

ORATION,

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Democratic Republicans,

OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF

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BY RICHARD BACHE, Esq.

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ORATION.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS—

While the origin of other nations is lost, in the distant retrospect of time, or enveloped in the fables of tradition, behold! the Freemen of America are assembled, to commemorate *the National birth day*, as an event, fresh, in all its struggles, to the memory; and real, in all its blessings, to the heart.

The nations of Europe passed from the savage, to the civilized, state, by a slow and silent gradation: but the American nation, sprung into existence, like Pallas from the front of Jove, endowed, at once, with all the wisdom of ages, and all the refinements of society. Many of the Founders of European Empire, may survive in the mere glitter of a name; and annual festivals may designate the epochs of their wars, their devastations, and their triumphs: But the Founders of the American Empire, flourish, in the imperishable lessons of political truth, which they practically taught mankind; and the day, hallowed by their patriotism—the auspicious Fourth of July one thousand seven hundred and seventy six!—will afford a theme, for gratitude and exultation, as long as the love of *Virtue, Liberty, and Independence*, shall adorn the human character.

Little more than three centuries have elapsed, since the genius of Columbus opened the regions of the West, to the hope and the enterprise, of the sons of Europe. During that period, what dangers have been surmounted; what wonders have been wrought! In our portion of the new world, immeasurable wilds have been converted into fruitful fields. The desert shores of the Atlantic, have been lined with the lofty seats of commerce. The arts, that support and embellish social life, on the banks of the Thames, the Scheldt, and the Seine, have been transferred to the Delaware, the Hudson and the Potowmac. And ten millions of civilized men, have become the inhabitants of that country, which was, previously, nothing more, than a hunting ground, for scant and scattered tribes of Savages.

Nor is the change in the physical condition of our country, a subject for greater admiration, than the developement of its intellectual and political character. From the overflowing population of the European continent, we have derived the moral elements of every soil, and of every clime; we have amalgamated the varieties of human manners, languages, and institutions; to constitute a new nation. Here, the distressed have sought solace; the persecuted have found safety; and even the ambitious have achieved fame. Equality of rights (the noblest aim of man, in all his migrations) has formed a deep and durable foundation, for civil liberty, and religious toleration. The spirit of independence, bursting the bonds of colonial servitude, gave a lasting lustre to the American Confederation. And a People, who; but a few years ago, were tributary in all their industry, and in all their wealth, to the avarice and the pride of a distant monarch, bravely asserting their own sovereignty, enjoy the only free government, known to the inhabitants of the earth.

Such is the rich inheritance transmitted to us, by the virtue and the valor of our Fathers: but mark, Fellow Citizens, it descends, charged with the sacred duty to improve and to preserve it. Indulge in a fond, but reasonable, anticipation of events; contemplate in "the mind's eye" the probable destinies of your country; and the duty, will become the delight, of every Patriot. Are power and dominion the objects of desire? In the perspective of a single century, what territory so vast; what clime so various; what population so numerous! Not ancient Rome, when called the mistress of the world: Not modern France, surrounded, in all the pride of conquest, by dependent thrones.—But if the mild pursuits of social life, are preferred to the high soarings of ambition, let imagination extend a chain of Confederation, link after link, connecting and combining the family of States, from the Atlantic to the Pacific;—let the representative principle of a democratic republic, refined and matured, by the experience of a few generations, be traced in the virtue of its source, and the energy of its effects;—let the channels, and the instruments, of internal commerce (the treasures of your mountains and your vallies, your rivers and your lakes) be viewed in their destined activity: And the prospect presents, to the enraptured sight, whatever can perpetuate the independence, the freedom, and the happiness, of your country.

A trust, so great, so precious, will never be betrayed: And yet, Fellow Citizens, you must not be insensible, to the dangers, that surround and threaten. The Declaration of Independence, which we celebrate, was hardly more important to our Country, than the Declaration of the War, in which we are engaged. The one, announced our existence as a nation: the other, announces our determination, to maintain the rights and honor of the national character. Britain waged the war of the Revolution, to bind us in the letters of her legislative authority, "in all cases whatsoever:" but she failed. The denunciations of her Parliament; the thunders of her fleet; the ravages of her armies passed away; and, with the loss of the brightest jewel in her diadem, she lost, also, her humanity;—the noblest attribute of renown in arms. Britain has again raised the Sceptre of usurpation; and, spurning the law of nature and of nations, demands subjection and allegiance, for her commercial supremacy, "in all cases whatsoever:" but she shall again fail. True, we have suffered much, and we have long complained, before the avenging sword was drawn. You have seen the guilty competition of GEORGE and NAPOLEON, for the sovereignty of the waters, and the sovereignty of the land, overwhelm the independence, and annihilate the prosperity, of unoffending, and defenceless Governments. The American commerce throughout the world, has been so restrained and bounded, by Orders in Council, and Decrees of State, that your Navigators ceased to find, in the magic of the Compass, a guide, for any legitimate port of destination. The sanctity of private property has been violated, by every species of authorised depredation and pillage. The purity of your Flag has been sullied with every stain, and every insult, that brutal force could inflict. And even the palladium of your national safety, the sacred Union of the States, has been assailed, with all the arts and agency of corruption. This, and more, much more, you knew and felt, "before the avenging sword was drawn." But patient forbearance, adds to the merit of the best cause; and, if in the vanity of his conceptions, the Enemy has ever mistaken a laudable love of peace, for the pusillanimous dread of war, he has already been compelled to dismiss, if not to repent, the delusion.

