the indigent or a receptacle for the scum of other lands. The welcome was intended for the moral and the honest seeker for liberty and to the truly oppressed of other climes. Citizenship for the high honor and blessings it affords, and commercial entrance for the prosperity which follows—these should be invited, but citizenship for the protection of outcasts and felons—this should be provided against by double locks and bars. Let us not forget that "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

Anticipating the wondrous millions of people soon to succeed us in our nation, we of the present generation feel it incumbent to extend the way for future habitation. The first great object of our solicitude is the vast region of our nation which is now incapable of sustenance for man because of its dry and arid character. This portion embraces nearly one-third of our Union or 1,000,000 square miles and 640,000,000 of acres. It extends from British Columbia on the north for 1000 miles to Mexico on the south; and from 100 meridan 1,500 miles to the Pacific ocean. This arid region is five times larger than France, and 14 times greater than Great Britain and Ireland. Irrigation is the only remedy for permanent progress and prosperity. It is proposed to store waters at heads of rivers and lakes, to create reservoirs, and then by canals and lateral ditches convey the precious water to the now barren wastes, there to produce "green meadows, golden fields, and blossoming gardens" and fertile homes for two hundred millions of people. On a small scale the system has been employed in the valley of Salt Lake, and now that whole region is under tillage and verdant in growing grains watered by 700 miles of canals, and there are nearly 1,000,000 acres reclaimed. It is said that to-day nearly one-half of the human race depends upon irrigation for existence. The nations of the old world have extensively practiced it from time immemorial. The swarming hives of humanity who dwell in Southern Asia have survived and flourished solely by the aid of irrigation. Nearly all of Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona and large portions of Eastern Oregon and Washington Territory and even Kansas will forever be desert waste until this great plan is put into operation by the direct aid and under the supervision of our government, and already a quarter of a million dollars is appropriated for surveys. Looking to the still further extension of American facilities for aggrandizement, our nation realizes the necessity of reorganizing and building up our merchant marine. Our merchants and manufacturers can never expect to obtain a reasonable proportion of the world's trade until we have regular lines or communication in direct competition with other nations. Steam lines build up a country next to railroads. The American flag is supplanted on the high seas by other nations. The trade of the South American countries which justly belongs to us is diverted to European markets, even our own exports are largely carried on British bottoms, indeed it is said that only 14 per cent. of the foreign commerce of the United States is conducted in American ships. Our productions in agriculture and manufacture are becoming so enormous that we require more enlarged markets and to do this we must have a merchant marine which can compete with our foreign rivals. Competition between foreign productions and our own is every day becoming more and more fierce. The race between the wheat producers of America and those of India and Russia is the topic of the

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