

AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED ON

MOUNT INDEPENDENCE

IN

GOFFSTOWN, NEW-HAMPSHIRE,

ON THE

THIRTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

JULY FOURTH,

1812.

BY THE REV. SQUIRE STREETER.

ESSE QUAM VIDERI.

CONCORD, N. H.,
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.....
1812.

GOFFSTOWN, JULY 7, 1812.

THE subscribers, by the request of a number of Citizens of Goffstown and its vicinity, present you with their sincere thanks for the very ingenious and well adapted Discourse delivered there on the 4th instant, and request you to favor them with a copy thereof for the press.

JOHN PATTEE, }
JOHN STEVENS, } *Committee.*

TO THE REV. SQUIRE STREETER.



WEARE, JULY 11, 1812.

GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMITTEE,

YOUR compliment affords me much gratification, notwithstanding my reluctance to gratify your request. But, on mature deliberation, I am constrained to gratify the honorable citizens of Goffstown and its vicinity with a copy of the Oration delivered on the 4th instant.

SQUIRE STREETER.

ORATION.



FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,

ON this stately eminence we joyfully join ourselves in social acclamations to commemorate the all-important and ever-memorable day, on which was declared the independence and liberty of our nation. All hail the blest auspicious day, that gave our American Republic its hallowed birth; and freed us from the shackles of despotism, and the tyranny of kings' unhallowed power. From the present situation of our country, let us rather hope than despair; let us rather watch than be lulled to sleep in the arms of security.

Among the numerous grades of beings, constituting the vast chain of nature, from the minutest reptile abiding in the dark recesses of the earth, to the highest Archangel residing near the throne of Omnipotence, man, spoken into existence by the Almighty Fiat, placed at the head of this lower creation, demands our calm, unprejudiced attention. While the rage of party spirit has enveloped the minds of thousands in the melancholy gloom of prejudice, we cherish a fond hope that it has not reached the minds of any in this respectable assembly. Man is but one link in the grand chain; consequently, every individual, the moment he breathes the vital air, has an equal claim to nourishment and protection; and, when arrived to years of discretion, has an undoubted right to exercise his knowledge and abilities in the political concerns of that community to which he belongs. Let us all hail the natal Anniversary of Columbia's Independence! Thy blessings are diffusive as air; thy utility commensurate with time; thy glory with eternity! Fourth of July, 1776—Blest epoch, sacred day, which consecrated the genius and patriotism of fair Columbia's Congress! May it be sacred to the memory of those worthies, till the last trump shall announce the catastrophe of nature, and time immerse in

the ocean of eternity !—Such is the state of man by nature, that from a critical view of ancient and modern history of nations, ~~we~~ find he has ranged himself under one of these political principles, viz. monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. The first rests the power in a king ; the second in the nobles ; and the third in the hands of the people. These principles, in their progress through the world, have uniformly received the appellations of liberty and tyranny. Tyranny first raised its hydra form in the eastern world, and its progress has ever been marked with blood, devastation, and misery. Asia opened the first scene in the fell drama ! Her struggling sons yielded to the cold embraces of death, or sunk beneath the cruel rod of merciless oppression. Here the infernal banner first plumed herself with boasting triumphs—establishing glittering thrones, which, viewed through the misery of their supporters, appear like sparkling coals amidst the ashes and wide extended ruins of a conflagrated town.

Religion too, that bright celestial spark, that high behest of God himself, sent down in kind benevolence to make men mild and happy, was converted, by these usurpers of human prerogative, into the worst of purposes. Idols were instituted for gods ; from whose polluted altars the fumes of human sacrifices frequently ascended to the deities of oppression. Thus despotism, leagued with ignorance and superstition, trampled on the rights of man : and nature lost her primeval dignity and grandeur. Africa, partaking of the poisonous cup, in dreadful convulsion, sunk beneath the powerful draught. Europe next became the theatre of contention between the rival powers. Liberty here, at different times and in different countries, made long and glorious struggles in defence of suffering humanity ; till weak and worn out by the unequal contest, she resolves to retire, and seek an asylum in some distant unfrequented clime. In this disastrous dilemma, she found it necessary that some distant region, concealed in the bowels of untraversed nature, should be sought ; where the gigantic fabrics of despotism have never been erected. The inventive genius of Columbus was engaged in this more than human enterprise, by the soft whispers of reason, philosophy, and observation. Glowing with ardor at the expectation of immortal honor, from an ex-

