

AN  
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT MR. THADDEUS BROAD'S,

ON THE FOURTH DAY OF JULY, 1819,

BEFORE THE

Republicans of Falmouth.

BY MR. THOMAS SLEMONS.

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PORTLAND :

PRINTED BY FRANCIS DOUGLAS,

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MR. THOMAS SLEMONS.

SIR,

*The subscribers being a Committee, appointed by the Republican Citizens of Falmouth, this day assembled at Mr. Thaddeus Broad's, to celebrate our National Birth Right, return you in their name, our sincere thanks for the Address by you delivered before us this day, and request a copy for the press.*

Falmouth, July 4, 1810. BARTLETT HOLMES, }  
JONA. SPARROW, } Committee.  
JAMES MORRELL. }

GENTLEMEN,

Falmouth, July 6, 1810.

*In answer to your note, presenting your thanks for the Discourse delivered by me on the 4th inst. and requesting a copy of the same, altho sensible of its many deficiencies, I am induced to comply with your request, from the same motives that led me to accept the duty your partiality assigned me, that of gratifying the Republican Citizens of Falmouth. I herewith enclose a copy.*

Your very Humble Servant,

THOMAS SLEMONS.

Messrs. BARTLETT HOLMES, }  
JONA. SPARROW, } Committee.  
JAMES MORRELL. }

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# ORATION.

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*Revered Friends and respected Fellow-Citizens,*

LET labor be at rest—business, cease thy numerous sounds—joy and gladness take possession of our hearts, that this auspicious day may be sacred to the latent flame of Liberty.

We are now assembled, fellow-citizens, in order to celebrate with festive cheerfulness an event of the first magnitude; that of a whole people, a great nation, rising superior to the servile thought of slavery, breaking in pieces the massy irons forged by the hands of the grim visaged monster *prerogative power*, and dashing them in his haggard face; declaring themselves independent of every nation on earth, (the proud isle of Albion not excepted.)

To acknowledge the numerous blessings which we have received, and which still continue to mark our country, should be among the first duties of this day. But as the powers of oratory are incompetent to the full display of those blessings, and having no pretensions to eloquence, I will therefore claim your patience and candor while I shall only speak of their origin, and glance at the most effectual means whereby they may be preserved.

The original connection between America and

the mother country, or more properly her unnatural parent, does not appear to have been founded either on reason or policy. Our forefathers were not only the discarded children of parental favor, but were compelled either to relinquish those ideas of Religion and Liberty which they considered inseparable with a virtuous life, or seek an asylum in a far distant, unexplored, and uncultivated land. With a firm reliance on Divine Providence for protection, they nobly chose the latter; they even preferred the dangers of the boisterous ocean, the accumulated miseries which an untried state of being would subject them to, and the barbarous enmity of a savage foe, to the refined cruelty, oppressive acts, and tyrannical measures of more savage men. And their undaunted firmness and conscious rectitude of intentions, inspired them with courage not to be appalled by a less daring enterprize.

After experiencing the various vicissitudes of hope and fear, and undergoing all the fatigues incident to an hazardous voyage, they at length landed on these then unfrequented shores, offered up to Heaven their fervent acknowledgments for their safe arrival, and rejoiced that they had exchanged the cruelties and oppressions of their former tyrants, for the mercies of relentless savages, and howling monsters of the desert.

In this way did our venerable ancestors purchase unlimited freedom by the fairest and most sacred title; and here in the luxuriant soil of civil and religious liberty, were planted the seeds of empire.

Many years had elapsed after the arrival of our forefathers, and more than a century from the dis-

covery of this vast continent by the immortal *Columbus*, before permanent settlements were effected in the more southern parts of it, over which our growing empire is now extended. Yet the treatment which the settlers uniformly received from the government of Great Britain, demanded no returns of gratitude or affection ; for had their dependence been placed on the munificent bounty of the King, for support or patronage, America had still presented us with barbarous acts of cruelty and scenes of savage nature, unpolished by the fair hand of art or industry.

At length there arrived a time when her sagacious statesmen perceived our rising importance, though with a jealousy, cruel as the grave, and their insatiable avarice and unbounded thirst for gain, prompted them to seize with avidity every opportunity to enhance the contents of their coffers. They no longer beheld us with an eye of contempt, as they had done during the progress of our infantile years ; they invited us to render them the fruits of our industry ; and when they requested aid in such a manner as freemen ought ever to be treated, it was granted without a hesitating thought or a murmuring word ; we even assisted in fighting her battles and filling her chests with the fruits of our labor.

