
Mr. RICHARDSON's ORATION.



AN ORATION.



IF other nations mark with festive honors the natal day of an *imaginary* saint, or a *real* tyrant; if Englishmen celebrate the birth day of a monarch remarkable only for the want of those qualities, which command the admiration of mankind; if Frenchmen devote to hilarity and joy the day, that gave birth to a revolution, which, after having rolled for years the garments of their nation and of the nations around it in blood, has at length plunged them into a gulf of slavery and misery, bottomless in comparison to the one from which they emerged; with peculiar propriety may the free-born sons of Columbia celebrate the anniversary of their independence; an event, which has given them not only a rank, but respectability, among the nations of the earth; which has not only been productive of a national prosperity, unparalleled in the annals of time, but has bounded their glory with the stars. This is a day dear to our countrymen; a day, they will *ever* delight to honor; or at least, till the virtues, which now cherish their liberties, shall be lost in the vices, which breed oppression; till the noble spirit of enlightened freemen shall be sunk in the abject meannets of illiterate slaves; till to the veneration of our WASHINGTON'S memory shall succeed the adulation of a CÆSAR or CROMWELL!

Let us then, fellow citizens, join heart and hand in celebrating the ever memorable 4th of July; and, while calling to mind on this day the great events connected with it, may the TRUE SPIRIT of '76 be in the midst of us.

The love of liberty has always been the ruling passion of our nation. It was mixed at first with "the purple tide" of the founders lives, and, circulating with that tide through all their veins, has descended down through every generation of their posterity, marking every feature of our country's glorious story. May it continue thus to circulate and descend to the remotest period of time.

Oppressed and persecuted in their native country, the high indignant spirit of our fathers formed the bold design of leaving a land, where minds, as well as bodies, were chained, for regions, where freedom might be found to dwell, though her dwelling should prove to be amid wilds and wolves, or savages less hospitable than wilds and wolves! An ocean three thousand miles wide, with its winds and its waves rolled in vain between them and liberty. They performed the grand enterprize, and landed on this then uncultivated shore. Here on their first arrival they found

The wilderness "all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and providence their guide." *

Their courage and industry soon surmounted all the difficulties incident to a new settlement. The savages retired; the forests were exchanged for fields waving with richest harvests, and the dreary haunts of wild beasts for the cheerful abodes of civilized man. Increasing in wealth and population with a rapidity, which excited the astonishment of the old world, our nation flourished about a century and a half, when

* Milton's Paradise Lost, Book 12, in the end.

events, further illustrative of the attachment of our countrymen to liberty, were about to take place. England, pressed down with the enormous weight of accumulating debts, and considering the inhabitants of these states as slaves, who owed their existence and preservation to her care and protection, now began to form the unjust, tyrannical and impolitic plan of taxing this country without its consent. In 1765, the famous stamp act was accordingly passed. This was received by our citizens, as similar invasions of rights are always received by men, who, feeling their claim to freedom, are determined to be free, with unyielding opposition; and was in the year following repealed. The right of taxation, however, not being relinquished, but the same principle under a different shape being pursued, the AWFUL GENIUS OF FREEDOM arose, not with the ungovernable ferocity of the tyger to tear and devour, but with the cool, determined, persevering courage of the lion, who, disdainng to be a slave, resists the chain; and led on by the consummate warrior WASHINGTON, with the other *immortal patriots* of that *glorious period*, and aided by that kind providence, whose plans are always marching amid the tumults and confusions of a jarring world to great and important ends, not only, in 1776, asserted the claim of the United States to independence, but rapidly advancing in the following years by victory on victory to the accomplishment of its object, and inflicting on its foes wounds, which bleed to this day, gained, in 1782, from the haughty aggressors at once the acknowledgement of independence and the offer of peace. As liberty was the object of contest, that being secured, the offer of peace was joyfully accepted; and peace was restored to free, united, independent *Columbia!*

But the arduous labors of the sons of liberty found not here an end. They had torn the branch from

the parent trunk,—but to make it flourish, independent of that trunk, and relying only on its own strength for the collection of sap and nurture, was still a task of much difficulty.

