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Mumford, Paul M.

**An Oration, Spoken in the Second Baptist Meeting-
House.**

Newport, [R. I.], Farnsworth, 1801. 23 pp.

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ETHICAL SOCIETY, 3 F...
AN
July 1801

ORATION,

SPOKEN IN THE

SECOND BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE,

AT NEWPORT,

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1801,

PURSUANT TO A VOTE OF THE TOWN.

By PAUL M. MUMFORD.

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F1 11

How does the lustre of our Fathers actions,
Through the dark cloud of ill that cover'd them,
Break out and burn with more triumphant brightness.

NEWPORT
PRINTED BY OLIVER FARNSWORTH
M, DCCC, I

Newport, July 6th, 1801.

DEAR SIR,

THE Committee, appointed by the Honorable Town-Council, do, as directed, present you their thanks, in behalf of the Citizens of Newport, for the excellent ORATION which you delivered, in compliance with their wishes, on the 4th instant, the Anniversary of American Independence; and request of you a Copy of the same for the Press.

We are,

With sentiments of unfeigned esteem,

Your's, &c.

WILLIAM DENNIS,

JOHN CAHOONE,

DAVID MELVILL, jun. } Committee

PAUL M. MUMFORD, Esq.

GENTLEMEN,

IF any thing can give value to my life, or has the power of endearing it to me, it is the favor with which my fellow-citizens "have been pleased to look towards me." I say *favor*: I consider it as such; because it involves a token of their *esteem*, to me the most valuable of worldly treasures. To the request of the Honorable Council, which as their Committee, you communicate, I cordially accede; believing it was intended as a *tribute to sincerity*. Though the sentiments which I had the honor of pronouncing at the late Anniversary of our National Independence, were not contemplated as ever to reach the Press; yet it would be impossible for me to resist such a compliment, from so venerable a source, and so grateful to my feelings. Forgetful of the many imperfections which their appearance in print may betray, they are humbly submitted.

Accept, I pray you, for yourselves, and those in whose behalf you appear, the unfeigned expression of my acknowledgements.

PAUL M. MUMFORD.

Newport, 6th July, 1801.

ANNIVERSARY ORATION, &c.

Friends and Fellow-Citizens,

IN compliance with your will, I rise the humble echo of sentiments to which the day is dedicated; and which, like the zephyrs of the morning, dilate in innocent pleasure, diffusing freshness, and fragrance. As yonder sun in his Eastern height, beams light and hilarity through the chambers of night, and wakes the repose of their slumbering tenants; so the invigorating influence of the present anniversary, as recorded in the annals of our Country, in its regular return, revives the feelings and the principles, by which we claim to be Americans. It is esteemed a prerogative, to those who are nobly attached to social duty, more pre-eminently glorious than could be derived from royal patents, that in the revolving circle of time we are annually presented with a day, signalized by the virtues of our Fathers, and hallowed by the genius of *Liberty*; on which the nobler faculties take the lead, expanding o'er the human race, as one extended family, and in generous pleasure mark the improvements of their condition.

WE are assembled, fellow-citizens, to commemorate our *Independence*, as a *Nation*, by which a magnanimous people were advanced from

bondage. The review, f₁ said as it is, involves many melancholy traits occasioned by an arduous and bloody Revolution, through which it was secured. The gloomy tints of devoted suffering, glance on the darkened mirror of remembrance, and create a flow of emotions, solemn and serene—which, mingling with a consciousness of rectitude, and the exalted sensations of eventual victory, constitute an enjoyment worthy of human nature, and acceptable to its author. Though there are many, perhaps, here present, who have mourned the fate of a fond father, a beloved brother, or more tender friend, swept from the catalogue of existence by the unprincipled arm of despotism; though the tears of sorrow and sympathy have not yet forgotten to flow at the recollection;—there is comfort in the reflection, that they were *voluntary* sacrifices in defence of their Country, and the rights of mankind; that their names are endeared to posterity, and embalmed in gratitude and esteem; that their blessed spirits are reclining in the bright portals of celestial bliss, and smile in conscious security, that the cause, for which they suffered, is established, and that the vengeance of tyrants can no longer reach them.

SUBMITTING, then, to the Supreme disposer of events, and satisfied that his dispensations, whatever appearance they may wear to mortal eye, are wisely ordained to promote the most substantial good of men, let us attempt to unfold a theme the most illustrious and interesting, which the history of Nations affords.

It ranks among the number of our misfortunes, fellow-citizens, that an era the most auspicious to Liberty ; that the birth day of a Nation ; on which millions of men emerged from an abject state of Colonial depression, and assumed the majestic attitude of continental independence : It ranks, I say, among the number of our misfortunes, that so auspicious an event ; the anniversary of our political existence ; the moments of our fondest hopes, are often seized upon, and monopolized by the rapacity of factious impostors, and prostituted to abandoned purposes. It has too often been our lot, when invited to attend the celebration of this day, to have our principles arraigned, and our feelings insulted, by the lofty impertinence of some crouching satellite of satellites, whose canine genius, set on by political Nimrods, in obsequious celerity, yelps for the immolation of virtue, and the extinction of right.——

“—— all is false and hollow ; though the tongue
Drops manna, and can make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels :——”

I am warranted in these observations, by recent examples, which evince their truth ; and being truths which relate to the object of the present assemblage, it has become my duty to make them ; a duty which I shall pursue in its strictness.

An imperfect organization of a few of the facts which relate to the commencement, and the progress of these States ; together with a few hints of the different principles, by the collision of which, the event we celebrate was produced

(and by the continuation of which, we have politically been "born again" into a new, and regenerated life) hastily thrown together, without symmetry or grace, will comprise the present report. And I regret that want of time, or ability, precludes me from affording one better adapted to the refinements of sentiment and literary taste.

There was a time, when America was without a name, and her shores were solitary, and dismal : When her best soil gave its substance to unfruitful trees ; and the fairest flowers of the valley "wasted their fragrance in the desert air." It was set apart in the original decrees of destiny as the refuge of *liberty*. Its discovery was attended with many singular events, and excited many speculations. The prowling monster of oppression, that roamed the eastern world, reared up its haggard form, and stretching its baleful eyes, surveyed in grim concern, the looming continent. The oppressed, who had been held in shackles of slavery, burst them asunder, and rose, in confidence and courage, to redeem their rights and their existence. Always consistent in zeal for domination, many attempts by the crown of England were made to people it ; but in vain. In vain were men embarked under the influence and patronage of a king ! They fell victims to disaster, and disease. The corrupt motives, by which the impulse that brought them was communicated, imparted a bane that sunk them in the dust. No possible adjustment of flesh and blood, in human composition, could

