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Mann, James, 1759-1832.

An Oration, Pronounced July 4, 1801.

Wrentham, [Mass.], Heaton, 1801. 20 pp.

MWA copy.

by the

AN
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED

JULY 4, 1801.

AT THE REQUEST OF A NUMBER OF THE
INHABITANTS OF

WRENTHAM;

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNI-
VERSARY OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

——
BY DOCTOR JAMES MANN.



WRENTHAM,
PRINTED BY NATHANIEL HEATON, JUN.

1801.

VOICE OF THE MEETING.

At a meeting of a number of the inhabitants of the towns of Wrentham, Medfield, and Franklin, at Whitney's Hall in Wrentham 4th day of July A. D. 1801.

ON motion, Voted that Major BERIAH BRASTOW, Doctor JAMES GERALD, and Major MOSES KNAPP be, and hereby are chosen a committee to wait upon Doctor JAMES MANN, and thank him for his well adapted ORATION this day delivered at their request, upon the anniversary of the INDEPENDENCE of the UNITED STATES of AMERICA; and to request of him a copy for the press.

*Attest JAIRUS WARE Clerk of
the Meeting.*



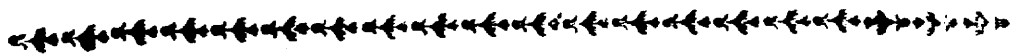
GENTLEMEN,

THE flattering testimony of the approbation of the gentlemen, at whose request I pronounced the Oration, after a very short notice, is a sufficient inducement for me, to comply with their request; sensible at the same time that their candor will apologize for all its imperfections. With sentiment of respect

I am your very
obedient servant

JAMES MANN.

To Maj. BERIAH BRASTOW. }
Doct. JAMES GERALD. } *Committee.*
Maj. MOSES KNAPP. }



AN
O R A T I O N .



CITIZENS and TOWNSMEN,

YOU are convened this day, neither to commemorate the birth, nor the coronation of a prince, nor of a king. The capricious, or cruel tyrant has no charms to subdue your passions, to his control. For you realize that you are men, exalted superior to that servile fear, which, the base sycophants of crowned heads express, at their master's frowns.

The fascinating splendors of a brilliant court, chain you not to the footstool of an imperious lord. You do not submissively kiss the dust, upon which he scornfully treads.

Sole possessors of the soil, which you cultivate, you enjoy unmolested, and in tranquility, the produce of your farms; for you do not meanly tremble, lest either the fruits of your laborious hands, or ever a tenth of your frugal earnings, should be wrested from you, to gorge the pampered ecclesiastic, or glut the coffers of insatiate civilian lords.

Fortunately you are destitute of all those orders of men, privileged by birth, to riot upon the hard-earned savings of the industrious citizens.

You are not subjected to be forcibly dragged, from your peaceable retirements, from within your own vineyards, and from under your own figtrees, to take up arms to gratify the desires, of an ambitious monarch.

You possess in complete security, the riches, which your lands, in beautiful profusion, are annually repaying you for your toils, while in their cultivation.

Such are a few of the blessings, which, you now experience, produced by that glorious revolution, which, you this day celebrate.

But, CITIZENS, *this* is not the natal day merely of your own independence. Nations yet in servitude and bondage, will hail *this*, as their birth of freedom, and independence. Even nations, where the American emancipation from oppression, is not as yet known, will at some future period, have abundant reason to join with you, in congratulations of joy, upon this auspicious day.

It possibly may be expected by my audience, that we should revert to those causes, which, through a long series of events, have finally led the United States of America, to that important crisis, when, they were declared free, and independent.

Upon your account, aged citizens! who have taken a conspicuous part, in the arduous, and haz-

ardous conflict, either in person, or by your influence, or by your property, it is quite unnecessary, to rehearse them in detail; while the recent annals of your country, are amply copious, and explicit for the information of those, who are too young, to have been at the time of your celebrated revolution, upon the theatre of action.

For these reasons, as well as on account of the brevity of our time, we shall only observe, that the *privileged orders of Great-Britain*, in whose hands the reins of government are always held, become jealous, and feared, lest those principles of *liberty, independence, and equality*, which had at first been implanted in AMERICA, by your enterprizing progenitors, should increase, so as to grow formidable, if not dangerous, to arbitrary systems.

