Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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Oswego, NY "Montcalm's Victory..."
Monseur's Victory and its lesson.

Writers of history, like readers of history, being human, receive different impressions and different opinions from the same statement of facts. And likewise, I have little doubt that the many people who are taking part in the commemoration of a great historical event will go away from here with many dissimilar views about that event, about the man who was the hero of the capture, and about the meaning of the
The war which we call the "French and Austrian".

We are inclined, I think in knowing a few things that happened in the past, to fall into two very natural errors—more common not only to students of history but to teachers of history. I refer first to the practice of dwelling on facts and on facts alone. I heard a very learned gentleman once who could give off-hand every important fact in history, and the name of every important man connected with those states. But when I asked him who affected the French and Austrian
War had upon the preparation of the colonies for the Revolutionary War be could only babble that the one occurred from fifteen to 20 years before the other, and that it must therefore have had considerable influence. In other words, he was forgetting causes, forgetting results, in his effort to remember facts.

And the other historical fallacy is equally common, we might call it the Speculative Fallacy. You are probably perfectly
Familiar with the man who says, "If Napoleon had been victorious at Waterloo, he would have been Master of Europe — not of the Whole World!" or "If Bagoysa had not been sighted at Saratoga, we should still be colonials of England."

This is interesting. There is an amusing, but it might well be called "intellectually sloppy."

I have called attention to these two viewpoints because they illustrate the real necessity of looking into the cause and the results as well as the fact — the necessity of so doing if we are to gain any benefit.
HYDE PARK
ON THE HUDSON

In the present from the
lessons which undoubtedly
exist in history.

The familiar fables of
Cowley rework it up.

"It was a summer evening.
Old Kearsar's work was done
and he before his cottage door
was sitting in the sun
bead by bead esquinted on the green
that little grasshopper Walshmore.

She saw her brother Peter's
raft something large & round
which he beside the sea sat in, playing. There had found
the same thing what he had found that
was to turn a smooth round of
Old Shippen took it from the boy
who stood expectant by
And then the old man shook his head
and with a natural sigh
"Tis come from fellows still wide
who fell in the great victory.
They you remember, Old Kerkin

goes on to tell of the Battle of

Blackheath, and at the end he

"And everybody praised The Duke

"Who this great fight did win".

"But what good came of it at last?

Quoth little Peterkin

"Why that I cannot tell" said he

"But there a famous victory."

What good came of another

famous victory - the victory

of Montcalm at Orrego

in 1756 that we all commemorate

today? Are we cele-

trating that just a date more

to the fact of a battle?

Or will we go away after

the exercises shaking our heads
and murmuring like Old Kasper. 'Why, that I cannot tell— but it was a famous victory.'

There are lessons. There is inspiration to be gained today. Do not fear that I will attempt to relate the details of the facts of the events which occurred— but I would like to sketch, very briefly, the battle and the commander in their relation to the history of many peoples in two continents.

In about the year 1750 two great forces, advancing
Without material interference had at last come into contact with each other.

The advance of the British colonies had been a natural growth—a normal fading back of the wilderness from the seaboard by virtue of increasing population—an advance not military, not religious, not political, but in advance of healthy colonization.

On the other hand, the French position on the continent was comparatively artificial. For a century, explorers and priests and voyagers had laid bare the secrets of the

woods of the Great Middle

woods of the Great Middle
West and had established communication between the St. Lawrence and the vast territory of Louisiana. But what had they left? Filmed their little knowledge of the Western streams? A few trading posts perhaps - a few so-called converts among the Indians, but that is all. But in doing this, the French had succeeded where the British had failed. They had not colonized, they had not developed the Wilderness.
But they had established a highly concentrated organization. What they lacked in numbers, they made up for in cooperative efficiency. A few hundred tradesmen were as a matter of fact the absolute rulers of the city. They were the representatives of a tottering monarchy, of a discredited form of government, of everything that we today would call an American ideal and yet for years, by sheer vitality, by organized effort, by a united front, they stepped off the inevitable. Manifesto was the indispensable of all
That was best in French America. The fall. The division out of Wolfe’s army, out of the inevitable conflict between the past and the future.

