

AN
ORATION,
PRONOUNCED
JULY 4th, 1808.
BEFORE THE
INHABITANTS OF NEW-BEDFORD,
IN COMMEMORATION OF THE
THIRTY-SECOND ANNIVERSARY
OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

BY JOSEPH BENNETT, A. B.

Difficile est proprie communia dicere.
Publica materies privati juris erit, si
Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
Interpres ; nec desilies imitator in arctum
Unde pedem proferre pudor vetet aut operis lex.

HORACE.

NEW-BEDFORD :
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1808.

NEW-BEDFORD, 4th JULY, 1868.

SIR,

AT the request of the Company who partook of the Public Dinner, provided by Mr. NELSON, and who heard your patriotic Oration, delivered this day; we now solicit of you a copy for the press.

BENJA. LINCOLN,
SAMUEL BONNEY,
HAYDON COGGESHALL.

MR. JOSEPH BENNETT.

NEW-BEDFORD, 4th JULY, 1868.

GENTLEMEN,

HOWEVER gratifying to my feelings this unequivocal mark of the approbation of my Fellow-Citizens may be; yet, be assured, there is nothing but the manifest propriety of submission of *private* to *public* opinion, which would have warranted me to grant a copy of the very imperfect composition delivered before them this day.

With sentiments of respect,

I am, Gentlemen,

Your very humble Servant,

JOSEPH BENNETT.

COL. BENJA. LINCOLN,
Capt. SAMUEL BONNEY,
MR. HAYDON COGGESHALL,

} Committee in behalf
of the Town.



Jonaⁿ. Swift.

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ORATION.

SUCH is the nature of the mind of man, that it is never weary of contemplations upon scenes that are past. Active, persevering, and inquisitive, it extends its eye throughout the whole range of animate and inanimate being, and fixes its attention upon every object which it meets. Nothing is of too little importance to elude the vigilance of its ken. Necessarily eager in its pursuit after general information, it is desirous of reviewing the actions of the bad as well as the good ; of minutely examining the long and sometimes almost imperceptible concatenation of events, which from small beginnings has exalted a nation to a conspicuous and even enviable rank ; and which, on the contrary, with causes alike obscure and unintelligible, has gradually reduced it from the pinnacle of glory to the lowest pitch of degradation and disgrace. The character of the bold and audacious Roman Conspirator, although in the annals of history “damn’d to everlasting fame,” is equally the object of remembrance with that of the illustrious personage, whose perspicacity foresaw, and whose wisdom finally averted the shafts of devastation and ruin which had been aimed at the very vitals of the commonwealth. But while an impartial posterity with one hand has been framing an immortal chaplet of amaranth and laurel to encircle the deeds of her darling CICERO, with the other, she has at the same time been preparing a wreath of the cypress, to consign to their native darkness, the deadly machinations of CATALINE. In reading the story of the fate of antient Rome, we are interested with all those circumstances which led to the attainment of the greatness of that once renowned and flourishing state ; together with the various causes which at last produced her down-
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fal. At one period, we admire that inflexible integrity which human device or intrigue could never weaken ; that undaunted courage, which was ever prompt to resist the encroachments of an enemy, and that unshaken patriotism, which no bribery could ever tempt to barter a country's for a private good ; at another, we are compelled to commiserate, rather than despise the unhappy condition of a people, rendered weak and effeminate by the introduction of idleness, luxury and voluptuousness.

From the first dawning of refinement and civilization, which began to gleam forth from the regions of darkness and gloom, through the period of a long succession of years down to the present time, it has ever been the usage of nations, to consecrate by a tribute of panegyric and praise, those actions, or those events, which from their importance, they considered as meriting so distinguished an honor. Soon after the establishment of the Egyptian monarchy, it became a custom, sanctioned by universal suffrage, to pronounce a malediction upon such of their Kings, as during their reign had been guilty of any opprobrious act, as well as a eulogium upon all who had deserved well of their country. The states of antient Greece, were too well convinced of the necessity of praise, as an incentive to honest ambition, to suffer any noble exploit or achievement of their countrymen to lie buried in the cold grave of neglect.