The confederation, then existing between the states, formed in times of tumult and disorder, and deeply tainted with the times, in which it was formed, was incomplete, void in a great measure of system, and without energy. Its attractive powers not being sufficient to keep the several states, impelled different ways by jarring interests, in the orbits, where general harmony would require them to move, they were continually deviating from their true paths—continually impinging upon one another. Thus confusion seemed to have universally seized the affairs of our nation; and our country, still oppressed with the burthensome effects of a war, which had to a great degree exhausted its infant strength, without funds, without credit, exhibited scenes of irregularity and disorder, which the honest patriot will ever pray may never be repeated.

In this perplexed state of our public affairs the sages of our country convened; and, with WASHINGTON at their head, formed and recommended to the people of the United States, our present excellent constitution, which was soon after deliberately adopted by the several states of the union. This constitution, marking out the path of duty to all the states, fixing the boundary between the rights retained and the rights surrendered by the people, and containing in itself a just balance of all its powers, has displayed in operation a general harmony, not unaptly compared to the harmony, which philosophy has discovered to exist among the spheres. Though *Europe*, with which we have been extensively connected in commerce, has been shaken to its centre

with eruptions more horrid, than those of *Ætna*, or *Vesuvius*; though war has deluged its territories with seas of blood, and peace has not found where to place the sole of her foot, not even on the top of the Alps, without dipping it in gore; though the clouds, with aspect black and threatening, have twice gathered in our horizon, and the lightning has streamed, the thunder has roared, and the hail has pattered amidst our commerce on our own shores; still our nation, placing the administration of its well formed government under the unshaken integrity and transcendent talents of the illustrious WASHINGTON and ADAMS, has not only been preserved from the ravages and distresses of war, but has in the space of twelve years experienced a greater increase of wealth, strength, and all other national blessings, than other countries have done in as many centuries.

Immortal wreaths are due to the heroes, who fought our revolutionary battles. May the sun of glory ever blaze in unclouded day upon their tombs; while laurels, green as our fields, luxuriant as the growth of our vales, and umbrageous as the oaks of our mountains, spring around to deck the spot, where their honored bones may rest; yet, great as is the desert of our warriors, wreaths, as green, and as large, and as rich, are due to the authors of our excellent frame of government. If *those* separated us from a foreign government, *these* have taught us to govern ourselves. If *those* freed us from tyranny abroad, *these* have secured us from tyranny at home. If our nation, in following our warriors, proved itself brave in the glorious cause of freedom; in adopting the constitution, framed by our sages, it has proved itself wise, virtuous, and worthy to be free. If our WASHINGTON, at the head of our warriors, laid the broad and solid foundation of his immortal fame, and raised the superstructure high as humanity is wont to

rise ; at the head of those statesmen and sages, who framed our constitution, he has added another loft to the stupendous fabric, has finished the superstructure ; and his character, thus completed, now stands the loftiest and noblest pyramid of human greatness the world has ever seen.

The future destinies of our country are beyond the reach of human calculation. What the new administration may prove to be is to us unknown. But our wishes and our prayers are, that, shaped by the principles of those, which have gone before it, wise, prudent, energetic, and uniting all hearts in its support, it may shower rich and important blessings on our nation ; that it may entitle our chief magistrate to a rank with his predecessors among the most illustrious benefactors of Columbia ; and that it may stamp the name of *Jefferson* on the hearts of his countrymen in characters, not to be obliterated by the rough hand of time.

Since we are heirs of so rich an inheritance, earned with the blood and toils of our ancestors ; and since “ the agonizing spasms of *infuriated* man, seeking through blood and slaughter his—liberty,”* are here no more ; it now becomes us with the coolness and honesty of *reasoning* men to enter on the enquiry, how we may preserve the blessings, which have descended to us, and transmit them down, unimpaired, to our posterity.

It will, in the first place, be highly essential to the preservation of our liberties, that the affections of our citizens centre, not in a foreign, but in their own country ; that they feel an honest pride in being Americans, and cherish no particular attachment to any other country ; that they consider the United

* Mr. *Jefferson's* inaugural speech.

