

AN
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT

FRYEBURG, MAINE,

ON THE 4TH DAY OF JULY, 1812;

AT THE REQUEST OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLICANS
OF FRYEBURG AND THE ADJACENT TOWNS.

.....
BY WILLIAM BARROWS, JUN.
.....

O Fortunatos, nimium, sua si bona norint!—VIRGIL.
———AMERICANOS!

“Excessive partiality for one foreign nation, and excessive dislike of another, cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other. *Real patriots, who may resist the intrigues of the favorite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.*”—Washington’s Farewell Address.

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Wm Barrows Willam
Fryeburg Me. 1812

FRYEBURG, JULY 4TH, 1812.

SIR,

The subscribers, Committee of Arrangements, in behalf of the WASHINGTONIAN REPUBLICANS this day assembled in this town, to celebrate the anniversary of our National Independence, express their acknowledgments and their high gratification for your Oration delivered on the occasion; and request a copy for publication.

With great regard,

Your friends,

OLIVER GRISWOLD,

JOHN BRADLEY,

H. Y. B. OSGOOD,

ABIEL FARNUM,

JOSHUA DURGIN.

WILLIAM BARROWS, JUN. ESQ.



To the Committee of the Washingtonian Republicans, assembled at Fryeburg, 4th July, A. D. 1812.

GENTLEMEN,

I submit to your disposal the copy you have requested.

W. BARROWS, JUN.

July 10th, 1812.

ANOTHER year has rolled its round. Again we hail the birth day of Liberty....a day, which commemorates the commencement of a new era in the history of governments. It commemorates men and measures, feats of valour and deeds of patriotism, which have so often been the subjects of eulogy, that language now affords us no adequate terms to celebrate their praises.

Suffice it therefore for a history of our national Independence....we were oppressed....we resisted....and we overcame. Thanks to that Being, who directed our Solomons in council, and our Washington in the field.

As we are now to be engaged in a new war, it may be more profitable, to consider the expediency of it....to "sit down and count the cost," than to narrate the events of *that*, which has so gloriously past. *That* acquired our Independence....*this* may establish it more firmly, or may hasten its downfall. *That* was a war for existence....*this* is declared to be a war for honor and for conquest!

But are we at liberty to discuss this topic with freedom? If not, why have we assembled to celebrate our Independence? Are we yet freemen, and shall we not speak?

But do the citizens at large enjoy a privilege, denied to their representatives, called to deliberate and act in the grand council of the nation? Shall a Randolph be silenced on the question of war; and shall the people speak as freely as they think? Has not the time now nearly arrived, often predicted by a few modern patriots, when the lips of opposition are to be sealed up forever? When the opposers of a particular system of administration are to be set down as "*the enemies of government!*" Their tongues torn out by the roots...their heads elevated on poles at the corners of the streets...grinning forth a horrid memento, to all, who dare question the infallibility of rulers!

Shame on such a cowardly sentiment. Shame and contempt cover that freeman, who on *such* a day...in such an assembly, dares not "call his tongue his own."

But although we enter our solemn protest against this degrading doctrine, we would ever observe the distinction between liberty and licentiousness...between a manly and temperate discussion of public *measures*, and a virulent and indiscriminate slander of public *men*.

We are to be engaged in a new war! How important then, that the causes, the policy, and the consequences of a war should be duly considered, and freely discussed? Particularly, as we complain of injuries from the two most powerful nations on the globe...nations, of insatiable

