

AN
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED

AT WRENTHAM,

JULY 4, 1803 ;

IN CELEBRATION OF THE

TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

By Samuel Bugbee, JUN.



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M, DCCC, III.

AT a Meeting of a number of the Inhabitants
of WRENTHAM, July 4th, 1803—

VOLED, That Doctor JAMES MANN, Major
BERIAH BRASTOW, and JAIRUS WARE, Esq.
be a Committee to wait upon Mr. SAMUEL BUG-
BEE, Jun. and thank him for his appropriate
ORATION, this day delivered at their request,
and solicit a copy for the press.

JAIRUS WARE, *Clerk of the Meeting.*

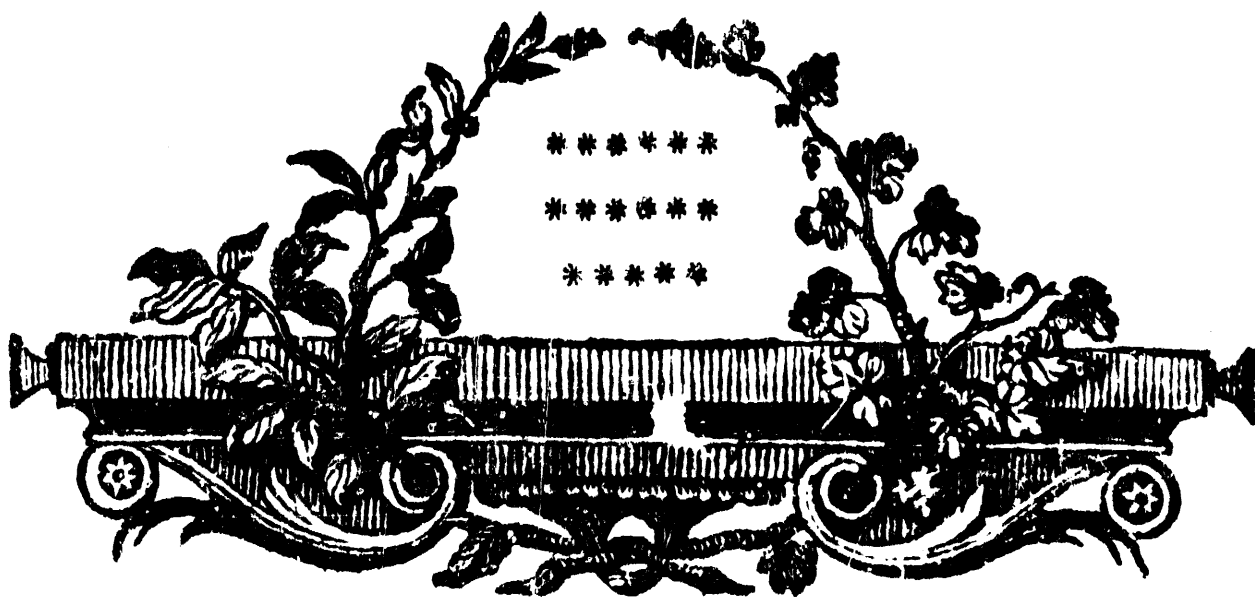
R E P L Y.

GENTLEMEN,

*AN impression of the inadequacy of the mer-
its of the performance, to meet the public eye, would
have confined the manuscript to the slumbers of the
closet, had not a desire to comply with the persua-
sive politeness of your solicitations been superior to
that timidity with which a solicitude for personal
reputation deservedly awes the juvenile adventurer.
I yield a copy to your request, ask a liberal exten-
sion of your candor, and subscribe myself,*

Your most obedient servant,

SAMUEL BUGBEE, Jun.



AN
ORATION.



WE are assembled to commemorate an important ERA in the annals of our country. Twenty-seven years ago our illustrious and patriotic Fathers, with a noble magnanimity, proclaimed to the world, their *DECLARATION of INDEPENDENCE*. The return of this anniversary, as it carries back the recollection to those momentous scenes, in which they dared to adventure, for the acquisition of our national liberty, excites, in every sensible soul, the most exquisite emotions of gratitude.

In order duly to appreciate the enviable situation which we hold, and the superlative advantages we enjoy, it will be necessary to pass, in review before us, some of those perils and difficulties, with which our glorious Benefactors had to contend.

