ADDRESS DELIVERED
by
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In a constant quest through time and space, civilizations which in the course of history, fashion the continents, seek to benefit from the wealth accumulated by their forbears or by their neighbors; just as mortal as human beings - they have been aware of it since Paul Valery - they are less ashamed to borrow, because they all aspire to that highest title of glory, to be one day plundered by those who will relieve them, as Athens was by Florence.

This is why Suffolk University at the suggestion of Dr. Bernays, and with the cooperation of Mr. Ralph Lowell, Mr. Dennis Haley and Mr. D. Bloomfield, whose memory I respectfully wish to recall here, was well inspired, when it invited the representatives of sixteen European powers to come and speak before you, about the contribution of Europe, this small Asian cape, to the formation of the civilization of the vast North American continent.

In the light of my preliminary remark, we know indeed that no feelings can be hurt by this detailed expose of what was given and what was received in exchange.

The United States of America constitutes the most extraordinary "melting pot" in history. They have assimilated men from everywhere and absorbed the substance of the civilizations of the old world, in order to create a new world with original traits which gives them an unmistakable identity and arm them with such power that they can in turn exercise a determining influence over those who inspired them at first. It is why, without any false pride, I would like to briefly recall before you the share that France took in the making of the

American civilization.

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To a Frenchman recently landed on American soil, who observes the way of life and of thinking and the customs in the United States, one observation comes first: he finds it difficult to recognize the imprint left by France.

As sung in my Fair Lady, the American speaks English. While working in town, he lives in the country; he seldom dies in the house where he was born; his garden, true to say, has no fence; he takes good care of his home but does not get attached to things; he is hospitable, with, often, a touch of formalism; he spoils his children who will leave him early in life; he enjoys living with others since it gives him the pleasure of discussions in common, and keeps him from the ills of individualism; he respects authority although he fears its abuse; he does not drink wine and yet he is an optimist; he believes more in the future than in gold; he prefers facts to theories; however, he knows the contents of his constitution, truly he never had but one. Such are the observations among many which, for a Frenchman in the United States, summarize the characteristics of a different world, whose typical traits recall the British or German worlds which have sent, one after the other, their elites and their emigrants to the United States.

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Does this mean that France has had no part in the formation of your civilization? This would be surprising for a country having made such a large contribution to the exploration of the American continent, which, for more than one hundred years, possessed such an important part of it and which intervened with its own forces to make it independent, a country that has sent to it, indirectly through Canada and the islands, or directly from France, tens of

thousands of its children and a country that receives, each year, hundreds of thousands of its visitors, and which, in the realm of thought and art, has exercised in this land an often predominant attraction and influence.

It the "discoverers" had put their stamp on all the regions they have brought to life, the United States would carry, almost everywhere, the imprint of France: it is enough to recall here the names of Jacques Cartier and of Champlain, the founders of the "New France", of Father Marquette, the discoverer of the Mississippi, of Cavalier de la Salle, of Antoine de la Mode Cadillac, the builder of New Orleans, and of hundreds of others who, from north to south, coming from Canada or from the West Indies, have constituted that immense legion of soldiers, missionaries and "coureurs des bois" who made it possible to define the relief of the land, to protect the settlers and pacify the Indians.

But whether inspired by warlike enthusiasm, religious proselytism or attracted by rapid material gain, those men preferred adventure or apostleship to the advantages of trade or of a settled life: each year, they advanced further inland, cutting themselves off from their country of origin and from their bases, bequeathing the benefit of their bravery or of their sacrifice to the succeeding group of men generally made up of English and Dutch elements.

Perhaps,with Arnold Toynbee, it is not too daring to see, in this spirit of initiative this taste for running risks and the deep-seated optimism of these men, the forthcoming signs of this pioneering spirit of which you are justly proud. You deem it so worthy that long after the Union has reached its boundary, you do not hesitate to give to your present policy the symbol of the "New Frontier".

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In the same manner, the soldiers who fought side by side with yours during two wars decisive for the independence of your country, have left you as a legacy most of your bugle-calls and part of your military vocabulary, sometimes even your uniforms - it is not so long ago that one of your regiments wore the uniform of the zouaves -. They have indeed left a deep impression and influenced your military way of thinking. Was not the Commanding Officer of West Point in 1796 a Frenchman, Mr. de Rochefontaine? But, above all, the memory of these men has remained engraved in your hearts. Last Saturday I was attending the celebration of the one hundred and eighty second anniversary of the Battle of Yorktown and while on the site of the fighting, I was thinking of Rochambeau, de Grasse, d'Estaing and La Fayette and of all their comrades in arms who had not then hesitated to cross the Ocean and face danger in order to defend a right and a friend far from their homeland.