pedition of such vast importance to the world, he spreads his sails to the rising breeze, and soon finds himself afloat on an ocean never before traversed by mortal man. Did the sky assume her most frightful veil of darkness and terror ; he remained unmoved. Did thunders roar, lightning stream, and storms terrific collect around him, threatening tempestuous immersion in the unfathomable ocean ; he baffled their deleterious powers by his skill. Did his men mutiny ; he soothed them, till the long wished for land was discovered, with loud shouts and acclamations from the fore-mast, which soon echoed from ship to ship. Gladly he leaped on shore, and hailed this new world, about to become the residence of freedom, and emporium of emancipation. Here liberty retired, though with insufficient force at first to withstand the all-powerful grasp of relentless tyrants ; yet she considered it the most favorable position, when sufficiently prepared, to make a vigorous stand against the further progress of lawless ambition and despotic sway.

Here our ancestors began to settle in 1608 and 1620, with as much freedom as their necessary connections with the tyrants of Europe would permit. In this manner our forefathers fled, not only from political oppression, but from religious persecution, and all the horrors of papal inquisitions. It did not suffice those tyrants to bind the people in bonds of mental servitude ; to seize their property at leisure ; and, when dictated by idle ambition, to involve them in the most destructive wars and religious persecutions, which continually deluged Europe in blood, destroying the lives of millions by cruel massacres and assassinations.

Thus removed from this political and religious slaughter, the increase of freedom and the unshackled exercise of conscience, more than compensated them for their toils, their hardships, the inconveniences of settling a dreary forest, and turning a barren wilderness into a well cultivated and fertile field. Through the vigilant perseverance, the patient fatigue, and honest industry of those hardy adventurers, the face of nature softened her asperity ; she yielded her strength to their incessant labors, and filled their store-houses with smiling plenty.

Through their attention, useful arts and sciences were cultivated ; pleasant villages suddenly rose where forests lately overshadowed the ground. Commerce here erects her places of exchange, to reward the industrious ; while wealth floats across the extensive ocean from distant parts of the globe. The gospel's sweetest voice gently vibrates through the air, lately agitated by savage yells and war whoops.

Though these colonies had ever maintained the strictest regard for their mother country, yet she considered her power but ill established over them ; she saw, to a demonstration, their minds were too manly, too firm, too dignified, to bow, in humble adoration, before a haughty tyrant. She was convinced, from careful observation, that they had never fallen down to worship the image set up by the Nebuchadnezzar of Europe. She saw, with envy, Liberty's altar flaming with the incense of patriotism, and a love for the rights of man, rooting deeply in the breasts of a people inured to hardships, and capable of a brave resistance. It was found that that infant Empire would become a political Sampson, to prostrate in the dust the mighty fabric of despotism, and its haughty builders, when arrived to mature strength.

This combination of circumstances continually agitated the high fed bloody tyrants ; who determined to secure their prey ere it was too late. This they endeavored to do by creeping on with cat-like caution ; but such avarice was not competent to succeed against a nation always awake and watchful of their interests : every movement was quickly perceived, and its designed effects carefully avoided. Finding her court tricks, ministerial intrigues, and deep laid plans, illy calculated for the penetrating eyes of those whom it was her intention to deceive, she determined to throw off the mask, and openly to make her final appeal to force.

Britain, at that period, exulted in her strength ; she considered herself advancing with rapid strides towards universal power : she saw France, her most potent rival, yielding to her the palm of glory and national dignity : she saw her generals returning from different parts of the earth, crowned with laurels and laden with the richest trophies of heroic valor. She imagined the wide extended earth from pole to pole, trembling at the

power of her arms, and reverencing the far sounding glory of her name. Moving in this mighty sphere, she summoned all her strength, (forgetful of her right) to raise her empire above human power. Thus reared thy heaven-defying rod, O Despotism ! to strike at the root of Liberty, and sink with one decisive blow the few remains of freedom in irrecoverable ruin.

This was a time of trouble ; this was a time to try the sincerity of men's hearts and the greatness of their souls. The powers of nature were troubled ; the elements were shaken with peels of thunder ; the heavens burned with lightning ; the northern regions flashed with the Aurora Borealis ; comets, returning through their eccentric orbs, seemed anxious for the event. The genius of Liberty hovers on the wing, on the point of taking flight from earth, never to return ; her devotees cast on each other a silent look of grief mingled with despair ; and the world shrinks from its impending fate. But hark ! when all seems lost ; when consternation seizes the stoutest hearts ; the voice of God, through justice and reason, declares liberty to the colonies. Congress next proclaimed acceptance ; rebounding quick the mandate flies from Georgia to Maine, from the Eastern to the Western ocean ; the feelings of every individual, from one end of the Union to the other, were no longer restrained through fear : every tongue shouted in emphatic language, " We are free, we are independent, we are a sovereign people : " which sound, like universal thunder, strikes the skies ; extatic angels make the loud reply, " to God be glory, and to men good will. "