Thus stood the connection between Great Britain and America, when she attempted to manacle her loyal sons ; but which they proudly disdained. And although the path has been so often trodden, still must I revert to the same causes of our separation, or they will cease to have the same effects.

The first foul edict which stained the records of their corrupted parliament, was the detestable Stamp-Act ; its existence, however, was of but short duration ; for injustice itself could but ill brook its merited disgrace. But from the ashes of its destruction, Phœnix-like, arose demands compounded of the pure ingredients of tyranny and oppression ; which were, to be bound in all cases whatsoever, to be taxed without our consent, to adopt the principle of passive obedience and non-resistance, to be deprived of the benefit of trial by jury, with many other acts of a less heinous nature, ~~to~~ which had we submitted would have reduced us to a state of unqualified slavery. There no longer continued to be mere demands for taxes, but of life and liberty.

Grieved by the wanton violation of our dearest rights and privileges, and the baleful injuries we had sustained, we humbly petitioned parliament for redress ; but instead of granting that justice which the nature of our situation demanded, she treated us with contempt and neglect, thereby adding gross insult to wanton injury. We were reproached as rebels and traitors of the vilest cast, and compelled indignantly to behold the landing of her mercenary armies on those shores which had once been consecrated to the sacred altar of liberty.

We now behold America, preparing for scenes in which the great family of mankind will continue to be interested so long as time shall endure. She now presents herself to the view of an admiring world, although in a youthful state, in the full pride and vigor of manhood. And so ineffectual were

the outrageous strides of despotic power in weakening, and dividing, that they gave seven-fold strength and energy to the union of the provinces. “For power without right, is the most odious and detestable object ever offered to the human mind ; it is not only pernicious to those who are made subject to it, but it tends to its own destruction.” And as such it has been verified when Great Britain attempted the exercise of it over the colonies.

We now ventured to inquire into the true origin of our rights ; and in retracing, the acts of George the third, nor the famous magna-charta, did by no means retard our progress. We went back to the original state of man. We found him sole proprietor of the world, and that we were among his lawful heirs. And since by nature, no stream can rise above its fountain, so no succeeding member of a family can presume on rights not found in the first.

Nature had furnished us with a luxuriant soil, lofty forests and majestic rivers, and we naturally concluded that she had been equally liberal in bestowing her mental favors. We blushed at our own folly, for valuing so highly English liberty.

Accordingly, thirty-four years this day, or July the 4th 1776, our fathers, in Congress, absolved forever all allegiance to the despotic, the faithless Court of St. James’ ; and produced that ever memorable Declaration of Independence, that the colonies were, and of right ought to be, free and independent States. And on those principles which were evidently calculated to make *Republicans*, to make *men*—viz.

“ That all men are created equal : That they

are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights : That among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness : That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed : That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.”

On that day our climate was purified from the nauseous and polluted breath of tyranny, our country re-consecrated to the favorite abode of Liberty.

And although our cause was just and glorious, where, I ask, were the means to support it?—Every thing was in a state of elementary confusion ; we were without revenue, without ammunition, without military apparatus, our armies undisciplined, and destitute of those war-like weapons which the ingenuity of man has invented to sharpen the scythe of death. And how were they supplied ? By that enthusiasm which the love of liberty inspires.

Daring Liberty ! Thy omnipotent presence is union, thy breath is revenue, and thy vengeance when roused, thunders death and destruction on the minions of despotism.

And when we were reduced to the sad alternative of keeping up the appearance without, the means to support it, the display of a few casks of simple sand had the same terrific appearance to the guilty myrmidons of Europe, as the compound ingredients of fatal explosion.

Already had commenced those direful scenes of bloodshed and confusion which the concomitant evils of war never fail to produce. Our peaceful citizens were inhumanly massacred in our streets, our towns and villages laid waste by the fiery devouring element. No doubt there are a number among you, citizens, who well recollect, with what pulsating emotions of indignation you beheld the conflagration of that part of our fair inheritance which then bore the present name of our town; when the smoke of the desolating ruins of our once peaceful habitations ascended up to Heaven like the evaporating tears of a weeping world, and their unfortunate inhabitants compelled to seek shelter, under the hospitable roofs of this and other surrounding villages.