Such a sacrifice, we know, was not made in vain. It has been a source of inspiration for those who, in the hundreds of thousands, two centuries later, were twice to make the trip from West to East to affirm their loyalty to an Alliance that was born then and that was never repudiated.

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Passing from the realm of the heart to that of the spirit, but remaining, at the same time, in this intangible field where it is difficult to weigh the contributions brought by various civilizations, we must try and define the extent of the influence of France on the thought, the arts and the way of life of the United States.

While refusing to endorse some of the remarks by Henry Adams or Henry James who, on returning from Europe, lamented the absence of intellectual reaction in this country, the attention of which was ther entirely occupied by its development, one must admit however that,

there again, the relations between our two nations have taken a long time to be set.

Montesquieu, with his "Esprit des Lois", has no doubt helped the founders of your country to confirm their conviction that a strict separation of powers was essential to modern nations, and that the natural rights of man, whatever his origin, were the necessary basis for any juridical structure. He also encouraged in them the thought that despotism being nourished on fear, the aristocratic government on honor, democracy should be founded on virtue; he thus strengthened the puritan teaching which had been instilled in American readers.

Whereas, in the previous century, Descartes had made it a fashion to search for a rational explanation of the world, the Encyclopedists started, here as in Europe, the fashion of making an inventory of the universe and of devoting one's efforts to the study of natural sciences. Their voices, in particular that of Voltaire, promoted numerous campaigns in favor of tolerance towards all religious and philosophical systems, and of intolerance towards those too fiery defenders of exclusive dogmas.

These lessons were especially noted by the Americans who lived in France at the end of the Eighteenth Century. Among them two personalities stand out, those of Benjamin Franklin and of Thomas Jefferson who led the francophile faction, facing Hamilton's anglophile clan. Back in the United States to become its first Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson was to be the representative of the "century of lights", the advocate of physiocratic theses, the champion of the People's Rights and the defender of the French Revolution. But the inexorable course followed by the economic development of your country was soon to put a stop to this current of ideas and give to Hamilton's clan a victory over Jefferson's faction. French influence was to feel its effects for many years to come.

If on our way, we make an exception of the names of Victor Cousin and of Fourier, we must admit that from then on, the gulf between French and American political ideas was to ever widen. In spite of all the admiration that you justly show for Alexis de Tocqueville, he has been of little inspiration to your men of thought. He sought only to understand the motives of your political life. In this way he helped you to take a better cognizance of them and perhaps helped you also to preserve their originality.

In the field of religious thought, our harvest is hardly richer. Calvin, who, in fact, as everyone knows, was a native of Geneva, and the Hughenots who, before the Edict of Nantes and after its repeal, came to this continent in search of freedom to worship, have played, but a secondary part, in the evolution of the American protestant churches.

On the other hand, French Catholicism has left a deeper mark on the evolution of the roman religion. As we have seen it, its missionaries founded, in the North, the West and the South, communities which not only are in many cases still in existence but which are also at the origin of numerous dioceses in Burlington, Philadelphia, New Rochelle, St. Louis, etc... Beyond the years, the ties between the various congregations have been maintained and frequent exchanges bring forth a close cooperation between French and American priests. Father Teilhard de Chardin offers the best illustration of it. In spite of numerous obstacles, this man who came to live and die in your country, has enlightened French catholic thought from the turn of the century. (At the same time, Mr. Maritain in Chicago and Mr. Gilson in Montreal were spreading a teaching which will remain forever engraved in the memory of the few who took advantage of it.)

A different language has no doubt limited the development of relations between the philosophers and theologians of our two countries.

but it has been even more prejudicial in that it has restricted the influence of our literature in the United States.

It is true that those Frenchmen who landed between the Delaware and the St. Laurent rivers, and at the mouth of the Mississippi river during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries held fast to their mother tongue, with a tenacity and faithfulness which everyone admires. Nearly 1.2 million Franco-Americans are still using it today to teach their children, publish their newspapers and numerous poems and essays, but at the same time they were unable to resist the great pressure of the mass which, in order to integrate itself into the American society, had to resort to the English language. Therefore, in spite of the increasing number of students who are learning to speak French, the proportion of Americans in this country, who are able to understand and enjoy French literature in its original text, is small. Nevertheless, whether offered in French or in their English translation, the works of the French naturalists, Flaubert, Maupassant and Zola, have had a real influence on your novelists, such as Dreizer, Steinbeck, Hemingway or Faulkner. So did Marcel Proust on Thomas Wolfe. However, rather than stressing relations, which are always complex, between authors, one should point out the tremendous interest among American readers and especially among students - and I am convinced that those of Suffolk University are no exception - in the great French writers of the past century, particularly Victor Hugo and Balzac, and those who were or are our contemporaries, such as Camus, Sartre and St. John Perse, and yet perhaps even more those representing the new form of novel, Yves Berger, Nathalie Sarraute, Butor or Robbe-Grillet, whose works you can see flourishing ceaselessly in the windows of your bookstores.