What then, my fellow-citizens, should be our sensations, when we are about to assemble around the festive board of *American Independence* ; an Independence, which has cost our beloved country some of the dearest, and the sweetest blood, that ever flowed in the veins of mortals ; an Independence, obtained not by that thirst of rule, which labors by means unjust and wicked, merely to extend the boundaries of territory ; but by that spirit of pride and magnanimity, inherent in the nature of man, which disdains to be trodden on by the foot of insolence and barbarity,

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an Independence, in fine, sanctioned not merely by the dim notions of justice and natural right, which belong to the lot of frail humanity, but even ratified by the eternal laws of the Deity himself? Shall we not pause awhile to pay the debt of gratitude, due to those disinterested souls, who fought the battles of our freedom? Shall we not “burst the carments” of the tombs, which contain the ashes of our WARREN and our MONTGOMERY, and be instructed once more in the lessons of virtue?—Shame to the little soul, that on this day can suffer the cold and phlegmatic feelings of the partizan to poison the horn of joy, which should pervade the whole heart of every American Citizen! Let us for a moment learn to love our country, rather than our party; let us cherish the liberality of patriotism, rather than the prejudices of faction; let us cordially adopt the strong and energetic language of our President, and say, “we are all Republicans; we are all Federalists.”

Although the flowers that once bedecked and adorned the Garden, in which we are now about to enter, have been so long and so frequently gathered by the hand of taste and imagination, that there are now remaining only a few scattering and solitary plants, which have escaped the reaper’s sickle; still I shall consider myself as having faithfully fulfilled the duty allotted me, if by a little embellishment of a trite and almost threadbare theme, I am just able to prevent the imputation of “weary, stale, flat and unprofitable.” If our subject is no longer crowned with garlands of hyacinth and roses; it may still afford a few sprigs of the tulip; if it no longer breathes the fragrance of the ambrosia, it may yet continue to distil some of the sweets of the woodbine.

Of the anxieties, the struggles and calamities, which terminated in the establishment of our freedom, you have all been told the interesting story; you have all heard of the wretchedness of parents, the wailings of wives, and the tears of orphans. Yes, I can behold many, that compose
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this very audience, who have not only *heard*, but have *seen*; who have not only heard the narrative of that lamentable tragedy, as depicted by the dull and chilly pencil of the historian, but have seen the bloody dagger of an implacable foe pointed at the breasts of their countrymen. To you, then, I would appeal, and ask, what was it that excited the bold and ardent spirit of enterprize and exertion, which at that period formed so distinguished a part of the American character? Was it not something like that greatness of soul, which scorns the groveling and miser-like employment of consulting only to gratify the cravings of self-interest? Was it not, that you might deliver to your posterity a country blest with every favor which the munificent hand of Heaven ever bestowed upon a nation? Your recollection has already anticipated me, and answered, *yes*.

My fellow-citizens! a liberty thus dearly bought, is worth the preserving. When our venerable fathers were presenting the invaders of American freedom with a breast, firm and immoveable as the Atlantean Mount, and an arm, dreadful as the thunderbolts of Jupiter, surely they did not think their children would prove themselves unworthy of such Sires; surely, they did not think their fortitude and bravery would in their descendants ever degenerate into that dwarfish and lilliputian pusillanimity, which fears to own its country. Let us not disappoint their generous expectations; let us catch something of the ardor of patriotic feeling, which the return of this Anniversary naturally inspires; and swear, that if ever the time shall come, which shall demand the united efforts of the valiant and the brave, the last gasp of our expiring souls shall breathe forth success to the cause of America.

