

AT a meeting of the Citizens of Natick and its vicinity, on the fourth day of July, A. D. 1809.

Col. EBENEZER M. BALLORD,
Moderator.

VOTED, That Captain John Atkins, Doctor Tepley Wyeth, Josiah Adams, Rev. Nathaniel How, and Doctor Timothy Fisk, be a Committee to wait on the Rev. Mr. SEARS, to thank him for his independent and patriotic Oration, and request a Copy for the press.

JOSIAH ADAMS, *Clerk.*



Natick, July 4, 1809.

AGREEABLY to the above vote of the Citizens of Natick and its vicinity, we do, in their behalf, thank you for your independent and patriotic Oration, and request a Copy for the press.

By Order of the Committee,

JOHN ATKINS, *Chairman.*

Rev. Mr. SEARS.



NATICK, July 4, 1809.

GENTLEMEN,

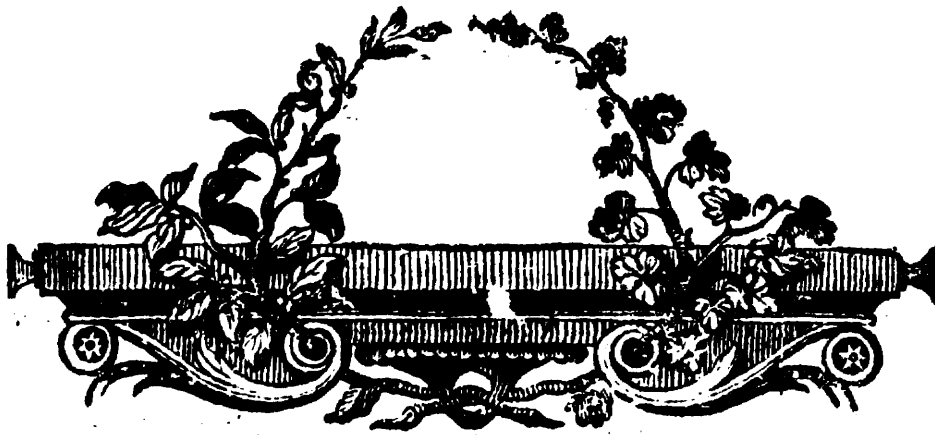
THE Oration, this day pronounced, when written, was not designed for the press. Such as it is, I cordially tender it you.

WITH sentiments of respect and esteem, I am,
GENTLEMEN, Yours,

FREEMAN SEARS.

Capt. JOHN ATKINS,
Dr. TEPLEY WYETH,
JOSIAH ADAMS, ESQ.
Rev. NATHANIEL HOW,
Dr. TIMOTHY FISK,

} *Committee.*



AN ORATION.



EXT to the concerns of eternity, the interest and prosperity of our country demand attention. The Speaker to day must descend from subjects of the first importance to those of a secondary nature.—And witness *ye walls*, and thou sacred *desk*, that nothing be suggested ; nothing be transacted, incompatible with the christian character.—The leading subjects of this day then will be finite subjects ; but they are sufficiently large, to fill finite minds. View an extensive country of upwards of a thousand miles square, see this large territory overspread with at least six millions of human beings, all pleading the rights and privileges of men, all desirous of personal happiness and freedom ; and you are presented with subjects of no small magnitude. Fellow Citizens, let our reflections be profitable, seasoned with decency and gratitude, suitable to the occasion on which we have convened.—In aiding your thoughts relative to the concerns of our country, I pur-

pose, in some measure, to forget the things that are behind, and look forward to those that are before.—The rise, and progress of our country—the unparalleled conflicts of our fathers—the unwarrantable subjugation of these colonies—the breaking asunder of the British yoke—and the declaration of the independence of America present a noble and pleasing theme. But though less pleasing, it may be more profitable to inquire, in what our independence consists, and how it may be transmitted to the latest posterity.—To review our national affairs from 1776, to 1809, would create in the breasts of men different emotions, and present to the eye of the beholder a chequered scene. The hand of time hath passed over them, they are marked for the historian's page, and there for the present we shall let them rest.—Something more important claims our attention, than either to commend, or animadvert upon past scenes.—The present and future glory of our country, the equitable form of government under which we live, and the transmitting of this invaluable legacy to generations, yet unborn, are no mean, no puerile subjects.—Be this, then our theme—A succinct account of the government under which we live, and how this may be preserved, and handed down inviolate to posterity.

