

Mr Henry F. S. Ours

AN

Aug

ORATION,

PRONOUNCED *JULY 4th*, 1810 ;

BEFORE THE REPUBLICAN CITIZENS OF *AUGUSTA* AND
THE NEIGHBOURING TOWNS.

IN

COMMEMORATION

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

BY NATHAN WESTON, JUN. Esq.

HALLOWELL—PRINTED BY N. CHEEVER.

[1810]

July 4, 1810.

SIR,

BY the request of our Republican friends convened this day at Augusta, to celebrate the glorious anniversary of our Independence, we present you their thanks for your elegant and patriotic Oration delivered before them, and request of you a copy for the Press.

Accept, Sir, our personal thanks and consideration.

Respectfully,

BARZILLAI GANNETT,
THOMAS FILLEBROWN,
E. T. WARREN.

NATHAN WESTON, JUN. ESQ.

Augusta, July 4, 1810.

GENTLEMEN,

THE approbation of the very respectable Republican gentlemen this day assembled to commemorate the era of our Independence, so politely extended to the hasty production I have had the honor to exhibit, claims from me the tribute of gratitude. I cannot distrust their candor ; upon which, in complying with their request, I feel the utmost assurance I may repose with confidence.

I am, Gentlemen, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

NATHAN WESTON, JUN.

HON. B. GANNETT,

HON. T. FILLEBROWN,

E. T. WARREN, ESQ.

ORATION.

THE origin and establishment of Empires has ever been an object of enlightened curiosity. The sources of their grandeur and the causes of their decay, spread on the page of history, afford monitory lessons from which maxims are deduced promotive of the happiness of social man. If this subject is interesting abstractly considered, the birth of our own empire will certainly excite our warmest sensibilities. We hail the return of this anniversary, as it brings to our recollection a period most resplendent in our history. In the enjoyment of the rich fruits which the revolutionary struggle secured, we consecrate this day with the liveliest emotions of gratitude, to festive joy. The era of our political emancipation will be celebrated with ardent zeal, while patriotism shall be cherished as a public virtue ; while freedom is appreciated as a public blessing ; and while the right of self government is dear to the human heart.—Shall the fire of patriotism ever become extinct in an American bosom, while the return of this high national festival annually revives in his remembrance the proud period in his country's annals, when its patriots surpassed the

boast of ancient virtue ?—The origin of our revolution impresses on the American character the stamp of greatness. Man is almost every where the passive slave of artificial power. Seldom indeed does he resist its mandates ; and successive generations present their willing necks to the oppressor's yoke. The people of America, with the discernment of profound statesmen, penetrated the first insidious approaches of arbitrary power, while its effects were yet distant and concealed. A trifling exaction flowing from a despotic principle assumed by the mother country, awakened their energies to manly resistance. That people deserved to be free whose vigilance was alive to the first invasion of their rights ; who could meet undismayed the terrors and devastations of unremitting war, and whose steady perseverance the pressure of adverse fortune and the lapse of years could not relax.

THE story of our revolution ; the achievements of our country ; the unfading laurels won by her matchless chief, the departed WASHINGTON, and his brave and virtuous compeers in the fields of glory, are deeply imprinted in our remembrance. If such were the infant exertions of our country, what will be the deeds of its manhood ? Shall we distrust our means of protection and defence ? Shall the erect and manly spirit of America tremble at the hostile frown of the mightiest empires ? It is not thus that we cherish the glory of our fathers ; it is not thus that we emulate their manly virtues.

THE superior virtue and intelligence of America was not less conspicuous after the successful termination of its struggle for independence. The establish-

ment of the Federal Constitution consecrated the principles of the revolution. In that glorious monument of enlightened political science, and in the fundamental organization of the state governments, every barrier is established for the security of the civil and political rights of man which the experience of ages could suggest.