ambition...exasperated against each other, with all that deadly hate, which a war of extermination can produce. That such nations should give sufficient and just cause of war to a pacific neutral, is not strange. The depravity of individuals and communities furnishes an easy solution of it. But that the neutral, however pacific, should be so much at a loss, which has inflicted the *most*, and which the *first* injury, as to ~~have~~ *leave* it doubtful after years of endurance, whether to wage war with *one* or with *both* of them, is a singular instance, on which it is believed the history of other countries ~~can throw~~ *can* afford no precedent. Still, we might more easily reconcile, even this, to a sanity of understanding, than that she should select for an enemy the Power, which has done ~~the~~ the least injustice *her*...the one, which is capable of wounding her most deeply. On a principle of vengeance and punishment, she should attack the most atrocious aggressor. On a principle of policy, the one, to whom herself is least vulnerable. When both these concur, there would seem no possibility of erring in a choice. But suppose we could reconcile it, that she must fight the least aggressor, and the most powerful assailant, still that she attack where her enemy is incapable of being injured, and leave herself exposed to the enemy's fury...where every shaft must wound as deep as death...where every blow must deal destruction...must be a mode of conduct utterly indefensible on the principles of reason and common sense.

Should this description of a neutral nation compare so well with our own, that no one could

mistake its application, deplorable indeed must be our condition....In vain have our fathers fought....in vain their exertions....they have only blown up a bubble, which the first blast may incorporate with the surface, on which it is raised.

As to injuries received....I will not occupy your time....I will not mortify that honorable pride, which freemen ought ever to feel, by reciting the disgraceful catalogue. I will not enquire who took the lead in the outrages....who has inflicted the deepest, and the blackest insults. *elatus* I will not go to ~~details~~ and records to spy out the precedency of Orders and Decrees....nor weave up the common sophistry of the day, to prove them *exactly* contemporaneous. I will not enquire, which belligerent has violated the most treaties....which has broken the most oaths....which has *burnt* and *sequestered*, which has *condemned* and *sold* our property....which has *impressed*, and which has *imprisoned* our citizens. However great and aggravated we might show the provocations to have been....however we might dress them up in argument, and beat our antagonists in a wordy warfare, we will wave them at this time, and with that celebrated statesman from the south, whose name we have before mentioned, “*would to God our aggressors had more of the argument, and we had less of the injury.*”

But the policy of waging war, in the manner contemplated, for any cause or any provocation, may justly be questioned. Our maritime rights

are infringed....we abandon our commerce, or leave it unprotected, and attack a peaceable, unoffending Province, belonging to one of the aggressing powers. It is usual, when wronged, to seek a redress of the same nature of the injury complained of. But if this be not an invariable rule....if we may make a reprisal of a different nature from the injury received, still it should be of that nature, which would most sensibly injure the enemy....would prove most advantageous to ourselves and be acquired with the least possible sacrifice.

On which of these considerations are we to justify the policy of an attack on the Canadas? Could we take them without the loss of a limb, or the expense of a shilling....yet where is the fatal injury to England....where the advantage to ourselves? What lover of his country, who has intelligence and judgment sufficient to discover the tendency and bearings of the event, could rejoice to hear they had submitted to our arms?

And here the ruinous consequences of waging a war of conquest....of enlarging territory, and adding province to province, force themselves irresistibly upon us, warning as solemnly as a voice from the dead, to beware of the wreck of popular governments. The Republics of ancient times, might, for ought that appears in their history, have at this day been flourishing, as in the days of their youth, but for this restless ambition, to overleap the bounds of a limited domain, and wield the sceptre of authority ~~of~~ the states ~~that~~ that surrounded them.

Carthage and Rome should serve as beacons to all, who would navigate "*the tempestuous sea of liberty,*" to warn them from the rock where they stranded....from the whirlpool, that swallowed them up. Carthage in the person of her most distinguished citizen, could grasp the horns of her altars and swear eternal enmity to Rome....while the favorite maxim of the Roman philosophers was *Carthago delenda est*. Is there any thing like a *national hatred*, between this country and England....any thing like an *ancient grudge*? If not, why call on the artillery of the skies to drive *the fast anchored Isle from her moorings*. Why join in the French clamour of *Delenda est Britannia*.

