

AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED AT

HOLDEN,

JULY 4, 1806;

BEING

the Anniversary of the

INDEPENDENCE

OF THE

United States of America.


BY JOSEPH AVERY.


Boston :

PRINTED BY MANNING & LORING.

1806.

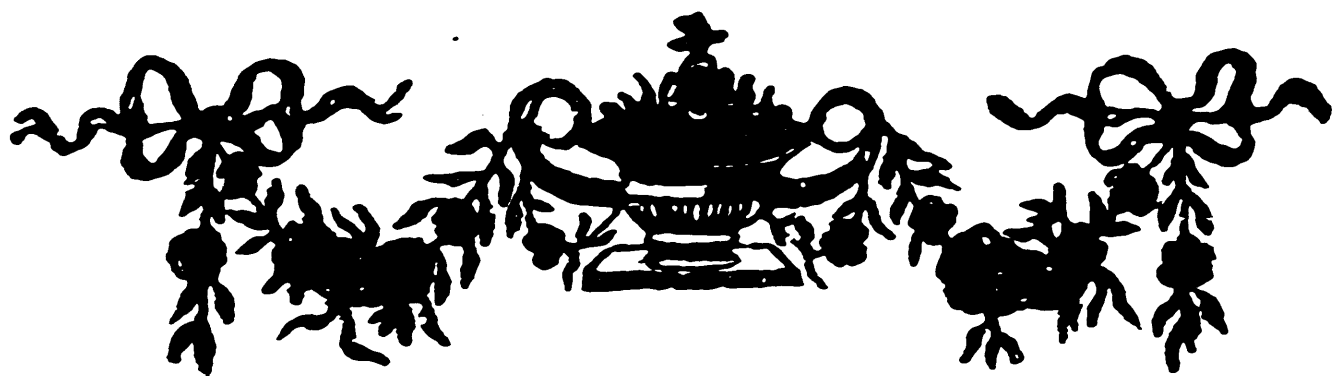
1113 57



Holden, July 4, 1856.

WILLIAM DRURY, Esq. Capt. JAMES ESTABROOK,
and **Mr. JONATHAN FISK,** as a Committee, waited on the
Rev. JOSEPH AVERY, thanked him for the Oration this
day delivered, and requested a copy for the press.





O R A T I O N.



AN accomplished limner may readily trace out a beautiful landscape, that shall delight the eye. Men of superior knowledge, and enlarged understandings, may sketch out a form of government, the parts and powers of which shall be so well adjusted, so nicely balanced, as to excite admiration, and invite experiment: but to promote and secure the real happiness of a people—*hic labor, hoc opus est*, here is the labour, here lies the difficulty. A Moses may be the leader; but if the mandates of Infinite Wisdom are not regarded, the people led may fall short of the land of Canaan; or, if they reach it, the milk and honey may be found wanting.

A Washington may be raised up, (the wonder of the age,) and may lead on the valiant sons of freedom, to conquest, to peace, to glory; and the fair dome of liberty be erected, that shall, for a time, command the respect of

distant nations : but true virtue and integrity must form the pillars to support the fabric, or its beauty will decay, and its tottering state will proclaim its approaching ruin.

Whenever we celebrate the anniversary of that day, which raised us to the honour and felicity of an independent nation, it should be regarded as a question of the first importance, how the blessing imparted may be preserved inviolate, and transmitted unimpaired to posterity.

On this day, this auspicious day, the thirtieth anniversary of our independence, we may now look back with pleasing gratitude on the dangers we escaped, and the difficulties we surmounted in securing the precious boon of liberty.

Previous to the acquisition, and indeed expectation, of independence, we looked up to Great Britain with the fondness of a child to a parent. Her honour we called our own ; her prosperity ours ; and her dangers we felt a willingness to share : but, strangely misled by pride, by avarice, and passion, instead of the fostering hand of kindness and friendship, she stretched out the menacing arm of cruelty and oppression against us. Dutiful petitions, the voice of sound reasoning, and the soft plea of affection to the parent state, were answered

with the roughness of a Rehoboam. This roused the apprehensions of Americans, and led them to think of the rod of scorpions that was soon to follow: but kind Heaven, though it suffered us to feel something of the rod, prevented our sinking under the force of it.

The tragic scenes that took place during our struggle for every thing dear on earth, you will find recorded on the faithful page of history; and to this you will sometimes turn your attention; and there you may trace the wonder-working hand of Divine Providence. There you will mark scenes of eminent peril, through which we have passed; gloomy scenes, when we appeared as if approaching the very precipice of ruin. But the God of armies interposed, bid our dangers depart, and crowned the exertions of freedom with glorious success. The Lord of Hosts may be said to have ratified our independence. He gave us a name and place among the independent powers of the earth. What pencil can paint—what tongue can tell the possible, I may say probable, evils into which we might have been plunged, had the scene been reversed, and the oppressive power of our enemies prevailed against us! But the standard of liberty we had erected, was rendered triumphant.

With peculiar pleasure, and sentiments of the highest esteem, we may now call in review

that band of patriots and heroes, who in the cabinet and field of battle, were the instruments, the blessed instruments, of our preservation from the horrors of vassalage. Nor should we forget to present our humble tribute of praise to our Almighty Benefactor, who gave wisdom to our counsellors, firmness and fortitude to our commanders and officers, courage and fidelity to our soldiers, and in so happy a degree united us in our common dangers.