Liberty again resumes command to lead her animated sons to new exertions of glory. That civility which had been shown to corrupted, misguided, mis-crowned heads, was now cast under the feet of dignified Republicans ; and a form of government, totally unknown to the civilized world, was conceived in this age of miraculous invention : the spirit of God manifested itself, diffusing new light into the human mind. It was now determined, by the genius of Liberty, no longer to struggle on the shoals of despotism and democracy ; nor subject the people to the inconveniences, of all appearing personally to transact their business of state ; but, with Columbian boldness, she ventures on the unexplored

part of the political ocean, to discover and reduce to practice a new and untried system ; which was by agents to collect and consolidate in our grand Legislative Council the minds and interests of the whole community : These to consult the national good, and concert measures adequate to the means for obtaining the same ; and the responsibility of these agents to their constituents, to be the pledge in the hands of the people for the rectitude of their conduct.

A new luminary now guides the minds of the people : not the Democratic star of the East ; not the Aristocratic planet of the South ; not the despotic Tiger of the North ; but the glorious constellation of the West. It is no argument against us, that former Republics have been destroyed ; have fallen through imperfection of system : our plan is different from theirs ; our advantages are superior ; we venture to say, as much superior as our situation is different in the longitude of the earth. We have therefore to draw arguments of our political prosperity and existence only from ourselves ; that is, from our own actual experiment ; which, tracing the progress of our government thus far, since its first establishment, proves a favorable issue.

But yet reflections are serious : when we take a retrospective view of those painful struggles which produced this glorious and mighty revolution ; of those scenes of barbarity which nature turns pale to behold, and which the feeling heart of every true American would gladly consign to eternal oblivion, were not the advantages arising therefrom so immensely great, so infinitely important to every inhabitant of united Columbia ; and, in fine, to the whole family of man.

See your houses in flames ; see your property, acquired by long and steady industry, fall a prey to British cruelty ! See your features, formed of nature's choicest delicacies, destroyed by their inhuman treatment ! See fathers and husbands torn from the tender embraces of their affectionate families, through patriotic zeal, expiring in the field of battle ; and recommending, in their last expiring moments, their orphan children and mourning widows to the care of Almighty God, and their friends ! See almost on the first onset a Warren, a Montgomery fall, whose falling bodies consecrated the ground and made it too holy for the feet of tyrants and

their mercenaries ; and whose departing spirits, as they ascended to heaven, seemed to manifest a portion of the noble patriotic spirit of WASHINGTON, pointed out by the finger of heaven, as the rising glory of America.

Weak and feeble at first, our small but patriotic bands were driven from post to post, bravely contending every inch of ground. The insolent enemy, with fire and sword, marked the path wherever they went with mournful desolation, until the colonies, deeply impressed by their misfortunes, began to despair of success : and their foes, infatuated by their good fortune, thinking their work completed, began to rest in careless security. This, this was a time for the great genius of our WASHINGTON to display all its skill and energy ; in the silence of the night when sleep had given them trifling repose, self-directed, he visits the frozen banks of Delaware ; whose impetuous torrent, as it bears down huge masses of floating ice, reads lessons of terror to approaching man. Here he matured and discussed a masterly plan of operation, and his all-active genius began its immediate execution. He marched on and Moses like in a miraculous manner, crossed in dead of night the murmuring flood, and ere the return of day, saluted his slumbering foe at Trenton, with the dread signal—"surrender !" Lost in amaze, they considered it some phantom, some visionary delusion of the brain ; but alas ! sad experience soon proved it a sensible reality, and nine hundred men became prisoners of war, without striking a single blow ; and before they had time to rally their baffled forces, Princetown shared the same fate.

These unexpected successes inspired Americans universally with new vigor, while fear and dejection sunk deep in the breasts of their opponents.

Here commenced, by the force of this all-active, all-penetrating mind, a series of victories, which finally established the independence we now joyfully celebrate ; covered the American arms with unfading glory ; forced Great Britain to recall, in disgrace, her numerous fleets and armies, and acknowledge the independence and sovereignty of that nation, her haughty pride had led her to insult and abuse. " Thus this brightest gem in his Majesty's crown no longer sparkles on his brow."