Should the Canadas be conquered, they must be incorporated with ourselves, and receive the privileges of republican citizens; privileges, of which they know not the value, nor have the virtue to support. Otherwise, they must be governed as provinces, at a vast expense, and held in subjection by a military force. On either supposition, our Republic must become such an unwieldy monster, as infallibly to be crushed with its own weight; a body without a soul; an old mammoth in the toils, unable to raise himself up. The energy of government, (though it thunder about the Capitol; though "*proclamations*" and "*attitudes*" roll down its sides, more frequent than the lightnings from Sinai) would be lost, in its travel to the frontiers of so mighty an empire. When our boundaries shall be Mexico on the south; Hudson's Bay, or the Pole on the north;

the Atlantic on the east, and the Pacific on the west—farewell forever to our Republican Government ; adieu to liberty ; farewell to equal rights ! Nothing short of an Iron Despotism—more energetic than Cæsar's—more cruel than Bonaparte's, can lock together such distant countries—mould so many clashing interests to the same laws, and bow so many rebellious spirits to obedience.

But shall we be told, we are imagining difficulties, which can never exist ; that there is either no serious intention of commencing this war of conquest ; or that the provinces, when acquired, are not to be retained—are to be bartered in exchange for commercial rights—bartered for a treaty—for a treaty too, with that nation, which, the common slang of the day calls, faithless and piratical ? If we could not retain them, but at so great disadvantage, they would, surely, never bring much in the market. Millions of territory would never buy off the right of search, or procure the repeal of the orders in council, so long as an imperious Ministry should be of the opinion, the maritime superiority of England would suffer by the bargain.

If it be not seriously intended to make such a war, as we have been considering—why this alarm of the public feeling ? why the 11,000,000 loan—why the proposed system of taxation ? why the recruiting and organization of a standing army—and a total neglect of naval preparations ? We are not permitted to believe, this is

a sheer gasconade—a bare, empty menace—a new contrivance to lavish the *surplus* of the treasury ! God forbid the *surplus* of these *poor times*, should be thus profusely squandered !

Other measures of the present and late administrations confirm the belief, that the same ambitious notions of adding farm to farm, and colony to colony, which actuated republics of old, are cherished by many in our country. We might name the purchase of Louisiana—an undefined wilderness—at one time, only a “string of land” on the banks of the Mississippi ; at another, larger than the Old Thirteen States. The seizure, or, in modern style, the sequestration, of the Floridas and Amelia Islands ; all manifesting a disposition to embrace a world in dominion. The territorial governments, even within the limits of the Old United States—as their governors and many of their officers are appointed by the President, are a species of monarchy, tending much to corrupt the simplicity of our republican institutions—tending to increase the evils, arising from Executive patronage, already considered formidable, and threatening to prostrate, at its feet, the other branches of the Legislature. When our members go to Congress, not to serve their constituents—to advocate *their* rights—but to procure an office for *themselves*—to be “Judge, Comptroler, or Ambassador”—then will they become mere tools in the hands of the Executive ; a supple, cringing, “back-stairs gentry ;” a more imperfect representation of the people’s will, than the most venal House of Commons.

Whence has grown that monstrous influence of the Ministry of England? In former times, the king and his ministers, must court the favor of the barons of the realm; must consult them on important occasions; and though they might declare war, without their consent, it could not be prosecuted, with any effect, if the barons withheld their assistance. The growth of the middle orders; the increase of wealth and commerce, in the grades below nobility, have created a change. The representatives of these classes in society, are no longer his "*Majesty's Poor Commons*," begging and petitioning for a redress of grievances. They originate bills for their own redress; and, if they please, withhold all supplies, even for the immediate exigences of government, till their demands are complied with. Whence then arises ministerial influence? Whence this kingly machinery to sheer the locks from the Sampsons of Parliament? Principally, from a vast increase of territory; from colonies and provinces in every quarter of the globe. Does a Jones, a Curran, or a Burke, appear in Parliament? Do they advocate the people's rights, and arraign the measures of the administration? Do they become formidable? They are *seen* by the King; they have an office, with its ten thousands Sterling a year, in Ireland, in India, in New-Holland, in Jamaica, or in Canada. Whatever it may be, if it have the requisite splendor of title and salary, its operation is as powerful as the ~~sp~~ on Cerberus. Their vigilant patriotism is lulled asleep; their watchfulness of the people's rights is forgotten; their old friends

are discarded, and they become the passionate admirers of the administration !