A POWERFUL and veteran army, assisted by strong alliances, instigated by unnatural and ferocious cruelty, inflicted on us, infant and tender

colonies, all the horrors which ability placed within their reach. Infatuated with mad ambition, and an inordinate desire to replenish her exhausted coffers, the gigantic greatness of British power did not scruple to adopt any measures, however unjust or however barbarious, did they but wear the most distant aspect of subjugation.—The pencil of the most lively imagination is required to portray, in sufficiently vivid colors, the various shades of guilt and crime, with which their perpetrations were stained. Thousands of our heroic countrymen were compelled to yield their expiring breath amid the leathsome horrors of their pestiferous prison-ships. Many of our towns and cities were enveloped in awful conflagration. The western savage was drawn from his howling retreat, and precipitated, with merciless fury, on our defenceless frontiers. Such various and repeated aggression on life and property, at length, alienated the affections of those who were formerly obedient children, and excited, in our patriotic Sires, the laudable purpose of erecting the standard of liberty, and throwing the gauntlet at a power, whose greatness was insult, and whose kindness, oppression.

AN independence gained, after a struggle with a foe so cruel and formidable, must be delightful, in proportion to the difficulties of its acquisition. Ours is of this description.—After sketching the prominent and outline features of the conflict, by which it was acquired, it may not be thought improper to notice the tenure, by which it is preserved. A tenure, indeed, admirable! One that reflects the highest honor on those who fabricated, and on those who extend the fostering hand.—This glorious tenure is our *Republican Constitution*. This we ought to venerate as the shrine, in which are deposited the ashes and the virtues of our heroes and patriots, who shed their lives and spent

their labors to erect and adorn so glorious a fabric. While we preserve inviolate this inestimable deposit of our country's rights, our national liberty and independence will be secure.

THE prevailing forms of government are three; aristocratical, monarchical and republican. Though a designing and ambitious few may extol the first; though the idle speculator and visionary theorist may chant the praises and celebrate the virtues of the second: yet the honest and judicious AMERICAN will be found enamoured only with the latter. The superiority of this form of government will be very conspicuous to him who considers the genius, or observes the effects of each. The genius of aristocracy instructs mankind to believe, that a *precious few* were made and originally intended to be the permanent depository of the people's rights; that they were moulded of superior clay, fashioned with superior elegance; and that superiority is their hereditary prerogative. In fine, it is calculated to make the opulent more wealthy and imperious; the indigent more needy and wretched.

THE genius of monarchy is of various gradation. In some places it is more tolerable; in others, more oppressive. The monarchies of *Europe* are both absolute and limited. While that of *Great-Britain* is subjected to constitutional control, the *Castilian* and *Catalonian*, formerly turbulent and unconquerable souls, now submit unconditionally to the despotic nod of his *Most Catholic Majesty*. The respective tendencies of each of these diversified shades are evidently pernicious. For power is put into the hands of those, of whose ability to execute, or mild intentions of government, we have not, nor can have, any possible testimony, or probable assurance. Common sense

and universal experience are ever reading to us lessons on the folly of hereditary endowments. A son may become heir to a pecuniary or landed patrimony ; but a mental one, to say the least, is quite precarious.

THE genius of republican government, on the contrary, inclines not to build up one, nor a few, on the ruins of many ; but gives virtue and talents an opportunity of appearing ennobled and resplendent : it is friendly to the happiness of the community, and inimical to no individual interest. The truth of these theoretical observations may be practically confirmed, and the eligibility of our situation and government conspicuously seen, by contrasting our individual and national blessings with the wretched circumstances of many other nations.--The tree is known by its fruits.

THAT government must ever be allowed the best, which best provides for and embraces the individual and collective interests of the nation. Let the honest hearted AMERICAN range the Atlantic's eastern bound, from the southern promontory of *Africa*, to *Zembla's* ice-clad shores, and say, Can he find a *COLUMBIA* there ?

LET him survey the governments on the south of the *Mediterranean*—there see a Dey ascend the throne, and before the earth shall have performed her diurnal rotation, behold him descending to the tomb ! The governed, subjected to the imperious disposal of the mushroom prince of the time ; property and life subjected to his control ; and say, does he wish to be a *Moor* ?—Does he ? Then let him be a slave ! he is unfit for a freeman !