States as embracing all that is dear to them, as claiming all their duties, and as the land, in whose prosperity, they are to share, in whose ruins they are to be buried. It is difficult to say what evils may happen to our country from a want of patriotism in individuals. Should the lamentable day ever arrive, when a large portion of our citizens, blindly attached to a foreign interest, and forgetting the affection due to the land of their fathers, shall not only distract our public councils, but even encourage and assist the ambitious designs of insidious foes; till those foes, strengthened by our weakness, and emboldened by our divisions, shall invade with powerful and successful forces our devoted country; who can calculate the depth of the wretchedness, into which we might be plunged? Who can say of the proud waves of calamity, that would be rushing upon us, *hither would they come, and no farther?*

It is perhaps *problematical*, whether it will be consistent with the safety of our liberties to admit foreigners of *any* description to a share in the management of our public concerns. But it will *certainly* be inconsistent with our honor. Would it not, fellow citizens, be disgraceful to our nation to hear in our legislatures, amid the debates of our rulers, or at the heads of departments, the barbarous idioms of all the languages of Babel mixed with our native tongue? Idioms as unintelligible to us, as the chattering of the magpie, or the black bird? Your national pride will best answer this question.

Born heirs of the important privilege of choosing our own rulers;—a privilege fruitful in blessings, if rightly used, but which by abuse may be forfeited and lost; if we wish our liberties to be immortal, we must exercise this right with great care and circumspection. To have a just claim to our suffrages, it is

not enough, that the political opinions of the candidate be of the same complexion with our own ; it is not enough, that he has courted our favor by promising better things, than our rulers have in time past done ; it is not enough, that he has scoured our country to proclaim his own merits, or encompassed sea and land to make profelytes to his opinions. No—it is the man of unstained character, whose well earned reputation is a sure pledge of future honesty ; it is the man of talents, who is capable of thinking and judging rightly on public affairs ; it is the man of information, whose enlarged views command the whole prospect of our country's situation ; it is the man of firmness, not to be warped by every popular breeze ; in a word, it is the friend of christianity, to whom our youth may with safety look up for an example of all that is amiable, great, and noble in conduct ; it is the man of this description, who may with justice claim our support. Calling such men, in all our elections, into public life, we shall not only ensure to ourselves good and wholesome laws, but derive an important advantage from the influence their example would be likely to have, in giving a fairer complexion and more comely shape to the manners of the age.

It will likewise be highly essential to the security of our liberties, as well as to the preservation of the health and vigor of our government, that we repose, at all times, a generous confidence in the integrity of our rulers. Not that *blind* confidence, which might induce our nation to slumber in quiet, till it awoke in chains ; but that *manly* confidence, which men, elected by ourselves from the great mass of citizens, and returning at short intervals again to mix with that mass, may with justice expect and claim from us. If we give way to unreasonable jealousy, there will not be wanting ambitious spirits, who, envying to

others honors, not due to their own virtues, and pining for places above their talents, will be ready to feed "the green-eyed monster." These wakeful demons, who exulting ride in all popular storms, continually hover round "the tempestuous sea of liberty." By their noise shall ye know them. Their whole employ is to raise political hurricanes, that, driving the vessel of state on rocks and shelves, they may plunder the wreck. Let us beware, fellow citizens; from our jealousies, these foes of order may brew storms, that will sweep away our liberties!

If the conduct of our rulers shall at any time be in our opinion wrong, it will become us always to censure with extreme modesty; in a particular manner those of us, whose political knowledge is bounded with the pages of a newspaper. Our "positions" will not command a prospect of the whole ground,* consequently our rulers, though in appearance wrong, may in reality be right. But should the measures of government be at any time *felt*, not *fancied*, to be weak, or impolitic, or oppressive, we ought not, even in this case, to appeal by unqualified abuse of public characters to the worst passions of our nature for a reform; for such a conduct would render us deserving of a bad government; but addressing ourselves to the good sense of the people, to rest assured, that, if our nation be worthy to be well governed, our citizens will soon, by new elections, call men to the head of our affairs, who will possess talents to invent, and dispositions to pursue, measures, more becoming the rulers of a wise and virtuous nation.