On this day of general independence, and in the prosecution of this subject, the speaker wishes to indulge a suitable degree of independence himself.—Not that he feels disposed to wound either of the contending parties, unless they voluntarily step in his way, to impede his course. While pursuing the subject in hand, he wishes to pass over the whimsical politics of the day, as you would pass over the dust in the street when in the pursuit of a rich pearl.—That some kind of government is necessary in this fallen world, experience and facts demonstrate; to attempt to live without it, might be pleasing in theory, but horrible in practice. The great query then is, what government

is the best.—The answer is at hand, that which will afford the greatest degree of liberty, and at the same time effectually guard life, character, property and order.

ALL power, whether in despotic, aristocratical, or republican governments, is originally vested in the people. They, naturally, are the executive, legislative and judiciary authority. All men come into the world equal, upon the footing of natural rights. Notwithstanding this, individuals may act in a legislative capacity, and their transactions be binding on generations to come.

THE two great extremes of government are those of perfect despotism, and complete democracy.—The former supposes individuals to have given up all their natural rights into the hands of one man, whose will is ever to constitute their law ; the latter is, where the people retain all their natural rights, and have given none of them to any man or set of men. A mean between these two extremes is the government of America ; approximating, perhaps, nearer the latter than the former. Part of our natural rights we give to individuals for a limited time ; for one, two, four and six years. At the expiration of which periods we come in the possession of them again ; and as before are at liberty to give them to whom we *will*, provided the person, or persons possess certain general qualifications. These men, thus elected by the majority of suffrages, are vested with the supreme authority of the land for the time being. They are, however, in no case to act repugnant to the federal constitution, which has been adopted and sanctioned by, at least, seven eighths of the nation. When intrusted with the helm of government they are not authorized to shape their course wheresoever their fanciful notions dictate ; but invariably to steer the political ship by this national chart. If, in pursu-

ing steadfastly this course, they providentially dash the ship in pieces, they ought not, they cannot be blamed. But if, in trying experiments repugnant to the constitution they make shipwreck of our liberties, the curses of millions may justly come upon them.—Our national government consists of three independent branches, all preps and checks to each other; all designed to support the fabric.—It may properly be called a federal-republican government. The first of these terms aptly represents the coalition of the states. Our national constitution is denominated the federal constitution, because it unites in one compact body, a number of smaller bodies. Like the planets in the solar system, all complete in themselves, yet subject harmoniously to revolve around their common center.—The term *republican* is significant of our right of election, liberty of acting for ourselves. It supposes every citizen, possessing the sum of 60% whatever his occupation or profession in life may be, at perfect liberty to act for himself in the choice of men to rule over him. Whoever shall attempt to deprive an individual, or any class of legal citizens, the right of suffrage, may justly be considered defective in his republican principles.—The government of America, though it may not be perfect, is undoubtedly the best now in the world. Various have been the forms of republican governments heretofore, but none of them exactly upon our plan. Whether ours, on the whole, will prove better than theirs, time alone must determine. The gazing world are now looking at America to see whether she will maintain her liberties. So long as this is the case the kingdoms of Europe will envy our happiness; but should we, like the republics of old, fall into the gulf of anarchy, or despotism, they will laugh at our folly. At present, fellow-citizens, we possess an admirable form of government. A government, which unites energy with mildness, liberty with security, and freedom with order;

are friendly to the arts and sciences, to the accumulating of property, and the enlargement of the human mind. A government designed to reward genuine merit, where-ever found, by the richest of her gifts.—Such is the independence we celebrate ; such are the liberties purchased with the price of blood ! Americans !—are they worth preserving ? if so, you will lay aside your prejudices, and carefully attend to the necessary requisitions.—How shall the rights, liberties, and independence of America be transmitted to future generations ? A question noble in itself ; deserving the attention of every statesman and patriot.—We shall now present a number of props, without which, this beautiful fabric must fall ; with which, it may be supported.