SINCE the period of our revolution, the civilized world has received a new form. The ancient political structure of Europe has been dissolved, and in many instances scarcely a trace of the old establishments remain. The French Republic, even in her revolutionary paroxisms, while torn with factions which successively became the victims of each other, reacted with such irresistible vigor upon her enemies, that she imposed her own terms on her suppliant foes of the continent. A succession of extraordinary events has invested her favorite general with her immense power, and all its accumulations. On the continent, nothing can resist the unparralleled genius of the Emperor BONAPARTE, holding at his devotion the finest and best appointed armies the world has ever witnessed, and commanding with despotic sway the resources of France and her dependent states. At his nod, kings are hurled from their thrones, and their dependent sceptres bestowed on the submissive instruments of his will. The march of his armies, like the lightening of Heaven, can hardly be traced but by its effects. With a rapidity unparralleled in the history of modern times, he scatters and destroys opposing armies ; and a nation is subdued before him in a single day. The imperial despot of the North, unequal to the mighty conflict,

submissively courts the power he had been unable to meet in arms. The troops of *Prussia*, trained in the discipline of the great FREDERIC, fell before the arm of BONAPARTE at the battle of *Jena*. Unhappy *Spain*, long bowed beneath the weight of ecclesiastical and civil tyranny, still protracts the lingering and doubtful hope of independence. *Austria*, the ancient rival of France, successively humbled by the battles of *Marengo*, of *Austerlitz*, and of *Wagram*, yields to the demands of the conqueror, and holds the remnant of her dominions at his mercy ; after having seen her capital and her palaces in his possession.

FOR a while the blaze of war abates, and gives place to the nuptial torch. The modern Hercules reposes from his toils, and receives a bride from the imperial house of vanquished Austria. To the labors of the tented field succeed pomp and revelry ; brilliant illuminations and gay and splendid fetes. His panting legions pause and participate in the festive scene ; ready at his voice to bear his eagles to *Madrid* or *Lisbon* ; to the regions of the North, or to the capital of the Ottomans.

AMID the storms which convulsed the old world, America for a series of years enjoyed a state of unrivalled prosperity. Under the fostering protection of the federal constitution and government, the resources of our infant empire unfolded themselves with astonishing rapidity. It was a spectacle the contending nations could not view with indifference. Justice and impartiality never yet allayed the jealousy of power. *Britain*, traversing the ocean with her thousand ships of war, arrogated to herself the sovereignty of

the seas, and claimed to make the world tributary by her commercial monopoly. She could not patiently endure that the American flag should be displayed in every part of the globe ; that we should unmolested augment our means of protection and defence, by the accumulating fruits of our industry, until we could bid defiance to her floating castles ; until American bravery could combat with equal arms on the highway of nations, and the thunder of our cannon speak as loud as hers. In her career of injustice to repress the rising energies of America, she wrested from our peaceful merchant ships, lawfully navigating the ocean, our native born seamen, to fight her battles. The varying rules which guided her courts of admiralty were moulded to entrap our legitimate commerce ; her blockading system, often extended beyond the bounds authorised by public law, at length embraced almost without exception the whole continent of Europe.—*France*, not to be outdone in wanton violations of neutral rights, interdicted our lawful trade by her decrees, even beyond the extent of her power and influence.

ASSAILED on all sides by the injustice of the belligerents, our government deemed it prudent for a time to withdraw from the ocean. It was an evidence of the virtue and patriotism of our rulers, which it is not easy to resist. Had they been actuated by the interested motives imputed to them by their enemies, would they have pursued a system which jeopardized their political considerations with the people ? Would they have furnished to their opponents weapons, which they were assured would be wielded against them, and which it was at least doubtful wheth-

