

Augustin Smith Clayton's "poetical oration," delivered June 2, 1804, at the first commencement of the University of Georgia. This copy was made from a handwritten transcription of the poem, found in MSS 965, Folder 11, Hargrett Library Special Collections, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia. The original poem is located in the same folder, but too faded and indistinct for further analysis.

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Hail inspiration! From thy throne incline
Impart the treasure of thy [illegible] divine:
Thee I invoke thy aid, let me not loose:
Inspire the [illegible] of an [illegible] [illegible]
From great of past events, give me to [illegible]
The awful [illegible], of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] law.
Uplift the [illegible] of future [illegible] show,
Her hidden [illegible], give me to know,
Give one to tell by what propitious lot;
We have [illegible] [illegible] of this happy spot.
I was [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] maintained

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To act in fullness, its [illegible] part,
Spread joys around, if mostly the heart,
To free the [illegible], with abject [illegible] [illegible] bound,
That lovely harmony should [illegible] [illegible]
She has forever happiness pursued;
Which [illegible] is found beyond this [illegible]
Guided by this immortal truth alone;
The valiant Clarke magnificently shone
Prompted by this, he fearless took the [illegible].
And bade [illegible] [illegible] to tender quell.
The Patriot [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
Midst the successive honors of his State
Who from the dawn of freedom's rising Sun
With faith, his country served till life was done
Give me to [illegible] that nature [illegible] gave place,
To men [illegible] to the human race.

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Inimical to laws and all the arts,
That join a general concord human hearts
Whose souls [illegible]teem'd north plan,
To hurl destruction on their fellow-man

Were oft amidst this solitary shade;
[illegible] the fell Savage edge his deadly blade.
On you dark bank he sat devoid of fear,
Brooding a fatal carnage far and near.
In [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] there he lay.
And [illegible] [illegible] thought did [illegible] death portray
Beside you [illegible] stream that glides along;
Uninterrupted in [illegible] murmuring Song:
Till here a rocky mound continues the way,
And dares [illegible] to its [illegible] sway.
But with redoubled force, [illegible] sound,
It [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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In expectation on this hill they stood,
To drench their hatchets in our fathers' blood.
They on this hill their frightful paint prepare
A direful [illegible] of destructive [illegible].
The bloody hatchets high in air they wave,
The sure forerunner of a hapless grave.
When evening shades pervaded peaceful [cells];
Around their flames they wind with [horrid] of ills
When tranquil slumber closed my eye;
Lauds to their [sanguinary] Gods they crye;
To steel their savage hearts and breasts prepare;
To tell sweet [illegible] not enter there:
Him they invoke to [let] naught them impede.
From executing every [baneful] deed.
Him they implore to let not pity sway.
Till all were mingled with their mother clay.
And now prepared beyond those hills they go
To scatter [illegible] to their foe.
Forth from his [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] they [illegible],
And him [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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In vain the mother to her partner calls;
But oh! To brutal lust a victim falls.
The much loved daughter no compassion finds
[illegible] by passions of [illegible] [illegible].
The infant on from his fond mother's arms
Is [snatch'd] and burned in the circling flames;

Or while the babe lies sleeping in its bed,
A tomahawk divides its tender head;
Uplifting then, they [fix] it in the wood,
Still [illegible] with the infant's blood.
The helpless sister, [illegible] another crave,
To clamp the infant in its [fiery] grave;
But dragg'd and tossed amidst the flaming [illegible]
Wrapt in each others' arms, they [illegible] their [illegible]
But oh! With what a tongue can I relate,
The [illegible] father, much more dreadful [fate]
While to the curse a tree fast bound
Who can describe [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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Not one is left his hapless lot to moan,
Not one is left to hear his dying groan.
His mangled body the burning fires contain,
Each nerve now quivers with the [illegible] pain;
What bid his faltering breath no more remain
The crackling flame around his body lies,
The growing sick of life he bows and dies.
But now O glorious change this happy seat
Is hallow'd; on a profan'd by savage [feet]
This balmy place on which the savage ran;
Contains man friendly to his fellow man;
A place where forth where innocence of age,
Tell bleeding victims to the relentless rage;
Affords a sacred shelter free from harm:
Where [illegible], can may all its fears disarm.
The Sun of knowledge through our happy land,
Will hence its verifying [illegible] expand.
A [illegible] through to wisdom shall be [rear'd]