Woe to our country when Executive patronage shall become thus extensive ; when it shall contain so many portions for place-men and pensioners ; when the office of Governor General of the Canadas and Nova-Scotia ; of Upper and Lower Louisiana and the Floridas, with their numerous tribes of subalterns, are in the gift of the President. He will then become the centre, whence all the rays of power are to emanate ; and the popular branches of our government, if they are still permitted to have a nominal existence, will be seen as humble satellites, revolving round this grand luminary of the nation.

In treating this subject, it will be noticed, we have never expressed a doubt of our *ability*, to drive every Englishman from the continent, and to maintain the ground, they leave behind them. There are some, however, who believe this could not be effected, without “ the loss of many lives, and much treasure.” But as we would not damp the ardor of those *brave spirits*, who are resolutely bent on a campaign to the Northward, we will say nothing of *danger*. As we would not discourage those, who would *patriotically* subscribe to the loans, or give currency and credit to the *exchequer notes*, we will talk nothing of *expenses*, or the hollow groanings of the treasury. All we contend is, the conquest would be *worse than nothing*, when acquired.

The consequences of wars in general ; the prostration of trade and commerce ; the ruin of those callings and pursuits, which, in peaceable times, afford an honest livelihood ; and above all, the depravation of public and private morals, need not be depicted. Oiten have we heard you, venerable Fathers, lament in the most feeling accents, the torrent of vices and corruption, which our revolutionary struggle poured in upon us ; a disregard of the Sabbath and its ordinances ; profanity and intemperance, with the mighty brood of ills, that follow in their train.

And were these the effects of a necessary war of self-defence ? a war for existence, when unconditional submission to tyranny was the other alternative ? What then may we look for, in a war of honor, of conquest and ambition ? If such things were done in *the green tree*, what shall be done in the *dry* ?

But the immediate consequence of this war, and the one, most to be deplored, will be the drawing closer the bands of union with a *nation*, more to be dreaded as an *ally*, than feared as an *enemy* ! Whose Punic faith is written on her forehead ; whose advances are always treacherous, and whose embrace is death ! Are we then prepared to abandon our neutral station, and be enveloped in the toils of French alliance ! To step from the middle ground where Washington placed us ; where we have so long rested in safety, secure from the shock of the waves and violence of the tempests, roaring around ? Are we

now prepared to leap into the surf ; to be dashed on the cliffs, or swallowed in the caverns, that yawn for our reception ! Are we prepared to form an alliance with a Power, “ on the title page of whose laws, as well as on her standard, should be written, *havoc* and *spoil*, and *ruin* are my *gain* ; ”—which snuffs for blood like the vulture—like the panther and tyger, destroys when she is full, and gorged with flesh—and tears and mangles, what she cannot devour !

May heaven preserve us from such an unnatural alliance ! May the groans of the nations about her, flattered, while it suited her convenience, with the soothing name of allies, now treated as contemptible vassals, awaken us from the torpor, in which we are lulled—arouse us from the lethargy, which her poisonous potions have produced ; that in the majesty of remaining strength, we may shake off that fatal influence, which has hitherto palsied, and rendered nerveless our arm.

Those, who question the expediency of present measures, are usually called on to propose a different system—To pioneer for a set of men, who have raised themselves to the administration of affairs, by gulling a too credulous but honest people into the belief, they would make *vast improvements* on their federal predecessors. To our country we owe it, (not to those so prompt to make the demand) to repeat again and again, the substitutes for the present ruinous system, so often proposed, and so eloquently enforced by a

Quincy, a Gore, a Lloyd, and a Pickering. The man, who has attended to the labors of these patriots, with an unprejudiced mind, has learnt that the interests of New-England have been long disregarded in our national councils. That commerce has been abandoned, and worse than abandoned—not only left defenceless, but directly attacked by those “*her former bounty fed*”—all sacrificed to “a time-serving, experimental policy.”