er they could resist with success ? It was an experiment honorable to the character of a large majority of the American citizens. A free people, arrested in the full tide of their successful and favorite pursuits, to which they were equally wedded by their habits and affections, yielded to the voice of their government, which required that they should forego and suspend them. It was not effected by the arm of despotic power, but by the mild and equal authority of law. It was not enforced by the bayonets of an insolent soldiery, but by the regular civil functionaries, in the ordinary discharge of their duty. Such at least during the first year of the existence of the laws requiring a suspension of external commerce, were all the means adopted to enforce them. Happy would it have been for our country, if those enlightened and patriotic sentiments, which actuated a majority of the American people to support their government in the hour of national calamity, had been equally felt by the minority in opposition. We should then have presented to our enemies an attitude too imposing to be disregarded. Viewing the union, the strength, and the resources of our country, the belligerents would have courted our friendship and dreaded our enmity. To one of them a commercial intercourse with the union was of the utmost importance. In the arrangement of Mr. Erskine she recognized the just claims of our government and sanctioned the wisdom of its measures. In her subsequent disavowal of it, after she had attained her object, the charge of perfidy is but feebly parried by the stale pretences of ministerial evasion.

THE arrogance of federalism has long denounced the republicans, as actuated by licentious and disor-

ganizing principles ; as ready to loosen the bands of society, and disclaim the authority of law ; as hostile to the federal principle, and opposed to the federal constitution ; as enemies to the saviour of our country and the maxims that guided that enlightened statesman. Let the unvarying character of the republicans, exhibiting a steady adherence to law and to order ; a uniform support of the union and its government, and a sacred regard to the invaluable legacy of the illustrious WASHINGTON, repel the imputation. It were well if the original of the picture they have pourtrayed existed no where but in the fancy.

A GOVERNMENT competent to enforce obedience is essential to the very existence of civil society. A free government is the offspring of law. The barriers it raises for its security must be complicated, and the authority of law sovereign. Whenever a body of men array themselves in opposition to it, they strike at the existence of political liberty. For a government of law, they substitute a government of men. The turbulent passions, unrestrained by civil ties, rage for a time in the wild tumult of anarchy, from which the transition to the still and deadly repose of despotism is inevitable. To us is secured the inestimable privilege of selecting our rulers by the voice of the majority. Within the extent of their powers, the duty of obedience is sanctioned by double ties ; as they derive their authority directly from ourselves, and as we hold our liberties by the regard we pay to the sovereignty of the laws. This principle ought at all times to influence the civil conduct of every good citizen ; but more especially when the safety of our country is endangered, and its rights trampled upon

by external enemies. On such an occasion the murmurs of internal discord should be hushed, and the voice of party dissensions be silent. At such a moment it is the most obvious dictate of patriotism to rally round the standard of our government, and to present to the enemies of our country a united and formidable array. American Republicans, have you perceived the party who oppose you actuated by those plain and obvious principles of duty? Have they lent their aid to the support of the government, chosen by the will of the majority? Have they by their patriotic union in support of the rights of their country, divested our external enemies of all encouragement arising from party dissensions? No, fellow-citizens, they seized the moment of national calamity to sow the seeds of disaffection. They struggled to embarrass your government and to clog the operation of its measures. They encouraged violations of the laws, and then denounced as tyrannical the legal sanctions which those violations rendered necessary. Have they not by their incessant opposition gone very far to defeat the policy of the government? The legislature of this commonwealth, in which they had obtained an ascendancy by their unremitting efforts, was made the theatre of opposition to the general government. Petitions and remonstrances, breathing the most seditious sentiments, were received with respectful attention; and the spirit of disaffection countenanced and encouraged. Not contented with expressing their own disapprobation of its measures in strong and unequivocal language, and their disposition to oppose them; they presented to their constituents, in their official character, an elaborate address, in which they denounced the general government; its policy; the

whole train of its measures ; and the character of those who had been entrusted to administer it. In this extraordinary production, which in its consequences might have led, but for the discernment and patriotism of the people, to a secession from the union, they reprobated with all the asperity of party invective, the means by which the administration then in power had obtained an ascendancy in the government ; although the President had received the unanimous suffrage of the electors of Massachusetts ; and with the exception of fourteen votes, of the whole union. Every engine of party and every motive of discontent were put in requisition to effect a revolution in the gubernatorial election. In the last legislature as if this commonwealth had assumed the powers of the general government, they appointed their committee of *foreign relations*, who, in a lengthy report, advocated the cause of the discarded British minister.