KNOWLEDGE and information disseminated among the people is one essential requisite to our preservation. The human mind uncultivated is prepared for nothing but either mean submission, or bloody revenge and hostility. The ignorant negroes of the South, mere vassals of burden, at one time receive the goad more patient than the ox ; at another, with anger flaming into rage, they rise and massacre all their lords.—A just portrait of man in the rubbish of nature. The uncivilized tribes of Africa, the barbarous Turks, the uncultivated Tartars, in their present degraded state, could no more adopt and preserve a republican government, than the vegetable kingdom could arise and come to maturity without the light of the sun. Instances might be cited to prove the fact. Experiments of this kind have been tried, but they have ever proved abortive. Vain and preposterous is it, for us to dream of existing as an independent republic, unless we pay special attention to the general diffusion of knowledge. Gross ignorance and freedom were never formed for companions ; they *will* not live together.—

Our youth should be early taught the value of a well cultivated mind, and our *rifer years* ought not to scorn the voice of instruction.—Americans ! what you give for the education of your children is money at interest, for the benefit of your country—the preservation of your liberties.—Here, to their honour be it spoken, some of the states, particularly those of Connecticut and Massachusetts, have not been dilatory in their exertions. They have in some measure paid that attention to the general diffusion of learning, which its high importance in a political view demands.

NEXT to education, we mention a free, open, and manly discussion of all important political subjects, as being highly conducive to the preservation of our country. By this, I do not mean news-paper slander, defamation, or libelling of characters. I do not mean the petty disputes of the bar-room, nor the frantic resolves of caucuses. These, like so many canker-worms, are incessantly devouring the tree of liberty.—But I do mean, that our national and state cabinets should ever be frank, open and manly in all their deliberations ; that every important subject may be scanned by sound argument, and weighed by the whole legislature in the balance of truth. Business, which belongs equally to the whole legislature, ought not to be transacted by a few individuals in secret conclave. The very idea of secrecy in public matters creates jealousy ; and jealousy, you know, hath an inventive genius ; she can pourtray a hideous monster, and imagine it real.—In order to prevent jealousy, surmises and hard speeches, let public business be transacted in open day, and in the presence of all concerned. Reason, good sense, and sound argument are the only successful weapons to be used in a republican government. We may unsheathe the sword to meet a for-

sign foe ; but domestic enemies ought, if possible, to be conquered by sound argument. An appeal to arms, for the purpose of enforcing laws, or quelling insurrections is very dangerous ; it may, and must be done, when no other expedient will answer. But never ought it to be till the very last drop is exhausted from the cup of reconciliation. Whenever a people so pervert their reason, as to sacrifice good sense, and sound argument, upon the shrine of passion and party feelings, their liberties and independence are on the verge of destruction. Americans ! if we will not be governed by good sense, we cannot be governed in a republic.* It is to be expected in this fallible world, that people of sense will see things in a different light. It is nothing strange that our legislature should be divided in opinion. What then ? shall we load each other with infamy, or, like the people of the dark ages, determine which is right by force of arms, or by single combat ? No, rather let us decide by the sword of truth, reason and argument ; let our legislature wield these weapons open, manly, and let the people judge which can handle them the best,—let the great body of the people carefully peruse these debates, say less, think more, and at the proper time, act wise.

** It is a melancholy truth, that people, both in politics and religion, are often governed more by their feelings than they are by reason and argument. Every thing said and done must be brought to the test of this governing principle, viz. inclination. Should they happen to agree with this, they pass current, otherwise they are condemned as counterfeit. Let people erect for their standard good sense, and we are ready to converse with them. Till then, reasonable things are as liable to be cast away, as those that are perfectly unreasonable.*

ANOTHER preservative of a republican government is a strict and prompt attention to all its laws. We cannot expect to exist, as an independent people, unless we submit to the powers that be ; and lend our aid for the support of lawful authority. Those laws, that are injudicious and oppressive, must be obeyed, until they are repealed, and this redress must come through the medium of the authority, which imposed the grievance, or else we subvert the government. Even those laws, that are considered by some unconstitutional, must be observed, till this unconstitutionality is pointed out, and publicly declared by some authority adequate to the purpose, else we open a door for individuals to object to every law, however pacific and wise. The speaker is not advocating mean submission to hostile and unconstitutional laws. But he is advocating manly submission, true American submission, reasonable, argumentative submission.