LET him now cross the Straits of *Hercules*, and behold the genius of *Hysperia* crushed beneath

the oppressive shackles of despotism ! He will there see genius, like the unwrought diamond, rusting amid its native rubbish : and persecution, with all its concomitant evils, expelling from life, or at least from its enjoyments, all those who dare to think for themselves, or whose thoughts accord not with those of the prince !

DOES he, after beholding these evils, wish to be a *Spaniard* ?

THENCE let him survey the several monarchies of *Europe*, and say, can he find where liberty has formed her residence ? Beneath the princely sceptre of the *Hanoverian* race, does he find her perched in undisturbed security ?—Does he not, on the contrary, there see millions starving for the necessary supports of nature, and pining away a wretched existence under the forbidding dispensations of government ?

LET him traverse the superstitious and benighted mountains of *Thebetian Tartary* ; there view the servile herd fixing the reverential kifs on the feet of inanimate clay ! And picture in his imagination the heights of *Delacarla*, where liberty has, in vain, so often assayed to fix her residence. Let the *Russian* court next salute his view, with assassinations and oppressions alternating between prince and people, in perpetual vibration, and he will say that liberty has flapped her wings, and taken her flight to some more genial clime.—Ah ! his natal soil he will again behold with renovated charms. If then we are so highly favored as to possess the happiest Constitution of Government of any on the globe, how deeply are we interested in its preservation ! Under what inducements are we to energize every faculty in its support ! By many it has been considered problematical, whether it

suffers a possibility of a permanent duration : and even some have asserted a belief that it does not.

THE liberties of *Rome*, it is said, were subverted by the mad ambition of a *Cæsar* ; while the Republics of *Greece* were extinguished by jealousy and division. Can we then rationally calculate on the long continuance of ours ? since the rise and fall of empires alternate in succession, and especially as Republics have ever been short lived ! But the fallacy of this reasoning will be obvious to any one who will, for a moment, consider the respective difference of circumstances attendant on each.—While the founder of the *Roman* empire was actuated with an invincible spirit of conquest, which he transmitted to posterity, and which, at length, by making vast acquisitions of wealth and territory, and including, within its embracive arms, an incongruous variety of people, introduced venality and corruption, which in their turn, laying their victors prostrate, trampled liberty in the dust.—Our national Republic has hitherto exhibited no such traits, either in its origin or its progress. On the contrary, our pious ancestors, with souls truly pacific, fled the accursed demon of persecution, and sought a calm retreat in the then forbidding, but now hospitable bosom of this resplendent hemisphere. This malevolent spirit, should it germinate in the bosoms of AMERICANS, could never meet those numerous objects of gratification which so irresistibly impelled a *Romulus* and his descendants, to encrimson the martial field. But should the sword of conquest be drawn, and brandished over the sultry regions of *Florida*, or should the fur-clad *Canadian*, and *Scotia's* hardy sons, invite its terrific point, the steady hand of JEFFERSON would reconduct it to its scabbard, or avert the impending horrors of its edge.

As NAMELESS other circumstances might be ad-
 duced to heighten the distinction, and render the
 comparison unavailing—such as the ignorance pe-
 culiar to the remoter ages of the world. The
 manners and customs of mankind had not, at that
 period, assumed a polish which much distances
 barbarity. The genius of the people, turbulent
 and ferocious, was not then by the promulgation
 of the peaceful precepts of Christianity, adapted
 to the reception of a Republican Government ;
 which in its nature, is therewith perfectly conge-
 nial.* It has been a maxim of general adoption
 with political dictators, that a government must be
 suited to the genius of the governed. Allowing
 to this adage that verity which the reasonableness
 of it demands, nothing short of the height of ab-
 surdity could induce any one to suppose that per-
 manency would have been the lot of the govern-
 ment under contemplation, in an age so unfriendly
 to its principles as that of which we now speak.
 It would be combining the very heterogene of na-
 ture, and from that combination expecting a har-
 monious issue—levelling all distinction, and des-
 troying all affinity.

* *The true principles of Christianity are unfolded to us by that sacred volume of divine origin, which is equally in the possession of all.*

This inestimable guide to truth and excellence is not, as formerly, withheld from the eyes of the people, and supplanted by the substitution of the confused jargon and false interpretation of interested bigotry, swallowed by the excessive credulity of superstition and ignorance : nor are we exposed to the double meaning auguries of designing priests. Our pure and divine religion is the corner stone of our Republic : its superstructure, the written law, enacted by a representation of our own choice, and that choice measurably regulated by the intelligent cultivators of the soil, whose habits of life induce virtuous manners. For, says one of our wisest statesmen, "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God. Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon, of which no age nor nation has furnished an example. It is the manners and spirit of a people which preserve a Republic in vigour.—Vide JEFFERSON'S NOTES ON VIRGINIA.