In order to the maintenance of the principles of our Constitution, as they have been handed down from our Fathers, pure, untarnished, and unimpaired, a diffusion of political information throughout the various classes of society,

society, is indispensibly necessary. The nature of all elective government is such, that the majority of wills, which compose the nation, must constitute the election of the officers of that government. Without this, the rancour of prejudice and party-spirit, would obstruct every laudable effort of the wise and the good, and would sometimes exalt to the chair of administration, those who have not one single quality to recommend them, except a supreme ignorance of the duties they are about to perform. This idea was wisely recognized, and engrafted into the excellent Constitution, under which we have the happiness to live. How important is it, therefore, that the minds of the people should be instructed in some of the general principles of civil polity, that they may be able to decide with accuracy and nice discrimination upon the qualifications of such of their fellow-citizens as they are about to make choice of to preside in their councils?—I am well aware, the extreme necessity of this measure has been in some degree superseded, by the exertions of many who have felt a *christian-like* compassion for the pitiful condition of their short-sighted brethren, and have *generously* undertaken to conduct them from the abyss of darkness, in which they had fallen, to the regions of marvellous light. But who are these enviable characters, that are disclosing to the world such eminent examples of generosity and disinterestedness? Are they to be found among those who have first informed themselves, and consequently capable of instructing others? Are they persons who have long accustomed themselves to a minute investigation of the nature of men and things? Are they men of that expansion and liberality of thought, that is capable of drawing proper conclusions upon great and important subjects? Or are they of that class of vain and aspiring demagogues, who are seeking not their country's good, but only to gorge the maw of their own voracious appetites with a sumptuous entertainment of *loaves and fishes*? It could not have been the design of the wise and independent framers of our Constitution, that the invaluable right of suffrage, which
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belongs equally to every citizen of the United States, should ever be controuled by the wheedling artifices of *Mountebanks* and *Mob-leaders*; and if ever the period shall arrive, (which may the gracious God of Heaven forbid!) when this venerable and stupendous fabric shall lie mouldering in dust and ashes, "there needs no ghost" "come from the grave to tell us" that the want of general information will be one of the principal causes, which will hasten the mighty ruin.

Another circumstance, which imperceptibly increases the power, the happiness and the glory of a nation, is the encouragement of the sciences and the liberal and mechanic arts. Here is a safeguard to the prosperity of America, like that of the Cherubim and the Flaming Sword, that defended the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. It is this, that has maintained the authority and influence of the *little Island of Britain*, while princes and kings of Continental Europe have been hurled headlong from the summit of power, and it is this which is even now protecting her from the ravages of *that Monster*, whose greedy and tyger-like jaws are still yawning to drink in the innocent blood of the fairest portions of the universe. Before the reign of the celebrated CZAR of Muscovy, it had long been a desideratum with political speculatists, whether the cultivation of the arts and sciences augmented or diminished the power of an absolute government. The problem however was no longer insolvable, and it began to be found, that a blind and clouded submission on the part of the subject was not always a sure passport to Executive influence. When he ascended the throne he found his dominions in a weak, enervated and enfeebled condition, his subjects scarcely emerged from the labyrinths of barbarism and superstition; sometimes employed in thundering out counterblasts upon the impiety of the importation of tobacco, and sometimes upon the equal impiety of shaving the beard. By his attention to the various arts of mechanism and literature he

was in a short time able to cope with one of the most powerful Sovereigns of Europe, and the battle of Pultowa will stand an everlasting monument of the necessity of refinement to produce a truly brave and warlike people.

In enumerating those advantages, which belong almost exclusively to the American nation, there is one, which from its peculiar importance cannot be passed over in silence: I mean the Trial by Jury. As long as life, reputation and personal liberty shall remain dear to mankind this fountain of justice, like the mysteries of the Bona Dea, should be held sacred and inviolable. Here the Criminal may behold the forms of legal investigation without dreading the warpings of prejudice or the influence of personal malignity. Here is no Court of Star-Chamber to ruffle the smooth and placid stream of juridical decision, and no Holy Inquisition to condemn an innocent citizen without being heard. In vain should we look for security of person and property; in vain should we call for our right to distributive justice, were we deprived of this inestimable blessing. It is the very basis of individual protection, and the only barrier to the insidious encroachments of villany and fraud. What then shall we think of the clamours of discontentment and opposition, which are continually poured forth against the cool and regular deliberations of the judicial department of our government? Why is it, that the outrageous voice of calumny and detraction is no longer silenced by an impartial Trial by Country? Is it not much to be feared, that this blessed Instrument, which for so many years has been employed in fixing the boundaries of justice between man and man, is at length arrived to its acme, and with that fatality which seems to behold with an eye of envy every institution of importance is now approaching to its dissolution?—— My fellow-citizens! let us not endeavour to hasten its fall! let us not be over-anxious to destroy the land-marks, “that our Fathers have set”! Let us not be allured from the path of duty by the siren charms of Innovation! We