The weakness of the British Colonies was the usual weakness of Anglo-Saxon peoples. A lack of preparation for war. The Colonies were going each their own road, thinking of commerce first, and curing for the development and control of the continent only insofar as their safety from attack in the sea and the success of the fur trade affected them directly.
This was the strife of a united and concentrated few against a divided and discordant many. It was the strife... against the future; of the old against the new, of moral and intellectual order against moral and intellectual... of barren absolutism, against a liberty crude, incoherent, chaotic, yet... of prolific vitality. Why then did Monteale capture Carasco? Why did French arms seem so long... The fact of this place was as we all
HYDE PARK
ON THE HUDSON

From the chief reliance of the colonies between Lake Champlain and Pittsburgh, and it was the principal
Trenton in the flesh of the Philadelphia. Here on the
Lake, opposite Fort Frontenac it stood a constant menace
to the great line of communication with the Mississippi.
Here was a dangerous post which threatened the St.
Lawrence and the Ohio.
The French knew all this, but the colonies of England
were left to their advantage.
Colony of New York was so busy fighting the Iroquois that it refused to give aid to the Western frontier. So it was all along the line. Braddock was defeated in Pennsylvania, every Englishman was driven east of the Alleghenies, and then Saratoga fell.

The success of the Treaties seemed assured - a land of free comparatively, based on a wilderness; without the barbarism had driven the British colonies almost back to the seaboard.

At last of course the awakening came. The giant child began at least to
On the Hudson

Realize this strength. The Colonies excelled New France in numbers, in wealth, in resources a hundred fold. And of course they were victorious.

The historian Seave has called the French and Indian War the birth of the history of the U.S. If this is so we can learn a lesson from its history. We can learn that strength such as Montcalm had is of no avail. That unity and organization in a
Motion amount to nothing of the social structure in fact. We may have armies and navies of the greatest but in the end they will go down to dust. If the people at home on the farm or in the town are rotten at the core.

And we learn that the fight at Enniscoe avails nothing in the end. It had and will have however through six time a lesson for the vanquished. At bottom the British colonies were round. They lacked truly. They were given & listened.
And the face of the sea,
even as you and I, may
their assemblies be fighting their Governments,
even as you and I.
They were caught unprepared for war, but the
inherent soundness of the
foundations carried them
to victory in the end.
Today that ultimate victory
would be more difficult.
Today one fights with
14-inch guns at ranges
of ten miles - the pens
in the top corners drawn.
is as longer of the
same was as was the
old nest just over the
chimney.

Conflict like everything
that is modern civiliza-
tion is so complicated
that preparation is
essential. That is why
we have our naval militia
that is why we think
ahead. No one desires
that today - we are all
struggling - trying - very
alike to prevent its
occurrence. But no one
can guarantee to the
American people that
there will be no more
war. And until that
Day comes the example of Montcalm, the example of Wolfe, and the lesson of the conflict between the French and the British colonies cannot fail to inspire us to better things.
Montcalm's Victory and Its Lesson.

Writers of history, like readers of history, being human, receive different impressions and different opinions from the same statement of facts. And, likewise, I have little doubt that the many people who are taking part to-day in the commemoration of a great historical event will go away from here with many dissimilar views about that event, about the man who was the hero of the capture, and about the meaning of the war which we call the "French and Indian."

We are inclined, I think, in learning about things that happened in the past, to fall into two very natural errors -- errors common not only to students of history but to teachers of history. I refer first to the mental practice of dwelling on facts and on facts alone. I once knew a very learned gentleman who could give, off-hand, every important date in history, and the name of every important man connected with those dates. But when I asked him what effect the French and Indian War had upon the preparation of the Colonies for the Revolutionary War, he could only babble that the one occurred from fifteen to twenty years before the other, and that it must, therefore, have had considerable influence. In other words, he was forgetting causes, forgetting results, in his effort to remember concrete facts.
And the other historical fallacy is equally common. We might call it the speculative fallacy. You are probably perfectly familiar with the man who says: "If Napoleon had been victorious at Waterloo, he would have been master of Europe—nay, of the whole world!" Or, "If Burgoyne had not surrendered at Saratoga, we would still be colonies of England."

This is interesting, this is amusing, but it might well be the world's knowledge, if it were not an intellectual meanness. I have called attention to these two viewpoints because they illustrate the real necessity of looking into the cause and the result as well as the fact, which we must do if we are to gain any benefit in the present from the lessons which undoubtedly exist in history.

The familiar poem of Southey sums it up.

It was a summer evening;
Old Kaspar's work was done.
And he, before his cottage door,
Was sitting in the sun.
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild, Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother, Peterkin,
Roll something large and round
Which he beside the rivulet,
In playing there had found.
He came to ask what he had found
That was so large and smooth and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by.
And then the old man shook his head,
And, with a natural sigh,
"Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
"Who fell in the great victory."
Then, you remember, old Kaspar goes on to tell of the Battle of Blenheim, and at the end says:

"And everybody praised the Duke, Who this great fight did win."
"But what good came of it at last?"
Quoth little Peterkin.
"Why, that I cannot tell," said he, "But t'was a famous victory."