Let us now turn again to our own country, our government, and our venerable WASHINGTON, whom we left at the head of a victorious army, endeared to him by long and intimate acquaintance. What was now his language? Did he say to the people, I have fought your battles; I have undergone fatigue and hardship, for which I ask to be rewarded with a crown? Did he say to the soldiers, place me in power and I will give you honorable employment in return? No—the language of a patriot fighting for eight years (with trifling compensation) the battles of his country could never be such. To the people he said, “Your toils, your labors, your dangers are measurably at an end; you have delivered yourselves from the galling yoke of a foreign tyrant; go and enjoy your blessings in peace; that command, that authority, which I received from you, to you I return.”

Then turning to his soldiers he might have said, “We have lived long together in kind and cordial friendship; you have completely triumphed over your enemies, more numerous and better disciplined than yourselves; you have gained from them many laurels, and much gratitude from your fellow-citizens; your work is completed, you may return to the bosom of your country and friends; and as you have been good soldiers, learn henceforth to be good citizens.” Then in an affectionate farewell, that bedewed every cheek with tears of the tenderest friendship, he disbanded the army.

Thus separated an army which might, under a leader of unprincipled ambition, have bound you in those chains of despotism you had so long been struggling to burst; thus this leader of armies, long accustomed to supreme command, by his own voluntary act became a common citizen, and retired to the walks of a private life. But such abilities, joined with such principles, could not long remain in obscurity; a government was to be established, political concerns to be regulated; the eye of the public soon went in search of its beloved WASHINGTON; the united voice called him once more from the plough to the presidential chair; where he shewed himself no less illustrious than at the head of armies. Peace he preserved abroad, unanimity at home; every one is enabled to repose under his own vine and fruit tree, and no excise master or direct tax-gatherer to

molest or make him afraid. He guarded the reputation of government by rectitude of administration, not by corrosive measures; he promoted science by encouraging colleges, academies, and schools; knowing a general diffusion of knowledge to be the main spoke in the government wheel: and agriculture escaped not his wise notice, as on this depends the rotation of this wheel, and the motion of the whole machine. Thus directing the chariot of state in wisdom's unerring path, his first term expires; the same unanimity calls him again to the presidential functions, and the same wise policy continues to guide his administration; a third election was about to manifest the same unbounded confidence; when advanced in years, and debilitated by a long and active life spent in public service, he, in an eloquent and pathetic address to the public, begs leave to retire. This request could not be denied him. He retired; but in his retirement he was accompanied by the hearts and affections of the people; the absence of that genius, which had put the affairs of government in so prosperous a situation, deeply impressed the image of its possessor on the memory of every worthy citizen.

We call on history, both ancient and modern, civil and ecclesiastical, to shew a human character equal to this. Will you cite us a Moses? When did he lead his people to a choice to shew their sense of his administration? When did our WASHINGTON retire to a Mount Sinai, or a Mont Vernon, until the people despaired of his return? Or when was our WASHINGTON forty years establishing his people in the Canaan of America? As to modern names, there is none worthy of attempting a comparison with his. Such, my fellow-citizens, is the character you have lost in the loss of a WASHINGTON; and such is the character which will command unceasing reverence. He is gone! He is dead, to live no more on earth; he lives in heaven's angelic paradise to die no more.

Such is the grandeur, the dignity, the happiness to which we are exalted by our glorious exertions in the cause of freedom. Had British prowess prevailed, different, far different had been our lot, of which to obtain an accurate idea, turn your attention to suffering Ireland, where British insolence, which we repelled, reigns uncontrolled.

Your minds might be called to many, yea very many, British insults which was the prime cause of their having to withdraw in shame and disgrace. But let me call your attention to the bloody standard of British cruelty, exercised towards and levelled against the freedom of our nation, within the last six years. Shall we for a moment call to mind the British insults on the high seas, the high road for every free born son of liberty ; see the sons of amity and peace, drawn from the Chesapeake, and extended between the heavens and earth by the strength of a rope, until the last faint flashes of expiring life had quivered out on their innocent lips. See our merchantmen plundered and robbed of the sustenance calculated for the support of their numerous suffering families ; the vessels burnt, or made instruments of British tyranny ; and the ship's crew, while having wives, affectionate parents, and disconsolate children weeping and mourning at home, are burnt or put on board their floating prisons ; many thousands have shared the same unhappy fate !

While we take a retrospective view of British outrage and massacres, we must rationally conclude it a sufficient cause for the present declaration of War ; and while their atrocities are contemplated, it makes the blood of free-born patriots of Columbia's peaceful shore, to spring in every vein, and causes them to proclaim like peals of thunder, " let us die or be free." At this important crisis, we find the sons of liberty re-animated with the warmest zeal to defend our rights, and fight the battles of our country ; rather choosing to retain our dear-bought liberty by the point of the sword and bayonet, than to dwell peaceably under the reigning power of despotism.