IN the paroxism of opposition which pervaded the New-England states, the hopes of federalism were elevated, and the veil which concealed their secret policy in part lifted. Ye pretended disciples of Washington, what were the secret counsels of your conclave? Was the preservation of the union the leading object of your wishes? Did you suffer its continuance to be doubted in your assemblies? Did you indignantly silence the first whispers of a secession? Or did a Northern Confederacy exhibit to you charms too attractive to be resisted? Our most disinterested and enlightened statesmen have ever deemed a federal union the ark of our political safety. Important, as affording strength adequate to external defence ; as competent to the best and most effectual management of

our financial and commercial concerns; and above all, as a security against those bloody conflicts, which have deformed the face of the old world; and which from the nature of imperfect man, are inseparably incident to neighbouring independent governments, respectively possessed of the right of making war and peace. The jealousy of power and the mad impulse of ambition, are of themselves every where fruitful sources of discord and bloodshed. If in addition to these, we consider the influence of foreign intrigue, which has never failed to have its full range among small states, unconnected by an adequate and efficient general government, a dissolution of the union would be deprecated by us as the most formidable of calamities.

IN ancient days the states of Greece were the seat of freedom and the arts. They were distinguished by all that adds dignity to human nature. Their warriors, their statesmen, their philosophers, their historians, have been the admiration of succeeding times. In the fine arts their genius has never been surpassed. By their advances in science and the arts, the human intellect has been enlightened, and their illustrious citizens have been portrayed by their inimitable writers as models of the most sublime and elegant accomplishments. Civil discord exposed them even to the influence of barbarian intrigue. In the course of their domestic turmoils their citizens had often lowered the proud crest of freedom to do homage to the satraps of Persia, before their want of union exposed them an easy prey to the kings of Macedon and the successors of Alexander. When the successors of Alexander sunk beneath the ascendancy of

Roman genius, the free spirit of Greece was yet hardly extinct ; a union might have reanimated it and secured their independence. The artful policy of Rome restored them to a semblance of liberty, and to the vices of their former discordant system ; which it took care to encourage and increase. A few more paroxysms of internal dissension prepared the weary combatants to receive the servile form of a dependent province. The same want of union, and the same materials of discord in the feudal ages, carried war and devastation into every corner of Europe. It was not a public warfare between mighty independent kingdoms ; but an internal fermentation of rapine and bloodshed, carried on by innumerable chieftains. Germany, though highly civilized and enlightened, presented but recently an image of feudal disunion. With a population and resources not inferior to the mightiest empires of Europe, her disjointed states have been successively played off against each other, until they fell an easy sacrifice to French power. Her ancient constitution is faintly shadowed by the Confederation of the Rhine ; but their chief no longer resides among them, and no longer accepts a nominal obedience.

AMONG the causes of congratulation in the recent expression of public opinion, it is not one of the least that the hopes of the Northern Confederacy have been blasted. The citizens of Massachusetts, in elevating to the chair of state a patriot of the revolution, exhibit an unequivocal proof that they still cherish the principles of that memorable period. Massachusetts, powerful by her population, her opulence, her naval and military resources, again presents herself a ready

associate in support of the union. Her sisters of New-England rally in the common cause. We are again formidable to our enemies ; prepared to repel aggressions and maintain our rights.