AGAIN, order, virtue and religion constitute another prop to support a free government ; the most essential of any that has been enumerated.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

You have often heard, that without religion, a free government cannot long exist. This is no novel idea ; therefore, the danger of not giving it full weight. It is not my business at present to speak of religion, as it respects the soul, but as it respects the political salvation of our country. There is a near and inseparable connection between religion and government, in as much as the former is the main-pillar of the latter.—This sentiment is not a whimsical

cal and sacrilegious notion of the clergy, invented for base and selfish purposes ; but it is founded in the very nature of things. Ye cannot overturn it, unless ye overturn the whole system of good sense and experience. With equal propriety might we attempt to separate time from eternity, or man from his Maker, as a republican government intirely from religion. Take away the sacredness of an oath, all expectation of future rewards and punishments, break up all religious order in towns and societies ; let it become a popular sentiment that "death is an eternal sleep,"* that there is no God, who takes cognizance of the conduct of men ; that it is no matter how people act, if they can only escape human tribunals ; and you take away the very life and soul of a republic. It falls as naturally as the body will, when the breath is gone ! The most celebrated lawgivers, both of ancient and modern date, bear testimony to this truth. Blackstone, Vattel and Priestly, in their learned and admirable treatises on the general nature of governments, say, "that virtue and religion is the basis of a republican government." Need there be any additional evidence to substantiate the proposition ? I turn you to the once famous republic of Athens, a city celebrated for its philosophy, and knowledge of the arts and sciences ; but depraved in heart and life, boldly denying the true God ; which was the procuring cause of its destruction.

But why go so far back, when the same truth is

* *This sentiment, at which common honesty recoils, and decency shudders, became so popular in France at the time of their highest notions of liberty, that it was ordered to be written on the gates of the burying grounds.*

demonstrated by a farcical and horrid scene recently passed before the eyes of the world. The scene is too much to the present purpose to escape unnoticed. It presses itself upon us. Behold and tremble !—Soon after the independence of America, the kingdom of France caught the flame of liberty. The fire spread from city to city, from heart, to heart. They erected the guillotine, slew all the royal family, from the king on the throne to the smiling infant at the breast. Thousands of her countrymen shared the same fate, till their blood crimsoned the ground and nauseated the air. And why this unprecedented effusion of her own country's blood ? It was to open the door for the millennium of freedom. "Liberty and equality" became the burden of their song. At length they were ready to adopt a republican government ; they collected the materials, and reared the beautiful fabric. But alas ! they forgot to put under the chief corner stone. Of course the fabric was no sooner reared, than it tumbled in the dust. As a nation, they openly discarded all religion.—Passing through Brest and Paris, the most central cities in the country, you would behold posted up in capitals this motto, "NO PRIESTS, NO RELIGION, NO GOD;" turning the eye upon the opposite post, you would see written in legible characters, "NO GOD BUT LIBERTY."* Infatuated people, thy liberty hath gone !—Where now is thy god !

I SPEAK these facts, not to elate, nor shame you ; but, as my own countrymen, I warn you—"Come not ye into her secrets, lest ye partake of her plagues !"

AMERICANS ! would we preserve the admirable fabric, which was reared by our patriotic fathers, we must not take away the chief corner stone, Virtue and Religion.