Again, when we view the depredations of the Indians, who are supported from British stores, and agitated by British tolerance, killing and destroying our honest troops on our frontiers ; burning the houses of our citizens ; putting to death the grey headed fathers and mothers ; and torturing, in the most cruel manner, the industrious husbandman ; taring the tender babe from the breast of the affectionate mother, and with the scalping knife and tomahawk separate life from the infant body : the mother ravished, and in a most cruel manner a period is put to her existence.

When we consider these, as brought home to our experience, shall we again say, that we have no cause for war? God forbid the bold, the daring thought!

Our wise Legislative Body, having taken into consideration these cruelties and outrages, have thought fit to proclaim War against the nation, and instigators of those horrid barbarities; it is sanctioned by our illustrious and ever-memorable MADISON, the man of our nation's choice, whose abilities, talents, and piety perfectly qualifies him for the presidential functions.

Hence, it is our indispensable duty not to oppose and resist the good and wholesome laws of our united republic; but to submit to those measures which are productive of our public peace and private interest, and fight like bold veterans in our country's cause; that we may enjoy our liberties, rights, and privileges on earth, till death shall separate us here, and unite our tranquil spirits in realms of unobscured happiness.

On this momentous occasion let me address you, my fellow-citizens, in the name and spirit of patriotism, which ought ever to inspire the heart of every true American.

We are advanced to a solemn crisis, which demands our utmost exertions in the cause of our beloved country; a time when trouble is at the door. But thanks to God that prosperity, victory, and triumph has only veiled themselves behind the curtain of adversity for a moment, and will shortly, we trust, make a joyful appearance to political view. As our country's freedom demand our service, let us, with warm expectations and great exertions, stand for our infinite rights and liberties, which we have shed blood to obtain.

War is truly desperate and distressing; but it is far, yea very far, preferable to a subjection to the reigning power of despotism. Then let the enemies of the rectitude of our government, raise their combined forces against the banner of liberty, we will stand to our arms, commanded by our venerable Chief, with heroic valor.

If our country's cause calls the industrious husbandman from the mechanical institution; the farmer from the plough and harrow; the lawyer from the bar or office; the merchant from the counter; the statesman from the chair; or the ministering servant of the Lord Jesus from the sacred desk, to fight for our freedom,

rights, and liberties ; let us go forth with undaunted courage and unshaken confidence, like Boanerges and sons of thunder, face the enemies of liberty and peace ; and with warlike activity poise the musket and wield the sword in defence of suffering humanity. In so doing the great God of peace will bless us with victory, and spread over us the out-stretched arm of divine philanthropy, and we shall ever dwell in peace and prosperity ; which may God grant for his Son's sake.

*The following Hymns were sung before the procession,
previous to the delivery of the preceding Oration.*

NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE.

NOW to the Lord, O let us raise
A sacred song of grateful praise :
May ev'ry tuneful voice transpire
To strike the notes upon the lyre.

Columbia's sons and daughters hail !
Fair liberty doth here prevail ;
The emigrants, from far and near,
May find a safe asylum here.

Nor kings, nor tyrants' dire domain,
Shall o'er this happy nation reign ;
Nor vassals feel a galling chain,
While Independence we maintain.

The arts and sciences shall here
A progress make, from year to year ;
In equal rights our land shall vie
With any land below the sky.

Religion, that most darling theme,
Through which eternal life is seen ;
To every name or sect is free,
Who stands in Gospel liberty.

O, Gracious God ! propitious smile,
And bless Columbia's fruitful soil ;
May peace and plenty here abound,
And Independence be our crown.

PRAYER FOR AMERICA.

LORD bless Columbia's happy land,
And make her fruitful be ;
Our equal rights wilt thou defend,
And grant us liberty.

May peace extend her balmy wings
 O'er all Columbia's soil ;
 The name of despots, monarchs, kings,
 None of her sons beguile.

May unanimity abound
 Through all her sev'ral States ;
 And stern oppressor ne'er be found
 Descending from the great.

May all our officers be peace,
 Exacters righteousness ;
 O, will Jehovah never cease,
 This nation long to bless.

The lib'ral arts and sciences,
 O, may they flourish here !
 In harmony. O may we live,
 Through each revolving year !

Our rulers, may they all be blest,
 And ruled subject be ;
 While nought but vice our laws oppress,
 The government is free.