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Paine, Charles, 1775-1810.

An Oration, Pronounced July 4, 1801.

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MWA copy.

A N
O R A T I O N,

PRONOUNCED

July 4, 1801,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE

INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF

BOSTON,

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF

American Independence.

BY CHARLES PAINE, Esq.

Heu Pietas ! heu Prisca Fides ! invictaque bello
Dextera !

VIRGIL.

Dii probos mores docili juventæ,
Dii senectuti placidæ quietem,
Liberæ Genti date rem, prolemque,
Et decus omne.

CARMEN SECULARE,

BOSTON :
MANNING & LORING, NO. 2, CORNHILL.

Vote of the Town.

At a Meeting of the Freeholders and other Inhabitants of the Town of *Boston*, duly qualified and legally warned in public Town-Meeting, assembled at *Faneuil-Hall*, the 4th day of July, A. D. 1801 :

On motion, *Voted*, That the Selectmen be, and hereby are appointed a Committee to wait on CHARLES PAINE, Esq. in the name of the Town, and thank him for the elegant and spirited ORATION, this day delivered by him, at the request of the Town, upon the Anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America ; in which, according to the Institution of the Town, he considered the feelings, manners, and principles, which led to that great National Event ; and to request of him a copy for the press.

Attest. WILLIAM COOPER, *Town-Clerk.*

BOSTON, JULY 4, 1801.

GENTLEMEN,

IN complying with your request, to which custom has given the solemnity of a claim, I trust my imperfect performance will find an apology in the purity of my intentions.

I am, with great respect,
Gentlemen,

Your very obedient servant,

CHARLES PAINE.

The Selectmen of Boston.



Oration.



NATIONAL sentiment, although frequently the result of circumstances, is yet the subject of education. Bold and irritable, it is pliant to the touch of eloquence ; resolute and untractable, it yields to the discipline of reason. In periods of revolution it incurs the crisis of its susceptibility and caprice. It is then we behold it in its most unfavourable aspect. Roused at every alarm, no opiate is strong enough to compose it ; existing only in its own change, it scarcely outlives the definition of its character. Such, however, perilous and volatile as it is, becomes the magical director, which guides the master wire of the cabinet in all countries, where the people claim a portion of the right of legislation. It demands respect ; for its office, though despotic, is lawful : It merits cultivation ; for its errors, though fatal, are involuntary. In all popular governments it is also the principal instrument by which the administration acquires energy, and one of the great functions by which law strengthens its authority. In moments of political hazard, created by foreign aggression, with confi-

dence we resort to its honest zeal, to rally the phalanx of the passions, and to subsidize the pride of man in the defence of his injured country. But in seasons of civil serenity, though we may suspect their plausible treachery, the tone of national temper is no longer to be raised by appeals to the popular sensibility. It is then our duty to convince, not to inflame. Surrounded by circumstances of so peculiar a nature, the return of this auspicious anniversary, while it inspires our enthusiasm and revives our gratitude, arrests us amid this war of sentiment, invites us to reflection, and leads us back to principle. It points us to a time, when we were "all brethren and all Americans," in truth and in honour, without being seduced into the affinity by the necromancy of words.

AMERICANS ! to this period let us return for a moment ; and while we trace back our footsteps to the goal from which we have started, we will cast a veil over the images of horror, which crowd on our retrospect, and mark with fidelity our aberrations from the path of our fathers.

THE "feelings, manners, and principles," leading to that great national epoch, which we are now assembled to commemorate, have annually been the theme of fervid orisons and heartfelt gratulations. What subject can be more animating, what more useful to an assembly of enlightened freemen ? Animating, because it inspires us with a veneration of that unimpeachable virtue, that magnanimous constancy, and that undaunted courage, which originated the settlement, which

protected the progress, which asserted the independence of America. Useful, because it teaches us those principles, upon which are founded our national dignity and happiness, and without which we can neither efficiently support nor duly estimate them.

WHAT then were those feelings, what those manners, what those principles, which gave birth to this auspicious era ? They were the independent feelings of men, who had obtained their liberty at too dear a rate to be despoiled of it but with their lives ; whose manners associated industry with integrity, and virtue with piety ; whose principles were an unbounded attachment to liberty, prescribed and sanctioned by law ; inspiring an equal hatred of tyranny and anarchy ; and uniting loyalty to their constitution of government with a determined opposition to the smallest encroachment upon their personal rights.

DRIVEN by ecclesiastical oppression from the land of their nativity, where lay inherited the relics of their departed ancestors, our venerable forefathers committed themselves to the ocean and to God, in search of some secluded residence in this then howling wilderness, where they and their posterity might enjoy those civil and religious immunities, which they had long and unsuccessfully struggled to obtain on the shores of Britain. Liberty, their cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, directed them to this her chosen seat. America was already destined in the councils of Heaven to be a great and mighty empire. This vast continent, fertile and salubrious, which

had for ages remained unvisited but by the necessitous foot of the savage, would probably at this day have been scarcely known even on the map of the world, had not its wilds been peopled by persecution and cultivated by banishment. But it had been reserved as the consecrated spot, on which should be erected the temple of liberty, when ecclesiastical bigotry and civil despotism had rendered the old world untenable by her pure spirit. In that inveterate oppression, which exiled our ancestors from the abodes of civilized man ; in that relentless vengeance, which pursued them even into these inhospitable forests ; in that fortitude and patience, which supported them amid the dangers and the hardships, which harassed and encompassed their infant settlement ; we behold the finger of Providence, pointing to the rising greatness of this western world. But in this operation of second causes, the blind calculations of human foresight were baffled and bewildered ; and even the philosophy of later ages has been astonished at the effect. From this example the oppressors of mankind might have learned, that the correct and steady virtue of principle acquires new strength from the pressure of opposition which surrounds it, and enriches its triumph by the spoils of those efforts, which are employed to defeat it.

SEPARATED from the mother country by an ocean of fearful and almost untried navigation, the Colonies pursued the object of their emigration without great interruption, until their rapid improvements, their increasing strength, and their