* *Faber on the prophecies.*

GENTLEMEN, Officers and Soldiers of the Militia, a part of the conclusion belongs to you. I mourn with you at the recollection of those lusts and passions, from whence come wars and fightings. I regret that general depravity, which renders it necessary for you to be thus clad in the habiliments of war.—But as inhabitants of the world, we must meet the world as it is. We may wish it were better, and do our endeavour to reform it ; yet it is a duty we owe ourselves, our families, our country, and our God to put ourselves in an attitude for self defence.—Gentlemen, your commissions in the military department of our government are honourable. Your stations rank high. In your hands are deposited an important trust. It is you, who must first hear the calls of our country, and take the front rank in times of war, as well as in times of peace. Your good sense will not suffer you to be elated in view of the importance of your offices ; but feeling your responsibility, you will endeavour to fill them with dignity and fidelity. You will make yourselves masters of the military art, and martial your troops to the best advantage, that they may see you are worthy the posts you hold. You will unite the energy of the officer, with the feelings of the soldier ; that you may ever maintain discipline on your parades, and at the same time not appear tyrannical. In raising each other to posts of higher office, you will pay no attention to party feelings, but be actuated solely from a sense of genuine merit.

SOLDIERS, so long as ye act in character, your rank is scarcely a step in the rear of your commanding officers. You are as honorable in obeying as they are in commanding. Though you might do but little without them, they certainly could do nothing without you. Let it

ever be your ambition, while under arms, to act the soldier. Equip yourselves, like soldiers. Respect your officers; cheerfully obey them. Let expression, and not the tongue, evince your martial feelings. In doing this, you add dignity and worth to your characters. You show yourselves worthy the name of an American soldier.

OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS, your stations are not incompatible with the christian character. Your equipments are not complete, till ye put on the christian armour. In addition to your other equipments, permit me, in the language of an Apostle, to exhort—"Take to yourselves the whole armour of God; having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, take the shield of faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God." Thus equipped, you are prepared to fight the lawful battles of your country.—I pray God, that none of your blood may be spilt on the field of battle. That the alarm of war may never echo this side the Atlantic. But ye are surrounded with bloody neighbors; neighbors, that have drenched the plains of Europe, and crimsoned the ocean with human blood. Lest they unexpectedly surprize you, be ever on your watch. Never let the sword nor the spear rust in your hands;—keep them habitually furbished for actual engagement. And should the voice of war ever resound in our land, may the God of Armies protect you!

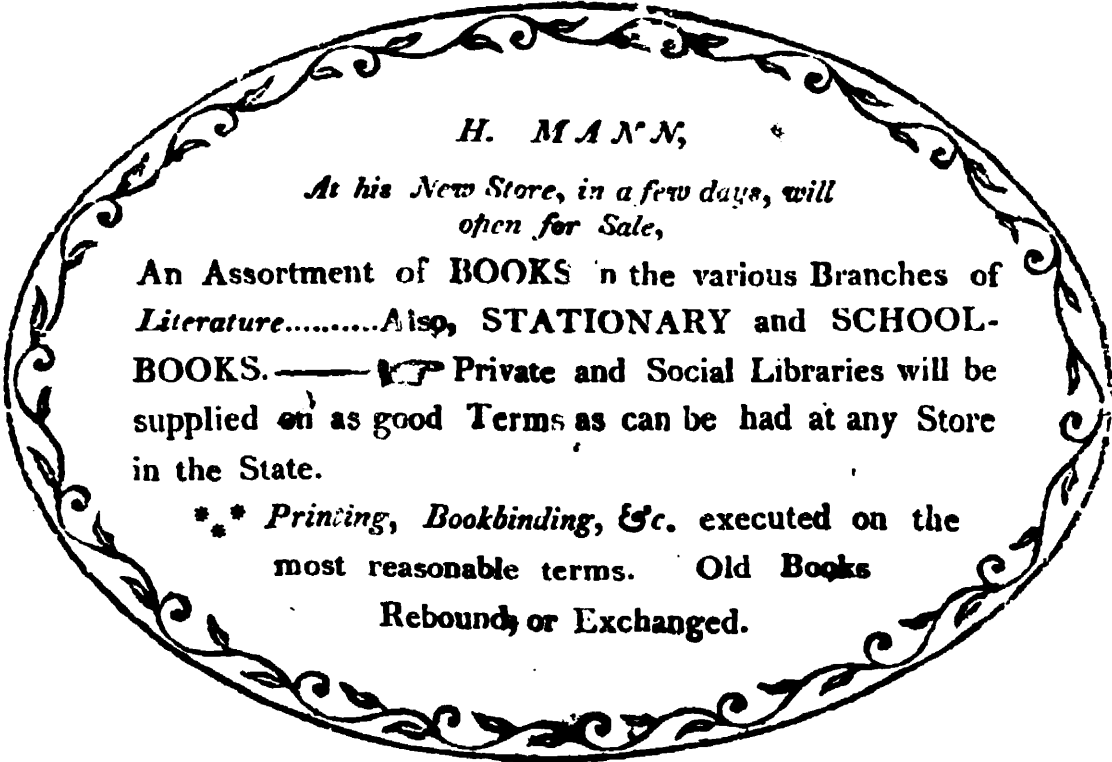
FELLOW-CITIZENS, you have had an imperfect view of the government under which we live. We have seen the props necessary for its support. Others might be educated, but they are all summarily comprised in the four that

