

ATHENS, 4th July, 1822.

On Monday the 24th ult. the members of Mount Vernon Lodge met in Athens, to celebrate the anniversary of St. John the Baptist. At noon they walked in procession from their Masonic Hall to the College Chapel, where a numerous and respectable assembly had convened, consisting of the citizens of the village and its vicinity, together with the officers of the College, the Academy, and the members of those institutions. After sacred music and a prayer offered by the President of the University, an eloquent and impressive oration was delivered by the Hon. Judge Clayton, admirably well adapted to the occasion; of which the concluding part has been obtained for publication, at the earnest request of many who heard it.

The members of the Masonic society then proceeded to the site previously selected for the new College edifice, and, with the solemnities usual on such occasions, laid the corner-stone of that building, in the centre of which were deposited the following articles, viz.: 1. A small family Bible. 2. Several specimens of the current coins of our country. 3. A glass cruet containing a sample of some of the most elegant manufactures of the present day. 4. A scroll inscribed with the date of the transaction, the names of the President of the United States, the present Governor of the state of Georgia, the President of the University, and the Master of Mount Vernon Lodge. On the exterior of the corner-stone, is the following inscription, engraved in legible characters, viz.: "By the liberality of the Legislature of 1821, this edifice was erected. The corner-stone was laid on June 24th, 1822, A. L. 6823, by Mount Vernon Lodge, at the request of the Trustees of the University of Georgia."

Extract from an Oration delivered 24th June last, by Hon. A. S. Clayton, on the double occasion of celebrating a masonic festival, and laying the corner stone of the new College Edifice about to be erected at Athens.

"The last Legislature, with a munificence that claims and must ever receive the unsparing plaudits of posterity, made an appropriation to the full extent of what was asked, for the erection of a new College Edifice, at this the seat of learning—On this day we are about to lay its corner stone—the ceremony usual on such occasions is solemn and affecting—it is a convention between the living and the unborn, intended to unite the simple story of the present moment, with the chronicle of future ages. The hands and the hearts of those who are now employed in this anxious rite will shortly, in the course of nature, be colder than the stone they lay; but this ceremony will impress upon it those qualities calculated to perpetuate the strong sensations and tender sympathies of this active crowd, and convey to the generous bosom, yet in the clod, all those warm emotions, all those ardent feelings, all those restless palpitations that flow from the mournful memento of departed times. There is no class of our feelings more pleasingly interesting than those which are awakened by retrospection; and when an object, endeared to a former period by some conspicuous associations, is presented to our contemplation, we seem to have arrived at the spot where the past and the future meet to hold a silent intercourse, to interchange the embraces of long absent affection, to enjoy the softness of melancholy without its anguish, and the serenity of memory without its reproaches.—The desolations of time spare but few of these rare memorials, and they stand scattered in the gloomy waste of its destructive current, like the shivered trunks of some tempest-blasted forest, at wide and solitary intervals. Here we are about to plant one of those remembrances; the building, which will be erected over it, will collect the bloom of every passing age, and they will shed around this monumental tale the rich perfume of gratitude due to the generous deed. How often, while treading this consecrated ground, and lingering over its artless legend, will they pour upon us the pensive tribute of fond recollection? How often will they stretch their imaginations to this bustling scene, and in the musings of a lonely hour, sadly enquire, where are all of its busy actors.

As long as our race continues, it will in every period of time, be subject to the same passions and desires—but the same habits and manners will not remain, these are ever changing with the varying circumstances of man. The beautiful tokens which we this day deposit in the bosom of this stone, intended as a present for future generations, and exhibiting the indications of the gay and tasteful character of the age, may one day excite the smile of innocent but amusing speculation. If, however, they should serve to be the faithful missionaries of some bland allusion of useful import to those who shall hereafter probe the secret, if they shall cherish an affection favorable to the liberality which has reared this edifice, and kindle, from the glow of emulation, a kindred sentiment betokening an increasing zeal for the progressive improvement of mental and physical science, we shall have accomplished all that could be desired, and in that fond anticipation alone, meet a just reward.

What theme is so sublime as that which points to the object of this fabric? When we contemplate the present character of the world for its learning and religion, the depth of its research, the dignity of its science and the stately order of its eloquence, how obvious is the inference that posterity will have committed to its charge an awful responsibility. To support this character this institution will be summoned to lend its aid, and may we not indulge the pleasing reverie that the part it is destined to bear will be upheld with becoming vigor and distinguished splendor. This stone which we are depositing with so much solicitude, is emblematical of that corner stone of literature which may now be said to be laid by the state in the establishment of this institution. The resources of Georgia, the mildness of its government, the fertility of its soil, the respectability of its growing population, its genial climate and natural advantages, all seem to demand the assertion, without a breach of decorum, that its rank is experi-

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mental and political knowledge, will be far from being either contemptible or secondary. Here will be collected its moral materials to be fashioned and moulded by the skilful hand of instruction, so as to occupy with suitable lustre, those important stations which it will be its exalted pride and higher destiny to maintain. Could we with prophetic vision be permitted to explore the extended range of future time, what gladdening prospects would arise to view, in the diversified richness of those philosophic treasures that shall spring from this eventful era? What an intellectual landscape, arrayed in the verdant garniture of taste, and gilded by the prismatic tints of science, passes across the field of our mental perspective! Let us unite in one common and fervent orison to heaven that this bright portraiture may not prove to be the illusion of an empty day-dream."

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