How were their countenances changed! Those faces on which joy and gladness before were wont to sit, were now visibly depicted with miserable melancholy, and nothing left to console their dejected minds but the bitter remembrance of departed prosperity.

But these were not all the calamities to which we were reduced; the loss of our property though immense, sink into insignificance, compared to the many thousands of lives sacrificed amid the clangor of arms and the din of battle. Our pleasant fields, and spacious plains, which before had only been accustomed to receive the tepid drops of the floating element, and the refreshing dews of Heaven, were now made drunk with the precious blood of the martyrs of American Liberty.

Lexington! Thy bloodstained fields attest to

the truth of this. And where is the illustrious band of heroes, who unappalled by the face of a daring enemy, were lead on to death and glory by the intrepid *Warren*, upon the crimsoned heights of *Charleston*.

*Bennington* ! Thou also hast presented us with the awful scenes of blood and carnage, yet thy chief still exists ! the brave, the venerable *Stark*, still lives to cheer us with his warning voice, and receive the glorious plaudits of his grateful countrymen.

But where are those kindred souls who left their mortal coverings on *Bunker's* rising summit—on the extended plains of *Monmouth*—at *Stillwater* conquest, and *Trenton* victory ? Ascended we trust, “to the abodes of more than mortal freedom.”

Think not, Fellow-Citizens, that the immortal name of *Washington* shall escape my notice ; if it did, I should almost think myself guilty of a criminal neglect ; *Washington* ! A name for virtue itself. What monument shall we raise to the memory of thy transcendant virtue and glorious achievements ? A world cannot add to thy glory.

*Hancock*, *Adams* and *Warren*, with a long list of patriot heroes in their train, who have long since, made their exit from the great stage of human action : what shall I say of you ? “Description cannot suit itself in words.” Short has been the time, Fellow-Citizens, which I have had to prepare for this performance ; but I complain not of its brevity, for *time* himself, were he the parent of generosity, could not oblige me with hours enough to complete the ardent task ; for had every minute of my

leisure been protracted to months, had every month been prolonged to years, still should I have been but at the beginning of so stupendous a duty as that of recording the virtuous deeds of those departed heroes. And were the flight of my fancy swift as the darting sun-beam, were the visionary powers of my mind, sharp as the vivid lightning through the darkened shades of night; even then, would my ideas be too slow: still would they loiter in the rear of their acquired Glory and merited renown.

Their indefatigable exertions in the cause of Liberty, compelled the haughty tyrant of Britain to withdraw the remnant of his mercenary armies and “left us free to combat error and superstition, with the more powerful weapons of Reason and Justice.” Accordingly, the necessity was perceived of establishing some form of government which should place freedom on a permanent basis, and extend its liberty to all; When lo! our glorious Constitution was presented to our view, “which must forever remain an imperishable monument of the powers of the human understanding.” And America arose to a high rank among the nations of the earth.

Commerce now revived and spread forth its whitened sails; the votaries of agriculture resumed their pleasing labors; manufactures flourished with fresh encouragement; mechanics and laborers found ample employment, and peace and plenty crowned their industrious efforts.

Such, Fellow-Citizens, has the situation of our country continued to be, realizing almost unrivalled

prosperity, with the exception of part of the last four years, when the two grand royal robbers of Europe, who never united in any thing else, manifested a desire to combine in the destruction of our commerce, and the enslaving of our citizens, which made it necessary for the federal government (tho' with reluctance) to embargo our ships and vessels, that our citizens might not be stripped of their property, and our mariners confined in nauseous dungeons, and floating bastiles.

During which embargo, we have experienced all the inconveniencies naturally arising from the sudden suspension of commerce.

But when we contrast our present happy situation, with that of other nations, how does our expanding minds swell with gratitude to that divine being through whose mercy and goodness, our every blessing is derived. And Fellow-Citizens, it now remains for us to prove, whether these invaluable rights and privileges with which we are now invested, and which has been the price of so much blood, shall be handed down to posterity unimpaired, or be totally lost in the inactive and ignoble mazes of ignorance and supineness.