For the freedom of commerce; for the emancipation of seamen; for the reparation of injuries: America, at length, assumed the armor and the attitude of war. Britain was not, indeed, the only object of our just resentments; and France has, yet, to answer to the heavy charges of lawless spoliation; odious duplicity; and violated faith; but Bri-

tain, alone, had closed the door of negotiation; and, voluntarily, presented herself as a foe, without dispositions to conciliate, or atone. For the reluctant, lingering, equivocal, revocation of her Orders in Council (whatever may be the pretext, in relation to our government) was, in fact, a temporary sacrifice of the ministerial system of commercial monopoly, to the craving, and the clamor of her own populace; leaving essential causes of the war, untouched and unsatisfied.

Involved, then, in hostilities, as unavoidable as they are just, the difficulties of our situation were neither unknown, nor disregarded. The war of 1776, was, emphatically a war of the people; spontaneously proclaimed by their will, and irresistibly prosecuted by their zeal, acting (as it were) in the capacity of Individuals. But the war of 1812, is the war of an organized government; the appointed guardians of a free and enlightened nation; acting under the constitutional restraints of delegated authority. Hence, armies were to be created; navies must be equipped; the treasury is to be replenished (not by the eager contributions of personal service, and private property, which characterise a civil war, but) by the slow and cautious application of legislative power. If, therefore, the jealous nature of Republican institutions, allows little for military preparation, during a time of peace, the first movements of war, must inevitably be exposed, to all the hazards of inexperience in the commanders; of imperfect discipline in the troops; and of irregularity in the supplies. Abate, for this cause, all that a hope, too sanguine, gave to the anticipations of the campaign, and what has occurred, even on the frontier of the Lakes, to depress our spirits; or to gratify the pride of the enemy? We look not at the transient effects of treachery, or of cowardice, in military chiefs; we despair not, for the loss of an army, or the failure of an expedition; disasters of a day: but, with fond and glowing admiration, we contemplate those tests of personal enterprize and prowess, which afford the best assurance, of the ultimate triumph of our arms. When, and where, has any American, shrunk, in the field, from the performance of his duty? Detroit was surrendered; but the victory of Brownstown had been previously achieved. Queenstown was rescued; but by a force so great, and at a price so high, that success afforded no triumph, and defeat incurred no reproach. If defensive operations are the subject of military fame, the abortive siege of Fort Meigs, or the recoiling assault upon Sackett's harbor, shall furnish an ample theme. If the energy of offensive war demands the tribute of applause, let the battlements of Yorktown, totter to their base, and the Royal Standard of Fort George, be displayed! But, alas! we turn with an aching eye, even from a scene of glory, which proved fatal to the life of the heroic PIKE.

Hasten, then, fellow citizens, to survey the frontier of the ocean, irradiated with a splendor, which, in a moment, broke upon the astonished world; but which no lapse of time can extinguish, or obscure. Britain, for her pride, had claimed; Britain, from her fortunes, had perhaps acquired; the sovereignty of the seas. Territorial lures of ambition, tempted France to throw the trident from her grasp. Spain, in the lethargy of a diseased and decrepid monarchy, became torpid on the waters. Holland lost, with the stimulants of trade, all the faculties of maritime war. The States of the Baltic, plundered of their fleet by treachery at Copenhagen, or by capitulation in the Tagus, were rendered impotent and idle. And thus, at the commencement of the American war, the flag of Britain waved triumphant on every sea, from the Zenith to the Nadir; from the Orient, to the setting Sun. The vanity of the triumph was indulged; but happily, the means of maintaining it were overlooked. The American Naval character had been formed in the Revolution: It was nobly developed, during our hostilities with France: it received the stamp of sterling merit, before the walls of Tripoli: And, yet, of late, the naval character of America was so little understood that the merest braggart of the