Let then the voice of New-England be again heard at the Metropolis. Give her that weight and consideration, to which her talents and patriotism justly entitle her. Let negociation be, once more, resorted to. Let it be conducted on our part, with more sincerity, and less of diplomatic intrigue. If that fail of success, give us an opportunity of contending on that element, for which our situation and resources; the habits and bravery of our countrymen, designed us. Give us the gallant little navy, so eloquently, but unsuccessfully contended for, at the present session of Congress. Place an unrestricted commerce under its protection. Cherish the enterprise and bravery of our citizens, and the flower of our youth. The future PREBLES and TRUXTONS of Columbia, will spontaneously advance to avenge the wrongs and defend the rights of our long insulted country—to gather laurels on the bosom of the deep—to convince an ambitious enemy, that the infant, who plucked up the standard, she planted on his shores, in his manhood, will wrest from her hands the trident of the ocean.

Let this course be pursued, and my life on the issue, we will have an advantageous peace, or an honorable war. A peace that will insure us a lasting prosperity ; or war, that will unite the sentiments and force of the nation, and eventually gain us the victory.

The present is an epoch of awful moment, to ourselves, and to future generations. That Independence, we this day commemorate, may depend on the issue of the present contest. Shall we then be cut down in the morning of our day ! The Sun of freedom, before it has climbed up the steeps of our skies—shall it measure back its course, and set in darkness in the east ! A long, a never ending night ; a night of black darkness, and despotism would ensue ! The only Republic on the globe—the light of the political world, extinguished forever !

Posterity, who must group their course in bondage—no gleam of liberty to lighten their path—perhaps too, denied the bright shinings of the STAR of Bethlehem, if haply the history of these days should survive for their perusal, would blush for the degeneracy—the corruption of their fathers. O feeble, degraded race, would they exclaim.—Your fathers sacrificed their ease and their fortunes, to procure you your freedom—yet ere they had closed their eyes in death—had laid down their bones in the ground, they defended—you spurned the boon they had prepared at your hands ! You suffered them to die in the bitterness of disappointed hopes—and to us, your

descendants, you left, what we must ever enjoy, the patrimony of slaves ! As we would avoid the execrations of our fathers, and the curses of our sons, we shall weigh well the consequences of our present conduct.

However gloomy our general prospects—however our peace be disregarded, and the Hotspurs of the south drive headlong to war—calling on their demons to raise the clouds and the wind, that they may “*direct the storm*”—we have one consolation—one ray of comfort remaining. Our own Commonwealth is under the guidance of a man, calm and tranquil, as a summer’s sea, when not a breeze is moving on its surface—firm too as a rock, against which, the billows of faction may rage in vain.

While the destinies of Massachusetts are directed by so much firmness and wisdom, we have no reason to despair, but much to hope—that while on the one hand, that reluctance to engage in this war, which appears in their constituents, will be manifested by the rulers—all constitutional means be adopted, to check the madness, which seems to have seized on our national councils—Yet that no violent measures will be resorted to—no popular insurrections excited, to lacerate those ties, which bind the union of our states.

Behold your Chief Magistrate, bowing before the God of his fathers, imploring his mercy. In the spirit and language of the prophets of Is-

rael, when judgment hung over their nation, calling on the people to pray—to prostrate themselves at the feet of their ~~Master~~—to entreat Him *“to hide them in His pavilion, till these calamities be overpast”*—till the destroying angel shall have gone by the door, and the smiles of His goodness again encircle them in peace.

While our country contains ten heroes like STRONG, she shall never share the fate of Sodom—but when ten thousand kindred spirits flock about him, *her walls shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved.*