Shall the weeping genius of the fair daughters of Columbia, again kneel to the sceptre of grief, to deplore the loss of their nearest relatives and dearest friends slain in the field of battle? No! may Heaven forbid it. Yet should the vile infatuation of any foreign despot guided by the madness of blind ambition, attempt our subjugation, as much as we deprecate the return of these seasons which once visited our country, when its inhabitants were called

upon by the voice of patriotism to throw aside their implements of husbandry and seize with vengeance the sword & the musket, even the direful calamities of war with all its attendant evils would we again prefer, to a state of unqualified submission. But we hope this may never be the case.

We have in fact, had greater and more alarming fears to encounter for the safety of our republic during the last thirteen years, from a set of men in the bosom of our country, than from foreign invasion; for not a stone has been left unturned by them to clog the wheels of government, and destroy our republican institutions.

O discord! Thou hast been our fatal foe—thou wert conceived in the abodes of deadly mischief—thy birth was in the caverns of strife—thou hast been expelled the cabinet of Satan, and

“Hell grew lighter as the monster fled,”  
 Yet “Effex-Junto” plac’d him at their head;  
 The fiend still, his wily art displays,  
 When lo! at Newburyport are arm’d the “Silver Greys.”

And not only with discordant passions were they armed, but to their eternal shame and the dishonour of this state, equipped with musket to resist and oppose the measures of the government under which they live and which they ought to have protected; & less excusable are they than many others, who have joined in the cabals of prostituted Federalism; for they were a group of men advanced in years, whose heads were already silvered o’er with the finger of time, and whose age and experience ought to have taught them better things.

But we rejoice that the last expiring breath of

faction is at hand, and like the infidel wretch in the last convulsive spasms of departing nature, who, when he can no longer speak, gasps for breath to heap additional curses on his memory.

And were it not that we have to regret the depravity of man in his best estate, here would I close—here would I rest my subject.

But Fellow-Citizens, we must not stop here, we must not suffer stupor to pervade our minds, we must be active and vigilant in order to secure what has been so gloriously obtained ; for we find, a short time after the close of our revolution, we remained inactive, sat down (as we supposed) under our own vines and fig trees, having none to molest or disturb : but soon we perceived there were persons among us vile enough to plot the ruin of our happy country.

Let us be watchful over our rulers, and jealous of our rights. Sacredly improve the seasons for elections ; be scrupulously careful in electing persons to places of public honor and trust, that they be men of virtuous sentiments and pure republican principles. These are privileges purchased with the richest blood of our country, and he who will not leave his business or his pleasures, to exercise his right of suffrage, deserves to groan forever under the lash of despotism. And among other things, of what momentous import is the charge of the public education. With what laudable zeal should it be pursued, since the prevalence of good morals and general information are essentially necessary to the very existence of a free and happy government. Without this, virtue would lose the

power of her attractive charms, and we should degenerate into a set of stupid, senseless automata's.

Already have the enlightened minds of the virtuous citizens of this Commonwealth, placed at their head in the chair of state, a person in whose ability and integrity they can implicitly confide ; one, we verily believe, that had he but one day to live, if we may judge from past conduct, would sacredly devote that day to the good of his country.

Our general government is composed of men who appear rightly to appreciate the blessings of liberty and the rights of man. And so long as you continue to choose such men for rulers, whose bright genius, powerful reasoning, and unfeigned patriotism, have already astonished European Statesmen ; your Constitution will remain un sullied and be preserved inviolate. Your liberties will be secured to you by the sacred legacy of Heaven. Here will REASON hold her empire, and virtue delight to dwell ; your country will remain free from contentions without and strifes within. And while other nations are wading through the horrid pestilence of destructive war, convulsed to their very centres by internal commotions ; we have only to be united, and we shall remain a free, quiet, and prosperous nation.

May we not hope the time is rapidly approaching when the equanimity of our laws, and the magnanimous example America has set for the attainment of liberty, shall be copied by nations of the old world. Already have the inhabitants of the southern parts of our Western hemisphere, where Spanish insolence has for a long time inactive laid, declared themselves Independent ; worthy the no-

ble feelings of Americans ! And may that almighty being who presides over the destinies of nations, and who graciously succoured us when in similar circumstances, grant them the aid of his wisdom and power to complete so glorious an object.

And may we not indulge the sanguine thought, that the blissful period will yet arrive, when all other nations shall go and do likewise—when illuminated reason and regulated liberty, shall once more exhibit man in the image of his maker. When universal philanthropy shall pervade every heart—the temple of liberty be extended to creation's utmost bounds, its pillars rest on the remotest corners of the earth, and its spacious arch shall be the concave vault of Heaven.