THE prognostic, therefore, of the speedy dissolution of our ark of safety, drawn from a comparison with the *Roman Republic*, must be fallacious and deceptive.

To foresee similar effects, we must be assured of the operation of similar causes. Though the places, which formerly boasted themselves with the glorious names of *Grecian Republics*, can now boast of nothing but absolute submission to the imperious will of despotic power—nothing but obsequious perseverance in riveting those chains which the iron hand of tyranny is ever so sedulous to forge: yet the souls of *AMERICANS* need not be dismayed with fearful apprehensions, by instituting a comparison, which, in its external circumstances, bears not the least shade of resemblance.

WE have not a powerful *Macedon* on the north, nor on the south, a *Lacedemonian* rival: we need not, therefore, consider ourselves an *Athens*. We are a world by ourselves; and while we remain disconnected with the conflicting interests whose recent collisions encrimsoned the martial fields of *Europe*, distained with mercenary gore the effeminate plains of *Asia*, and tingured, with a blushing hue, the noble tide of *Afric's* glory. We need not shudder at the clangor of their arms, or the thunder of their artillery; which, like the distant peals of Heaven, serve rather to sublime our feelings by destroying the noxious malignity of the political atmosphere.

OUR empire is, by the beneficent hand of providence, adapted to the nature and growth of an independent race of freemen. We combine all the diversities of soil and climate which can possibly contribute to human happiness. The pro-

duce of the tropical regions may, by the steady hand of industrious cultivation, be gathered in profuse abundance, from the fertile fields of the south, while the north exhibits the more substantial and less cloying bounties of nature.

Do the sons of *Gallia* boast the noble vintage of millions of acres? They are not exclusively privileged. The prolific soil of *Kentucky* exhibits to its industrious yeomanry, the exhilarating beverage of the luxuriant vine. Experiment has amply demonstrated that the energies of our soil are, in no point, deficient. Its universal adaption to every vegetative production sufficiently evinces the end of its original destination. The live oak and lofty pine, adorn our forests; both of which, are superlatively adapted to naval requisitions. Does *Britannia* boast, that with her proud navy, she holds the world in awe? *COLUMBIA* sternly replies, vaunt not thyself of tomorrow! I will open my bosom to *Neptune*, and salute him with an incense more grateful than thy whole fog-wrapped Island. I will transform the luxuriant growth of my forests into the vehicles of his thunder, and make echo waft a humiliating tale to the ears of thy ministers. These are not the idle results of fanciful excursion; but the sober dictates of fact and reason. They forcibly impress a conviction of the necessity and plenitude of union to the perpetuation of our independence.

AFTER having shown the futility of those apprehensions which preface the utter impossibility of a permanent duration to that republican constitution, which we have differenced from all other national governments, the means conducive to its preservation, in conjunction with the dangers which really await it, or which possibility may elevate to

the eye of reason, naturally present themselves to our consideration.

AN administration, according to the genuine principles of a constitution, is the eminent and supporting pillar on which it must rest. Whoever impartially surveys the financial interests of our country, conducted by the mathematical accuracy of a GALLATIN, and beholds the fiscal department, in a condition suited to the gradual extinguishment of our national debt, without an increase, but even by a diminution of taxation, is he not constrained to say, in the full tide of his joy, **Glorious economy! Harmonious union of principle and practice!**

WHEN he beholds the **FIRST MAGISTRATE** of his country, with a prudent and disentangling caution, superintending the foreign relations and supreme concerns of the nation, happily uniting due subordination with rational liberty, he exclaims, in the language of ancient wisdom—"When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice."†

BUT when he hears the illiberal invective poured, in copious effusion, from the pens of disappointed ambition, or native malevolence, fruitlessly designed to tarnish the lustre of a character, which,

