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Bacon, Ezekiel, 1776-1870.

An Oration, Delivered at Williamstown.

Pittsfield, Mass., Allen, [1801]. 16 pp.

MPB copy.

AN
ORATION

DELIVERED AT WILLIAMSTOWN,

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF

American Independence,

JULY 4th, 1801.

BY EZEKIEL BACON.

“ Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? For thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this matter.”

Published by the Request of the Citizens convened on said day.

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An Oration, &c.

A COUNTRY whose first settlement was almost within the memory of the oldest of her inhabitants, and a generation who were the first cultivators of the soil which they occupied, towards the close of the eighteenth Century, were the authors of deeds which excited the admiration of a polished age, and gave birth to a Band of Sages, who by their sentiments and their achievements eclipsed the heroes of antiquity. From the pen of *one* of these Sages, and from the hearts of all his Copatriots, issued that memorable instrument which has just been read, known by the name of "*The Declaration of American Independence.*" A composition which with admirable precision, exhibits an Epitome of the incontestible rights of MAN in every age, and a faithful picture of the *wrongs of insulted America* at that trying period of her affairs. It was for the maintenance of these rights, and for the vindication of herself against these wrongs, that our Country at length assumed the attitude of Sovereignty and Independence: And it is to commemorate the natal day of this most interesting event, that we, my friends, have once more assembled ourselves together. And while the flame of FREEDOM continues to animate our bosoms, and the Genius of Liberty claims a habitation in our hearts, so long, oh! auspicious day, will we hail thine annual return, and offer upon thine altar, the tribute of thanksgiving and joy!

BUT of all former Anniversaries which have

attracted the attention of Americans, that of the present year furnishes perhaps the most abundant sources of congratulation and reflection. Since our last, we have seen the completion of a *Century*, which for the importance of its events, the magnitude of its *Revolutions*, and the splendor of the scenes, which it has exhibited, stands entirely without a parallel in the history of Man ; and we have now entered upon another, which as far as human foresight can discover, opens upon us, pregnant with events equally interesting and crowded with scenes equally splendid. Since our last too, we have witnessed the close of an Administration in our national affairs, upon whose merits, the great body of their countrymen have already made up their final awards ;—and we have lived to see the commencement of another, which we fondly hope will heal the wounds of a bleeding Country, and be marked by future ages, as an era peculiarly propitious to the cause of civil Liberty.

A BRIEF retrospect of the past, a summary view of the present, and a conjectural sketch of the future prospects of civil society, more especially as it regards the fortunes of our own Country, invites therefore at this time a few moments of your attention.

THE annals of the world certainly do not afford a more eventful and instructive period, than that which has been presented to the view of those, who have lived to see the close of the eighteenth, and the commencement of the nineteenth Centuries. It is true that those who have for a long time partaken in the busy and momentous transactions which this epoch has exhibited, become gradually unconscious of the magnificent events which are passing in quick succession before them, and in a manner dead to those great sensations which they are calculated to inspire. When the ardent and patriotic mind reviews in his closet the annals of anti-