THE troubled aspect of our foreign relations continually urge us to depend only upon ourselves. That public law which had been consecrated by the respect of civilized nations, and by the immutable principles of justice, is now totally disregarded. Commerce, which diffused mutual benefits ; which extended to every clime the conveniences and comforts of all ; which cherished the social principle, and extended the sphere of human knowledge, is deprived of that freedom which alone supported and sustained it. The Emperor of the French proclaimed himself the champion of the liberty of the seas, and of free trade. Preposterous idea ! a tyrant the champion of freedom ! To correct the excesses of Britain, he more than imitates her example. He seizes with a rapacious hand the property of unoffending neutrals, who were the carriers to his subjects of many of the comforts of life. Millions of American property are sequestered in his ports, and millions converted to his imperial use. From the representative of our government alone, at his court, he hears the manly accents of freedom and independence. In the dignified language of our minister, we perceive the sentiments and spirit of our illustrious PRESIDENT. It will remain an eternal monument to refute the idle imputation of French attachments so absurdly thrown upon our government.—The car of power is however callous to the remonstrances of justice. To all who approach

the despot of Europe, he uses the accents of a master ; and the language of his official communications to our minister, but faintly conceals the temper of lawless domination. America may soon be called to assert in arms her violated rights. United, she possesses ample means of protection and defence. The legions of Europe must buffet the storms of the ocean and the perils of a protracted voyage, before they can violate our shores. On those shores, far from friendly aid, they would meet the opposing and formidable array of determined patriots, stimulated to repel the invaders by the most powerful incentives that can inflame the human mind. If they received unbroken the first attack, the conflict would be incessantly renewed, until their forces were scattered and destroyed.

OUR country embraces the most fertile climes, teeming with the richest productions of nature, which contribute to the support and comfort of civilized life. To ungrateful Europe we have carried articles of the first necessity. Our ships have borne to them the luxuries of the East and of the West. To her manufacturers we have contributed in abundance the basis of their fabrics. America has presented to them a most extensive market for the products of their industry, which has given subsistence to their artizans, and enabled them to comply with the exactions of their governments. Our habits have given the preference to the showy, but less durable productions of their looms. From them we have received the expensive baubles and decorations of fashion, which are sought and purchased with avidity.— Though invited to manufactures by many advanta-

ges, we have been accustomed to depend on Europe for what we might easily furnish ourselves. A suspension of our usual commercial intercourse has, by discontinuing the usual supply of some of our real and many of our artificial wants, created a temporary inconvenience ; but it is confidently believed the advantages derived from it will be permanent. Our real independence has been promoted by a rising spirit of manufactures. A capital has been directed to that interesting object. A patriotic preference is now given to the productions of our own fleeces and the labors of our own looms. The northern and middle states will shortly become the seat of important manufactures, adequate not only to domestic supply, but furnishing a surplus for exportation. The manufacturing towns on our own shores will then present an ample market for the produce of the farmer ; while they will furnish in return of domestic production, articles of necessity and convenience, which we have long sought for in Europe and its dependencies.

THE dependence of America on Europe is every day diminishing. The Brazils have furnished an assylum to the exiled monarchy of Portugal ; and in that quarter of our continent an extensive empire has been established upon an independent basis. The extensive and opulent American provinces of Spain, long held in a state of colonial vassalage, have asserted their claim to self government, and to a free intercourse with the world, from which they had been excluded by the mistaken maxims of an illiberal monopoly. In an active commerce with those rising states, who will look to us as their elder sister in the establishment of American independence, we shall re-

ceive some indemnity for the many embarrassments which have accumulated in the ordinary channels of commercial enterprise.

To America it has been reserved under very many advantages, to demonstrate to the world that rational liberty is consistent with the preservation of law and of social order. This high privilege does not in its result affect ourselves only. The civil and political blessings of posterity will be determined by its exercise. For its preservation we are responsible to the whole human race. If liberty cannot be secure here, it will henceforth exist only in the fancy of the poet or in the remembrance of former times. It is here interwoven with every fibre of our civil and political organization. It has been consecrated by the habits of two centuries, from the first settlement of our country ; by the revolutionary conflict ; by the privations and the blood of our fathers. If we appreciate its value, our vigilance will be constantly directed to its preservation. We shall cherish every institution established for the diffusion of useful knowledge, and the support of the republican virtues. Virtue and knowledge are the firm and lofty pillars upon which rests the temple of freedom ; while they are cherished and preserved, the superstructure will bid defiance to the insidious malice, and open attacks of its enemies.