But when the sword was sheathed, the olive of peace appeared, and our independence was acknowledged by the power that had opposed us, were our dangers at an end? we soon perceived they were not. As an *independent* nation, we were in a state of infancy. Our government, (the hasty production of the moment of danger,) was calculated neither to enforce permanent obedience or command respect. The soldier found his hard-earned wages vanishing into something little better than air. Calls for the expenses of a grievous and impoverishing war, were loud and heavy. Private debts, which had almost been forgotten in the din of war, were now brought up to view. Hence sprung a spirit of discontent; and this bred the evil of insurrection, which for a time bore a most threatening aspect; but, happy for us, the storm was soon quelled, and the bitterness it occasioned in time subsided.

The nation at large were now roused to a sense of the importance of a more energetic form of government. Men eminent for wisdom and integrity were selected, to form a new constitution ; and when formed, adopted, and carried into execution, was found productive of the happiest effects. With pleasing wonder we then beheld the rising glory of America. The improvements made, in various respects were rapid and astonishing. But can we now say, that the prospect before us brightens every day, and promises a fresh and constant accession to our glory ? What a happiness to believe this ! But do we not find those things that tend to clip the wings of our hope, and damp our sanguine expectations ? However reluctant we may be to charge ourselves with existing evils, we *feel* that there are things which *ought not so to be*. But shall the thought unnerve our exertions for the public good ? Shall we not pause a moment, think, and say, What are those evils which sap the foundation of our peace and happiness, as a people ? what will add to our strength and increase our honour ? Mutual disaffection, alienation, and party rage, if indulged, will certainly, will most essentially, injure us. It will give scope and effect to the designs of artful and mischievous men. It will invite the contempt and encroachments of the ambitious and

unprincipled, even in foreign climes, and distant nations. Let us then recollect afresh the maxim we so often repeated in our struggle for liberty—*United, we stand; divided, we fall*: and never should we lose sight of the vast importance of disseminating virtue, as well as knowledge, among the rising generation.

Honesty and impartiality should also mark our inquiries after men to guide our public affairs. Men that are steady as the pole, in seeking and pursuing the general prosperity of the people, and that soar with a manly dignity above the low arts and wretched chicanery of the *mere* partisan, have a pre-eminent claim to our suffrages. Men possessed of no virtue, no steady principle of action, fraught only with zeal and ambition, and who never rise above the sordid wish to secure their own private emolument, in these it is dangerous to confide. And let us ever remember, that true piety and genuine virtue lie at the foundation of our happiness in *this life*, as well as in that state of existence which awaits us beyond the confines of time.

A constitution formed by angels, and sent from heaven, would never render a vicious and abandoned people happy. And should the republic of America sink in corruption, in venality, and every species of vice, how soon may some daring, aspiring spirit seize the reins

of government, and produce another wonder in the world, similar to that in France! And who then would ever hereafter hazard a prediction of the felicity and glory of a republican government? But will it be said that republics, as well as other forms of government, have their course, rise in glory, and then sink in disgrace? Those of Greece, Rome, &c. had their day of renown, but are now descended into the *dark shades of ruin*.

Rome and Greece had their sons of science; but the republic of America has been brought forward under the meridian influence of light, of knowledge, derived from sources human and divine. A mighty chart lies constantly before her view, exhibiting the various rocks and quicksands that have been fatal to the rights and liberties of other nations. The great truths of that religion, which breathes on earth peace and good will to men, and when imbibed forms the man and the citizen to the best of tempers, and brightest of characters, have been proclaimed in the midst of us. If we fall, then, we fall like Lucifer, son of the morning. Far distant be the day that may witness such accumulated guilt, such aggravated woe.

As we tender then our own honour and felicity; as we regard the happiness of unborn

millions, let us stem the torrent of vice and infidelity, and awake to the practice of every virtue that is ornamental to human nature, and conducive to the good of society; and may every cloud of evil, that obscures our prospect, be chased away. For ages to come may the sun here shine on a wise, enlightened, and virtuous people, happily refined from all the remaining dregs of slavery; and may the knowledge and love of the truth, with pure, unadulterated liberty, spread their benign influence to the extremity of the globe; and the light of the great Immanuel shine in this our land for ever and ever.

A M E N.

By desire, the TOASTS of the day are here subjoined.

1. *THE Day.*—May generations yet unborn have cause to rejoice in it, as the great birth day of their freedom.

2. *The President of the United States.*—May he emulate the wisdom and virtues of his illustrious predecessors in office.

3. *The Memory of General Washington.*—May his virtues never be forgotten, and his patriotism ever be imitated by the sons of America.

4. *The United States.*—May their union be complete; and may they never want wise and good men to guide their public affairs.

5. *The Governor of Massachusetts.*—May his illustrious virtues meet their deserved reward.

6. *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*—May it become strong by union, and a dignified line of conduct.

7. *The American Navy.*—May its flag become respected by all nations.

8. *Agriculture.*—May it be an ample source of wealth to the nation.

9. *Literature.*—May it ever be cultivated, and applied to the best of purposes.

10. *The noble Band of Heroes, that have fought and bled to defend our Rights and secure our Independence.*

11. *The Clergy.*—May they be eminent instruments of good to their country, and reap the reward of the faithful.

12. *The Militia.*—May they ever command respect, and be the shield of their country.

13. *The Hero, whose Bravery led to the Liberation of American Captives in Tripoli.*

14. *Commerce and Manufactures.*—May they prove a rich source of prosperity to the nation.

15. *Union.*—May every citizen realize its importance, and seek its promotion.

16. *The Press.*—May it ever be the conductor of correct information, and free from the poison of slander.

17. *Peace on earth, and good will to men.*

One volunteer Toast is added.

The Fair Sex.—May they ever meet with that attention, friendship, and fidelity, to which their eminent rank and high importance in life so justly entitle them.