British fleet, thought he might safely make it the object of a challenge; and the gravest Senators of the British Parliament, ventured to laugh at it, as a jest. But the day of retribution came! If, like Xerxes, the monarch of Britain confides in the countless numbers of his naval host, he ought to dread, not less than Xerxes, the dauntless spirit of a Spartan Band. Already has our gallant squadron traversed the Ocean, on every point, and hovered on every coast, in defiance of the foe. The Royal Standard has already five times fallen beneath the Republican Banner, in equal combat, ship to ship. The banks of Ontario and Erie, reverberate the mingled sounds of military and naval enterprise. Even the exploits of the private armed vessels of our citizens (superior to the sordid impulse of predatory warfare) have added lustre to the national glory. The spell of British power is broken! The colossal structure of her ships, and the ostentatious variety of her fleets, may for a while protract the maritime ascendancy of Britain; but the spell of British power was broken, when Britain was no longer found to be invincible on the chosen element of her empire. The illustrious champions of "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights," detecting the secret of her usurpation, have emancipated the world from the terrors of a name; and LAWRENCE (the brave, the generous, the patriotic Lawrence!) dying, "with all his country's wishes blest," died not in vain.

With a just cause, with a fair object, and with the instruments of civilized warfare, America maintains the arduous conflict. But in the career of British hostilities, where shall we discover the pride of the warrior, or the virtue of the Christian? That Navy which could justly boast of the victories of the Nile and Trafalgar, is now, principally, employed, in the pursuit of shallops, and of oyster-boats; or in sending forth troops of marauders, to pillage and alarm the scattered inhabitants of an open coast. The bombardment of the useful nest of Pilots and fishermen at Lewistown, was an achievement of a higher order; and the conflagration of the defenceless villages of the Chesapeake, will, probably serve to amuse the United Kingdom, in the monotonous pages of a London Gazette.

Nor, while these outrages upon humanity, and the laws of civilized war are perpetrated by the sailor, on the one side, does the soldier fail, on the other side, to emulate the example. Allied with the savages in arms, and almost assimilated with them in nature, the troops of Canada are ferocious, without courage; and treacherous, without art. Like the savages themselves, they seek not an enemy, but a victim. Excited only by a thirst of blood, they are equally gratified by the stream, whether it flows from the head of the old or of the young;—from the heart of woman, or of man! But it remained for the depravity and the disgrace of the present times, to give to such appetites, and such dispositions, (sufficiently detestable, as the vice of individuals) the testimonial and the sanction of an organized government. Yes: even in the sanctuary of the legislative council of a government, framed and administered by the majesty of Britain; by the self-created asserter of the civil liberties of mankind; by the eulogized bulwark of our Holy Religion; the blended trophies of the tomahawk and the scalp, the mace and the mitre, were found ostentatiously displayed!

But, after all, Fellow Citizens, whatever may be the trials, and the casualties of the war, be assured, that, if America is true to herself, she has nothing to fear in the result, from the power, or the policy, of other nations. Let her be true to herself, according to the example, and the precepts of her departed chief;—WASHINGTON, the great and the good!—and she will love peace, but not peace without honor; she will cherish liberty, but the liberty of the laws; and she will cultivate harmony, but, above all, the harmony of the UNION. For far different objects, however, faction assumes the name of WASHINGTON: Under the mantle of that sacred name, ambition aims at power; sedi-

tion disseminates discontent ; and even treason lurks, in anxious hostility to the constitution. We have seen men, who were solicitous for a war with England in 1793 ; who waged a war against France in 1798 ; who demanded an act of war against Spain in 1802 ; who clamored, once more, for a war with England in 1806 ; and who, at this moment, pant for a war against imperial France ; adopt, with all the complacency of an accommodating forgetfulness, the title of **THE FRIENDS OF PEACE !** We have, also, seen men, who disclaimed an acquiescence, in the sense of a legitimate majority ; who encouraged violations of the restrictive system, lawfully established ; who appealed to the people, from a solemn declaration of war, made by the constituted authorities of the nation ; who openly asperse the American cause, and vindicate the cause of Britain ; who deny to the national authority, the aid of the national militia ; who brand the service of the American soldier, with the guilt of the murderer ; and, who, even now, meditate a deep and deadly stroke at the public credit of the Union ;—rally, unblushingly rally, under the denomination of “ **THE FRIENDS OF ORDER AND GOOD GOVERNMENT.**” But these are the weak, and the abortive efforts, of a few aspiring minds. The people, intelligent, virtuous, and sovereign, can neither be deceived ; nor overawed. And **THIS DAY'S FESTIVAL**, shall forever remind them of **THE INDEPENDENCE**, which it is their happiness to enjoy, and their duty to defend.