What good came of another famous victory - the victory of Montcalm at Oswego in 1756, that we commemorate to-day? Are we celebrating a date merely or the fact of a battle? Or do we go away after the exercises shaking our heads and murmuring, like Old Kaspar, "Why, that I cannot tell, but t'was a famous victory?"

There are lessons, there is inspiration, to be gained to-day. Do not fear that I will attempt to recite the details of the facts - of the events which occurred. But I would sketch, very briefly, the place which the battle and the commander hold in their relation to the history of many peoples in two continents.

In about the year 1750, two great forces, advancing without material interference, had at last come into contact with each other. The advance of the British Colonies had been a natural growth - a normal pushing back of the wilderness from the seaboard by virtue of increasing population; an advance not military, not religious, not political, but an advance of healthy colonization.
On the other hand, the French position on the Continent was comparatively artificial. For a century, explorer and priest and voyageur had laid bare the secrets of the rivers and lakes and woods of the great Middle West and had established communication between the St. Lawrence and the vast Territory of Louisiana. But what had they left behind them besides the knowledge of the trails and streams? A few trading posts perhaps, a few so-called converts among the Indians; but that is all. But in doing this, the French had succeeded where the British had failed: they had not colonized, they had not developed the wilderness, but they had established a highly concentrated organization. What they lacked in numbers, they made up for in cooperative efficiency. A few hundred Frenchmen were, as a matter of fact, the absolute rulers of all this vast country. They were the representatives of a tottering monarchy, of a discredited form of government, of a corrupt social system; and yet, for years, by sheer vitality, by organized effort, by a united front, they staved off the inevitable. Montcalm was the embodiment of all that was best in French-America. He fell, the victim not of Wolfe's army, but of the inevitable conflict between the past and the future.

The weakness of the British Colonies was the usual weakness of Anglo-Saxon peoples, a lack of preparation for
The Colonies were going each their own road, thinking of commerce first, and caring for the development and control of the Continent only in-so-far as their safety from attack in the rear and the success of the fur trade affected their pockets. Parkman sums up the situation when he says:

"This war was the strife of a united and concentrated few against a divided and discordant many. It was the strife too of the past against the future; of the old against the new; of moral and intellectual torpor against moral and intellectual life; of barren absolutism against a liberty, crude, incoherent, chaotic, yet full of prolific vitality."

Why, then, did Montcalm capture Oswego? Why did French arms seem so long victorious? The fort at this place was, as we all know, the chief reliance of the Colonies between Lake Champlain and Pittsburg, and it was the principal thorn in the flesh of the Frenchmen. Here on the lake, opposite Fort Frontenac, it stood a constant menace to the great line of communication with the Mississippi. Here was a danger spot which threatened the St. Lawrence and the Ohio. The French knew all this, but the Colonies of England were blind to their advantage.

The Assembly of the Colony of New York was so busy with the Governor that it refused to give aid to the Western frontier. So it was along the line. Braddock was defeated...
in Pennsylvania, every Englishman was driven east of the Alleghenies, and then Oswego fell. The success of the French seemed assured. A handful of men, comparatively, based on a wilderness, had driven the British colonies almost back to the seaboard.

At last, of course, the awakening came; the giant child began at last to realize his strength. The Colonies excelled New France in numbers, in wealth, in resources, a hundred fold. And, they were victorious.

The historian Greene has called the French and Indian War the birth of the history of the United States. If this is so, we can learn a lesson from its history. We can learn that strength such as Montcalm had is of no avail. That unity and organization in a nation amount to nothing if the social structure is lacking. We may have armies and navies of the greatest, but in the end they will go down to defeat if the people at home, on the farms or in the towns are weak in resources, that endurance, that in fundamental ideals.

And we learn that the fight at Oswego availed Montcalm nothing in the end. It had, and will have, however, through all time, a lesson for the vanquished. At bottom, the British Colonies were sound. They lacked unity, they were given to bickerings and surface jealousies, even as you and I; their assemblies were fighting their enemies, even as you and I.
They were caught unprepared for war, but the inherent soundness of the foundation carried them to victory in the end. Today ultimate victory would be more difficult. To-day we fight with fourteen-inch guns at ranges of ten miles. The pistol in the top bureau drawer is no longer of the same avail as was the old musket over the chimney.

Conflict, like everything else in modern civilization, is so complicated that preparation is essential. That is why we have our navy, our army and our militia, and that is why we think ahead. No one desires war today. We are all striving - army and navy alike - to prevent its occurrence. But no one can guarantee to the American people that there will be no more war. And until that day comes, the example of Montcalm, and the lessons of the conflict between the French and the British Colonies, cannot fail to inspire us to better things.

Today a Montcalm would have a better chance of achieving complete success than he did a century and half ago. And today we cannot be sure that the sleeping giant would be given the same opportunity.