But the best and surest preservative of our freedom will be, to have among all classes of people pure and simple manners, correct dispositions, and

* Mr. Jefferson's inaugural speech.

enlightened understandings. Liberty, fellow citizens, is a goddess of high and liberal notions; delicate to a high degree in her choice of abode. Disdaining to dwell with the ignorant and the vicious, she courts a residence with the wise, the brave, the virtuous nations of the earth. The virtues and wisdom of our ancestors have induced her to make our happy land, from its first settlement, her abode. Let us not, by deserting the pious paths of our ancestors, induce the celestial guest to desert our shores. Let us exert ourselves to train our youth to habits of order and industry; to the exercise of benevolence and justice; to the love of simplicity, of virtue, and of their country, and above all, to a veneration of religion. Let us endeavor, that in our literary seminaries *every valley of humble virtue and genius may be exalted*; that *every mountain of pride and arrogance may be made low*; that *the crooked in disposition may be made straight*, and *the rough places in manners plain*. Thus educated, our youth cannot fail to make virtuous citizens, and our citizens being virtuous, our nation must flourish.

But we live in an age big with revolutions and momentous changes, both in the moral and political world. Opinions, destructive of all virtue, and consequently of all rational liberty, begin to prevail. When, or where, or how, the present daring spirit of innovation, which is abroad in the earth, is to terminate, is not within the reach of man's calculation. From the never resting ocean of European affairs has of late arisen a monster, not of *seven heads and ten horns*, but of seven thousand heads and ten thousand horns—each of which heads is continually employed in plotting the destruction of all, that supports, or cements society; and each horn in battering down all the walls of virtue, of civilization, of religion, laws, and government, which the wisdom of ages has erec-

ted for the restraint of the turbulent and ferocious passions of man. Its progress is more destructive, than blasts and mildews. Wherever its footsteps are seen, no salutary plant springs, no flower of virtue expands; society is reduced to a desert, where nothing will flourish, but the thorn and the bramble, the worm-wood and the nightshade. I refer to the new philosophy; that philosophy, which teaches its disciples to disbelieve all religion; and shews them *how* to be blind to all moral distinctions, *how* to see no difference between right and wrong, between virtue and vice; that philosophy, which teaches us to root out all the private affections from the heart, to make room for the exercise of universal benevolence; to be tenderly affectionate towards all mankind, who are out of our reach, and to plunder and butcher all within; that philosophy, which exhorts our women to become men, to quit the government of a family for the government of a nation, to leave the distaff for the plough, and to exchange the fan for a firelock! that philosophy, which teaches its votaries how to feel the tyranny and oppression of the marriage institution;—in a word, that philosophy, which separates time from eternity, believes death to be an eternal sleep, and denies the existence of a GOD!—which sees not the hand, that annually spreads and adorns the grand carpet of nature; that pours life, and beauty, and happiness through the universe; and that formed, arranged, and now sustains those glorious orbs, which roll in silent majesty above us!—Americans, there are even in our happy country symptoms of this philosophy! But will you barter the religious creed of your fathers for opinions like these? Are the pure and simple manners, for which our country has been so justly renowned, to be exchanged for the licentious excesses of a Godwin, or a Wolstonecraft? Will you sell your *bibles* to purchase the blasphemous publications

of Thomas Paine ? quit the worship of your GOD for the worship of reason ? or abolish your sabbath of religious rest to introduce decades of revelry and debauchery ? Better things are certainly to be expected from our countrymen. The good sense of our nation *will* preserve it. The wise and the good, the real patriot and the sage, will, with united zeal and energy, resist the march of sentiments, so destructive of all social enjoyment, of all real happiness ; and may their combined exertions long preserve our nation from opinions and practices, which must soon involve us in evils more horrid, than pestilence and famine !

There are bounds to the existence of nations, as well as of individuals ; and there is a righteousness, which preserves, as well as vices, which destroy them. May the virtues and wisdom of our citizens, under the blessing of him, who is the fountain of all blessings, continue to protract the existence of *Columbia*, united and free, from generation to generation, from century to century, to the distant sunset of time ; and may the last pulse of every American heart, in each revolving age, throb for the glory and prosperity of this federate republic.