have seen, that although at first view her enticements may captivate "the mind of desultory man," they not unfrequently terminate their career of glory by inflicting a wound, deadly as the sting of the adder or the bite of the serpent. Think of the disastrous state of things in England, which immediately succeeded the beheading of Charles the First! Or to bring an example within your own recollection, infinitely more in point, think for a moment upon the horrors attendant upon the late Revolution in France! Let us be taught wisdom from the mistakes of others. When called upon to exercise your elective privileges be not deceived by the blandishments and fair promises of the sly and intriguing Flatterer. Examine for yourselves, and be careful to support those, and those alone, who are men of understanding and integrity, eminently distinguished for their love of our country and veneration for her Institutions; Those, "who fear God, and hate covetousness; who are a terror to evil doers, and a praise and encouragement, unto such as do well." So shall we still continue to maintain our standing, as a great and powerful nation; so shall we be able to preserve harmony at home and influence abroad; and so shall we transmit to our Posterity a precious and goodly heritage, who "will rise up and call us blessed."

To the FAIR PART of this Audience, it is needless for me to say, how much they are interested in the blessings, which this Day calls to mind. It is only in the calm hours of peace and tranquility, that female amiableness is permitted to expand its buds. It is the appearance of war with all his Tartarean train of Concomitants, that stifles the growth of every thing mild and gentle and charming, and nips the root of the refined sensibilities of the heart. It is then that "even beauty at whose bright glance the generous lion stands in softened gaze" can no longer assert her empire and must yield the palm to that grimness of visage, which, like Milton's Death can best *grin horribly a ghastly smile*. After shuddering at the narrative of the dreary catalogue
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of Oriental barbarities, that has reduced Woman to a grade scarcely removed from the manacles of actual servitude, we turn with a pleasing rapture to view a land of finer feelings, where she is once more suffered to preserve her native dignity ; where *the last best Gift of heaven* is once more allowed to exhibit her original excellence. In America the influence of Female Worth is too conspicuous not to be universally perceived ; and too beneficial in its effects not to be universally admired. Convinced, as you are, of the infinite importance of correctness of demeanour you will not mistake the true object of your ambition. It is not the bold and artful and masculine Sempronia, whose name is remembered with emotions of esteem, but the lovely Lucretia, mild as the breath of Spring and sweet as the honey of Hybla. We could not wish to behold you in the character of modern Joans of Arc, kindling the firebrands of war and desolation ; nor could we willingly see you armed with any breastplate, but the breastplate of modesty, or any helmet, but the helmet of virtue.

To you, Gentlemen,* in fine we commit the keeping of the liberty and the national honor of our beloved country. The charge is important and awful, and if there be any thing on earth, which demands your scrutinizing attention, it is this. If by the direful claron of War you are ever summoned to assemble in the Field of Mars, what is there capable of giving a spur to ambition, if it be not the consideration, that your wives, your country, in fine your very hearths are at stake ? On this occasion let your strength be more than mortal power ; let it be an emanation, proceeding directly from the inspiration of God.

From that spirit of philanthropy, which shines so eminent among those amiable qualities, that form the characteristic of the American Soldier, it will be superfluous to observe, how necessary it is, that you should learn mercy, as well as valor, and that you should never suffer