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Then growing reason shall [illegible] her sway;
And mount [resplendent] as the new born day.
On in his laws her precepts will impose
On in no labor, but a sweet repose.
"Delightful tasks! Our tender thoughts to rear"
"to teach" our flexible minds no ills to fear
Our youthful minds with "fresh instruction" fill
To bear with resignation nature's will.

Here the fond Parents shall commit their child
To reap from [illegible] all the [virtues] mild:
No disappointment shall they [refine]
But find comfort in their life's decline.
Here too our country, their great truth will [pose];
Conducive wisdom, causes freedom's [lose];
Her suns from hence will honors paths pursue
And say to [illegible] [illegible] justly [illegible]
With pure design their country's [illegible] [maker]
And pledge their lives one [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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With scorn the necessary [world] regard
Where [illegible] minds do good and [hope] [reward]
Through the [thick] shades of future times I see.
Great [distinct] commutable decree
I see immortal Statesmen here arise
And for their country generous laws devise
Give grateful peace all their fellow men
Nor of injustice shall they ere complain
The peaceful [farmer] with no [wife] to [illegible]
Enjoys the comforts of his frugal house
Altho' an humble lot contains her all
Yet him of lords Supreme obeys his call
To him her [illegible] grants hear.
No [illegible] to [illegible] her labor enter here
No [illegible] enormous eats his children's past
He says he [illegible] [illegible] with cheerful heart
[illegible] [illegible] when [illegible] shall [illegible] in to [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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When love ends love shall say he [no more] to [illegible]
The tender ties of father, husband, friend.
I see from hence to spring desire of mine,
Each to [illegible] a devoted friend;
That happy calm which cheers the drooping head
And greets with joy the living and the dead
That teaches savage [illegible] [refrains]
With [illegible] [illegible] thy harmless earth to [illegible]
That guided the souls a [illegible] [illegible]
That [illegible] the endless train of future years;

That brings contentment to the troubled many
And bids its hold on life in peace resign;
That ready stands to soothe the aging breath
And light the soul through the [illegible] of death

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No frantic fiction this is [illegible] in done
If father knows his newborn son.
If honored government performed his share
The lifeless vision vivid will appear;
A government where peace, where plenty reigned
And nought but inclination yet remained
Ought to regards and sacredly adorn.
This greatest good to millions yet unborn
What happy comforts in your laws are found
Oh [we] remember golden plenty smiles
That liberty is free from Coluntier's wiles
Walks [illegible] if the remotest
And deals out justice to the meanest

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Was ever then your toil [illegible] troubles cast
Remember parent state they are not lost
Let those who [patronized fair] [illegible] cause
Throw glowing gratitude [illegible] just applauses
Those who illustriously avow'd her claims
Let grateful generations a [illegible] their names
Meritorious Milledge foremost strains
Who gratified great wisdom's first demands
Milledge the good, the [virtuous] and the great
The friend fo Science and the guide of State
[illegible] science how her sacred leaf [illegible]
To graft celestial [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] souls
That we are [illegible] [illegible], to rule [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
From whence disease, despair and torture of law

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Our age to govern its proper sang
I bear with [illegible] and every change
To murmur not at fate's averring nod
But [illegible] the pleasure of the righteous God.

When he in wisdom shall approach us near
And bid our better days for [illegible] appear.
A long and shining train shall [illegible] each heart,
Till time shall lay us with the country's deed.