Where painting is concerned the facts of French influence are

more precise: to the proven influence of English painting at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth, succeeded, in the beginning of the twentieth century the radiant school of Paris. No one, in this country, will forget the scandal and shock produced by the exhibition of New York, in 1913, when, for the first time, the American public became aware of modern painting, the impressionists and the very beginning of the trend which was to lead to the abstract painting. From that moment your painters, after Whistler Sargent and Mary Cassatt, considered it a necessity for them to leave Greenwich Village for a while and abide in Montparnasse. But, here again, even more perhaps than the tremendous reaction of the painters themselves, one must realize influence which the School of Paris had on the American public through the priceless treasures held in your museums. Two weeks ago I was visiting the "Barne's Collection" and I could not help thinking with a certain feeling of envy, of the good fortune which your countrymen and yourselves, at the Fine Arts Museum and the Gardner Gallery, have, in being able, on the spot, to turn over the pages of this great album made up of the thousands of canvases of the best French painters.

It would be tiring indeed if one had to enumerate the various influences France was able to contribute to the development of the American Civilization. However, allow me to mention the influence exerted on your musicians by the Schola Cantorum and the Group of the Five, an eminent member of which, by Darius Milhaud, who lives in California, as well as the remarkable School of the Fine Arts of Fontainebleau, founded and directed by the late Walter Domrash.

In the field of architecture, I will not mention the debatable influence of our gothic cathedrals, upon the style of your churches. Since I live in Washington, I prefer to quote the names of L'Enfant,

who drew for your capital the plan which the present generation is in the process of completing, of Chouteau who did the same for New Orleans, of Mangin who built the Town Hall of New York.

As regards sculpture, rather than mention Bartholdi, let me speak of Houdon, Rodin, Bourdelle and Maillol whose works have a large place in your museums.

Much more could be added to this list already too long. In all the fields of human activity, that of sciences for example, in which the name of Pasteur shines with a special glow, France has contributed, in her own way and ability, to the development of your national qualities and has had her share in the success of your civilization. Going beyond this inevitably dreary account of a contribution which, because mingled with those of other foreign nations, often to the point of fading, I would like to mention a fact of civilization which seems to me particularly important and which probably is the best illustration of the extent of French participation to American civilization. It is the attitude of man confronted with life.

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To this country marked by English pragmatism, German rigor and Scandinavian conscience, France has brought a new contribution: through her example, her men, her works, her way of life, she has brought the Americans to ask themselves what is the meaning of life. She cautioned them against the risks of losing themselves in a vast adventure on their continent and thus to become a prey to the often harsh necessities of this world in making. She warned them against the temptation of materialistic achievement, she gave them a taste of the immeasurable, even if insignificant; she displayed for them her own scale of human values; in one word she imparted to them her own conception of happiness, her idea of man's freedom face to face with power, might and success, she initiated them to la "douceur de vivre".

To reach this goal, she showed them the stone lace of the Sainte Chapelle, the rose-stained glass window of Chartres, the Palace of Versailles and the banks of the Seine. She read to them from duBellay and Ronsard, Verlaine and Apollinaire; she held out to them the Virgin and the Child of Georges de la Tour, the Embarking for Cythera of Watteau, the Child with the Dove of Picasso. She gave them to hear the Royal March of Lully, the symphonic variations of Franck and the Children's Corner of Debussy. She gave them a taste for the street where Mimi Pinson goes by, for the side-walk cafes where one gathers flitting moments, for the gardens a la francaise with their strict designs, for the furniture enchanting to the eye, for the table which refines the palate, for the wine which sings, for the dress which drapes the figure in order to show it with better results, for the hats which peuff out the coiffure, for the perfumes that enthrill.

All this, you may be tempted to say, is really futile in these demanding and harshful centuries. But this was not Gertrude Stein's feeling, who at the very time when adversity befell on France in 1940, did not hesitate to write from Paris "There is no pulse so sure of the state of a nation as its characteristic art product which has nothing to do with its material life".

Such was not either the feeling of Thomas Jefferson: conscious of the future promised to his country, but also fully aware of the necessity to preserve for man a universe capable of saving his soul and his ideal, the third President of the United States has shown in his estate at Monticello that he could adapt to this place of high fame of the New World the refinement of the Old. He has so bequeathed the future generations with a living symbol of the ever improving harmony which should exist between the civilizations of Europe and the United States.