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* *The Gentlemen of the Militia.*

the madness of infuriated passion to stifle the compunctious visitings of conscience. However ingeniously the casuist may have exerted his sophistical powers to demonstrate the right and the justice of enslaving a vanquished foe, it is hoped, we are yet too virtuous to adopt, and too benevolent to execute the horrid principle. The justest praise, that ever was bestowed on Roman greatness, was that, which extolled their tenderness towards their enemies, and if there be any species of wickedness, in which the powers of Barbary have particularly excelled, it is that of their inhumanity. To us it seems peculiarly to belong to cherish this divine principle of benevolence. We are as yet free from that brood of national vices, which when recommended by universality of approbation and nourished by the hand of time in a manner almost unperceived or unthought of, flourish and multiply, until at last they have drowned the feeble efforts of those, who have endeavoured to arrest their progress. We are a people a little too young and of too much simplicity to worship vice, because it has been applauded by age or sanctioned by intelligence. We do not covet that false glare of national respect, which is raised on the basis of the sufferings of our fellow-creatures. We are content to maintain a character regulated by the rigor of moral rules, and are willing to resign to others the *happy* privilege of growing *great* by first growing *corrupt*. May we long continue to cultivate the seeds of honor and integrity, which have been so deeply implanted in our breasts, and let it not be enrolled on the pages of the historian of future times, that the people of America began to be *rotten before they were ripe*.

When assailed by foreign or internal force, we shall look to you, Gentlemen, and call for your assistance. We shall expect you to acquit yourselves, like freemen, like soldiers, like men. You have an example before your eyes worthy of being followed. Imitate then the virtues of WASHINGTON, your once illustrious Leader, who is now gone to receive the rewards of the good and faithful servant of God.

God. Forgive it, Sainted Shade, if I trespass on thine ashes ; but who can think of American Independence, and not think of thee ! Truly thou art very dear to us, and while memory holds a seat in our souls, wilt be remembered with gratitude. We know thou lovedst thy Country ; for we have seen thy patriotism ; we know thou wert benevolent ; for we have felt thy kindness ; we know, thou wert good ; for who ever heard evil of thee !

“ Oh, while along the stream of time, thy name
 “ Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame ;
 “ Say, shall *our little bark** attendant sail,
 “ Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale ?”

* *Alluding to the Artillery Company, to which the Author belongs.*

ODE TO LIBERTY.

COMMEMORATIVE OF THE
THIRTY-SECOND ANNIVERSARY
OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

CELEBRATED AT NEW-BEDFORD,
FOURTH OF JULY, 1808.

.....
By ELIHU DOTY,
.....

Tune—"Ode to Science."

DAUGHTERS and Sons of patriot Sires,
Attend the theme the muse inspires !
A Theme that calls forth all her fires,
 Joyful to greet this Annual Day :
The Day, that gave an Empire birth,
Let it resound through the whole Earth,
Sacred to freedom and to mirth,
 And to thy sons, America !

CHORUS.

*Hail Liberty, thou Good Supreme !
The Wiseman's wish, the Patriot's theme !
On us in broad effulgence beam ;
 With thy mild spirit fill our hearts !
From Eastern nations, plunged in war,
Thou to the Western world afar
Hast come ; th' attendants on thy car
 Are Science, Virtue, and the Arts.*

Heroes of Seventy-Six ! we claim
Th' immortal honors of your fame,
Our breasts with glory to inflame,
 And urge us on to virtuous deeds :

Then

Then shall no foe our land invade,
 Or, impious, dare the soil to tread,
 "That's sacred by your relics made,"
 The tyrant, who attempts it, bleeds.
Hail Liberty, &c.

'Twas Freedom made the desert smile,
 And sweeten'd our forefathers' toil ;
 They deeply planted in our soil
 The TREE we celebrate this day :
 Then let us, heart and hand, oppose
 All foreign or domestic foes,
 That dare by art, or dare by blows,
 To blight, or lop, a branch away.
Hail Liberty, &c.

The fairest tree the groves among,
 Firm may it stand, and flourish long,
 The envied theme of future song ;
 While nations in its praise combine.
 Now we our annual offerings bring,
 Let joy through all our temples ring !
 Let us with grateful rapture sing,
 And the whole Earth in chorus join !
Hail Liberty, &c.

Let distant lands the echoes hear ;
 'Th' oppressed smile, th' oppressor fear,
 While we forever hold thee dear,
 Thee, Liberty, thou Sovereign Good !
 Thou didst to us thy name reveal ;
 We own thy power, thy influence feel ;
 Behold us at thy altar kneel
 To seal the contract with our blood !
Hail Liberty, &c.