It was readily conceived by the *British court*, that in order to subjugate your spirits to their wills, it was only necessary, to divest you of your property; so that while depriving you of your liberties, they would grasp the whole income of the American World; from which they had, in consequence of your unexampled, and rapid increase of population, calculated a large increase to their revenue. How frequent it is, that those events, upon earth, which are of the most importance to mankind, are often caused by the most trifling, sometimes by the vilest intentions of men!

But these measures of *that infatuated court*, artfully conceived, and unwisely adopted, to be carried into execution by force of arms, excited a resistance which confounded their wisest politicians, a resistance, which repelled eventually their hostile armies, and a resistance, which by its consequences, astonished, at the time, the world of mankind, and has since caused the globe to tremble to its center.

Hence, the effects of this resistance did not cease in America.—Nations, who were coadjutors in the American revolution, and nations, who were mere spectators of the sanguinary contest, which the UNITED STATES supported, having caught the infectious principles, which were the basis of the American revolution, cherished them, and adopted them, as their own. While these principles having thus extended themselves far and wide, do, at this very moment, continue to prevail, to the awful destruction of tyranic power, and its base supporters.

But, while you have cause to rejoice at the downfall of tyranny, and at the dawn of rational liberty, when the mind enveloped no longer in clouds of error, is free to expand itself, and uncontrolled by civil, or ecclesiastical subordination, may open its views, into the regions of speculation, and investigation, far beyond mean, contracted considerations, you should lament that degraded state of savage, and barbarous degeneracy, which still exists within

the breasts of men, and, which is the occasion of so much blood-shed and slaughter.

Although crimson rivulets have been made to flow in the support of the cause of humanity; yet it is to those miscreants only, who have driven men to this bloody extremity, you are to look for the source of all this calamity; while, on account of their criminal outrages committed against nature, they finally will perish by their own indiscreet measures.

Connected with your independence, is that ever memorable DECLARATION OF RIGHTS, which announces all men to be equal, and free. It has its foundation in truth, and reason, not in vague and speculative opinion. Its principles were first engrafted into the nature of man, and after being lost, in consequence of his depravity, were again promulgated with the gospel of Christ. It has since been published for your benefit, and the happiness of mankind.

An annual renovation of these principles will serve as a monitor to your memories. This declaration of the rights of men, which cannot be too much celebrated, has ever since its publication, been viewed by republicans, as the great charter of the human race; and, while it contains the political creed of freemen, it should be constantly retained in their hearts; it should be taught to youth, as

a lesson of lasting importance; even the infants should be made to lisp it, from their tongues; while its principles imbibed with their mother's milk, will durably impress their tender minds, not to be effaced; except with the loss of life, and with which, than these principles, they will sooner part. Even every act authorized by whatever name, ennobled or not, or however dignified to divert the citizens of these their inestimable privileges, will be viewed not only *unjust* but *oppressive* and *hostile*.

Mankind prone to idleness, and too indolent to think for themselves, have in times past, received their instruction, civil and ecclesiastical, from those who interested themselves, to keep their pupils subject to ignorance, and superstition. Passive obedience to superior authority, whether just, or unjust, and nonresistance to civil, and ecclesiastic laws, whether right, or wrong, have been the themes, upon which, the privileged orders, with indefatigable zeal have harped.

But, such are not the precepts taught by our holy religion. From the divine instructions of the LORD, we have the genuine principles of republicanism clearly opened to us. He himself has set us for our imitation, precious examples of liberty, and equality.

The debasement of the self-exalted, and the exaltation of the meek and humble are, every where

announced, in that sacred volume, which should be the rule, and guide of our faith, and practice.

Is it not then incontrovertably evident, that exclusive privileges belong to no class, or orders of men? Public offices of course, are the sole property of the nation, and they themselves only have a just right to dispose of them. What are salaries, but mere rewards adequate to the labors, and services done the public? While he, who is the most faithful servant, is the only one deserving of the future confidence of the people. When a citizen is invested with authority, to act; it is neither from himself, nor for himself that he officiates. The law must govern his administration, and direct his measures, not whim, caprice, and passion. The law is the voice of the nation, and that man, whether in office, or out of office, who will not obey its mandates, will, in hours of cool reflection, be esteemed an enemy to the republic, a traitor, or an usurper.

The historic pages of the American revolution are replete with instruction, and wisdom, as well as outrage and violence. From them, may be collected a knowledge, not only of ourselves, but of men. From them, may be learnt, in what manner, republicans, with a tone, *philosophical, dignified, and manly*, addressed the usurpers of their rights, and with what language, fraught with insolent abuse