have been named.—Education,—frank, and reasonable discussion,—observance of laws, and religion. Once more take a view of the fabric standing upon these four pillars.—The fabric is good, we all agree; but what say ye to the foundation? Are all the pillars sound, or are they defective? As an individual, I confess to you, I tremble when I see on what my country rests! I *fear* the perpetuity of our government. And though I should be accused of *treason*, I cannot, I dare not suppress it.—When I see the foundation taken from a building, I know, as sure as matter will gravitate toward the centre, that building must fall! Not that the foundation is, as yet, entirely taken from our government. No—some of the pillars stand unimpaired;—time, instead of mouldering, seems to invigorate them. Education flourishes—Laws are generally observed; mutiny and insurrections are unpopular with the judicious, of all parties.—But others, particularly those of good sense and religious order, are defective.—There is a very great proneness in people to believe what they desire, upon the slightest evidence, and to reject what they do not relish, even in the face of demonstration. I only ask gentlemen to open their eyes, and look at the state of morals and religion in our country, and then say whether such *fears* are perfectly groundless.

THE unhappy political divisions in our country are truly alarming. No house, no nation can be strong when it is nearly equally “divided against itself.” We do not wish to indulge a needless timidity, and torment ourselves before the time. Nor would we be so stupid and heedless to the future, as to see the *breakers*, and not give the alarm. We would not lull the people to sleep, crying “peace! peace!” when sudden destruction awaits us. If we will suffer party feelings to usurp the throne of reason, and licentiousness to occupy the place of virtue, without

the spirit of prophesy, we may predict the downfall of our country, and bid a long farewell to American Independence!—But is there no alternative, no hope in our case? Yes, I rejoice with you, Fellow Citizens, that this anniversary ushers in a brighter morning than the last. May it continue with increasing lustre unto the perfect day!—Our difficulties with Foreign Powers are in some measure adjusted—Our flag once more traverses the ocean—and a door seems to be opening for greater union among ourselves. The God of heaven is giving us another trial, to see whether we will preserve our Independence, or prostrate our Liberties upon the shrine of passion.—Americans, it is time to cease domestic hostilities—party-spirit has reigned long enough—some of the nobler feelings of the soul ought to be promoted and encouraged. Let us return and unite in the good old principles of our fathers, both as it respects politics and religion. Let party names be forgotten and lost in the better name of *True American*.

DOUBTLESS we have our *Catalines*, who are lurking in ambush to give the fatal blow, and want nothing but a convenient opportunity to assassinate the Republic. Yet, we fondly hope the number of *Ciceros* are sufficient to detect them. Honest men, and men of talents, we trust there are of all parties, who are willing to devote their talents, their property and their lives for the preservation of their country. Let *them* unite—let *us* unite with them; and we may form a powerful phalanx against the common enemy. If there must be a division, let not the dividing line separate honest men; but let it be drawn between honesty and dishonesty—virtue and vice—patriotism and treachery..... May this Anniversary witness a coalescence of all genuine Americans. And from this day may honest men bury in eternal oblivion all those petty animosities and false insinuations, which gender strife!



H. MANN,

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