† *Is not the occasion of rejoicing much magnified, by the invaluable acquisition of LOUISIANA to the UNITED STATES, made by the presentation of the logical and argumentative memorial of Mr. LIVINGSTON, to the French Government?—And is not the wisdom of the EXECUTIVE completely evidenced, by the confidence which the industrious merits of the Minister prove to have been judiciously reposed?—Would not a few such successful events justify the displacements, so much lamented by party wisdom, and vindicate the character of the FIRST MAGISTRATE, from any unfavorable imputation, for removing the scum raised by the ebullition of the political pot?*

like the full orb of day, appears more cheering and resplendent, after the sable hue of tempestuous darkness :—when he hears the rulers of his country basely calumniated, he may, at least, suffer some apprehension, that the flames of faction are enkindled, the political pot is boiling, and the scum, whose specific gravity is least, will probably ascend to the surface. Hence the consequence of political scandal is wholly indebted to its levity : For on no other principle will it arise and arrest public notice. In order to suppress the pernicious influence of faction, which is the only formidable foe to our country's happiness, and has contributed more to the subversion of ancient republics, than all other causes combined, a liberal diffusion of knowledge throughout the United States is absolutely necessary. The mass of the people must be enlightend, or they will be incompetent to make those judicious elections, which a wise and virtuous administration requires.

POLITICAL and local prejudices must be eradicated by the fostering hand of education, and a careful vigilance exercised in the election of virtue and talents ; whether their glittering beams are darted from the western brow of the Allegany, or whether the bosom of the Atlantic reflects their dazzling effulgence ;—whether the eastern range of Hudson's illustrious stream be the favored spot of genius, or whether its buds shoot, and blossoms evolve on the southern borders of *Potomack's* noble flood. Political prejudice and party virulence would be very readily extinguished, and the two dangerous extremes of national phrenzy, like the projecting crescent of a segment, brought into harmonious and circular union, did the high-toned maniacs of faction, instead of sharpening their reciprocal malignity, by crimination and recrimi-

nation, direct their united energies to the support of that common object, on which we must rest, or with which we must fall.

It is this only from which we can anticipate a permanent duration of liberty, viz. the extinguishment of party rancor. The dangers which may probably or possibly await us are implicated in the above suggestions. They therefore require not a more particular detail.

LET us then, with united hearts, swear fidelity to the glorious cause in which we are, by providence, embarked, and sentimentally adopt the language of the immortal SIDNEY, saying, "*Where LIBERTY dwells there is my COUNTRY.*"—Did this language rightly interpret the feelings of every heart, and were the eccentric desires of every soul regulated in conformity therewith, how glorious would be the future prospects of *COLUMBIA!*—How rationally might we sublime our feelings by anticipating the distinguished lustre which the wings of our Eagle would reflect on posterity's brow!

LET not a chilling apathy freeze our hearts; nor a weak irresolution unnerve our minds in a cause which ought to excite the most noble sublimities of feeling, and call forth the most decided energies of soul: It consists not only with feeling, but with duty, to contribute, by our prudence, an exertion to the future greatness of our Empire.

THE wheels of time, with all their rapidity, have not rolled off two hundred years, since the first smile was lighted on the countenance of this western hemisphere!—Where now shines forth the distinguished artizan, nought but the rudeness of

barbarity then appeared!—Where now the towering spires of our superb cities pour regalement on the distant eye, the portable cot of the savage served but to degrade the human intellect!—Where formerly nought but the dismal gloom of extensive wilds saluted the view of the idle vagrant, the rustling grain and waving meads, with their verdant hue and fragrant odour now shed a diffusive joy through the heart of industry!—Here labor is compensated for all her toils!

WHERE irregular confusion was once the only director of the migratory herds, a regular, mild and pacific government now embraces within its fostering arms five millions of enlightened freemen.

LET this consideration of the rapid growth of our empire, from so recent beginnings, excite a zealous emulation to pursue the path of glory in which our infant footsteps have hitherto ascended the acclivity of fame! We have indeed a flattering specimen of our rising greatness.

SHOULD not the flames of faction burst into violence, and burn asunder the cords of our political union, before another century shall be added to the past, the muscles of our national arm will be sufficiently nerved to toss at pleasure the greatness of *Britannia's* glory, which now floats mistress of the ocean.

FOR the glory of ourselves, for the felicity of posterity, and that the praises of *COLUMBIA* may never cease to be chanted, let us swear that our national wisdom shall never be chequered by divided folly.—Let us direct our suppliant hands and devoted hearts to the universal Benefactor of nations, imploring his kind benediction on poster

ity, that their favored eyes may behold the Philosopher, Statesman and Patriot, revive in the person of some future **JEFFERSON**.

