

AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED

AT THE CENTRE MEETING-HOUSE

IN

MONMOUTH, MAINE,

ON

THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1804,

BEING

THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE

American Independence.

By JOSEPH CHANDLER.

" A new-born republic arms its children to defend its Independence.....What a dreadful lesson to the enemies of liberty."

CARNOT.

PORTLAND:

FROM THE ARGUS PRESS.....BY DAY & WILLIS.

1804.

Oration.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

THE anniversary of this day is commemorative of the most august event, perhaps, that ever graced the pages of history—an event, which will be remembered and celebrated in America as long as the god-like flame of **FREEDOM** shall animate the hearts of her citizens:—for this is no other than the day on which America burst the bars of oppression, and stood forth upon the stage of the world in the cause of Liberty, Justice, and Humanity—armed with the sword of defence to support and maintain the *Equal Rights* of Man.

We, Fellow-Citizens, are assembled to recount the important incidents which led to the **INDEPENDENCE OF AMERICA**; to congratulate each other on the happy continuance of our national prosperity; and to render to the **GOD** of Heaven our unfeigned thanks for his supreme bounty and goodness, in directing and supporting us in the placid paths of prosperity and peace, while other nations have been convulsed with wars, pestilences, and commotions.

The GOD OF NATURE hath implanted in the heart of man a love of Liberty, and it is impossible for all the Despots on earth to extinguish the heavenly flame! Although it has always been the aim of *Tyrants* to keep mankind in ignorance and slavery; yet, in proportion as reason and science have been cultivated, mankind have struggled, and verged from the dark abyss of slavery and oppression, to the beautiful and delightful fields of liberty and happiness.

It was this impulse of patriotic zeal, which animated the hearts of our venerable Forefathers, and taught them to despise the oppressions of Europe, and prompted them to seek a solitary refuge in the then uncultivated and howling wilderness of America.— Here is presented to us an example of the true principle of Freedom, which despises the gaudy equipages of courts and palaces, while surrounded by the base symbols of slavery; and rather courts the humble cottage in the dreary desert, for the enjoyment of the blessings of liberty.

When our Forefathers first settled in this country, the unrestrained freedom of nature seemed to inflame their bosoms with the most pure and sublime ideas of true and rational liberty; which afterwards shewed itself in opposition to the unnatural usurpations of Britain. America was then the happy asylum of the oppressed inhabitants of the old continent: They knew, by experience, the miseries of tyranny; so they knew how to value the blessings of freedom.

The increasing prosperity of America soon began to excite the envy of the European powers ; and Great-Britain, ever thirsty for power and dominion, assumed the jurisdiction and government of the American Colonies : and from this time, the Americans experienced all the miseries of despotism. All the evils attendant on hereditary governments soon fell on the devoted Americans. Laws were enacted by the British Parliament to bind the people of the colonies, without their consent ; which was absolutely contrary to the Constitution of England. From this time they began to enforce their authority over the Americans ; every remonstrance of the People was called a rebellion against the *mother country* ; and every patriotic struggle to regain the rights of FREEMEN, was represented as dissention and confusion !

The just resentment of an incensed people could not long slumber : the hardy sons of COLUMBIA could not endure the sight of a troop of mercenary soldiers, sent to enforce the tyrannic laws of a *Despot* ! LEXINGTON will ever witness to the streaming veins of Americans, in the cause of LIBERTY ! and BUNKER'S HILL will be consecrated to her shrine, as long as the planets shall measure the course of revolving years.

But, my countrymen, let us pause—and drop a mournful tear, for the loss of our fathers and brethren who fell in the *crimson field of battle* ! who have sealed the testimony of their patriotism and valor, with the last drop of their vital blood !

Shall we not mourn, with pathetic sorrow, for the untimely death of the immortal WARREN? Shall we not grieve, that the ornament of the age should be cut off in the prime of life, in the period of his usefulness? But his character and virtues have made an indelible impression on the hearts of Americans; and the name of WARREN shall mock the rude assaults of time!—But were we to attempt to call over the illustrious roll of Americans, who fell upon her “high places,” time would be too short: For when I name a MONTGOMERY, such a host of illustrious Heroes are presented to my mind, that I fear your patience would be wearied in attending to the lengthy detail. But the grateful hearts of Americans will ever retain the remembrance of their valor and patriotism—their illustrious names shall grace the annals of America.—What Citizen is there in this respectable auditory, whose heart does not glow with pure emotions of love and gratitude to those Heroes “*who fought and bled in FREEDOM’S cause,*” while we contemplate the gloriously important scenes of our Revolution?

But the *FOURTH of JULY*, 1776, was the glorious EPOCH of the Western World:—for, on this propitious DAY, the concentrated wisdom and firmness of America, declared, in a voice of audible gravity,

“AMERICA IS FREE AND INDEPENDENT!”

On this Day, a Nation was born, and ascended the stage of the world! This is the glorious eventful Day, on which a mighty REPUBLIC verged from the chaos

of *Despotism* ! This is the Day, which hailed the rising glory of AMERICA, and laid the fair foundation of her present prosperity and happiness.

*Then let us hail this glorious DAY,
Which gave our NATION birth!*

It gives me, my countrymen, a superior degree of pleasure and animation, to behold, in this assembly, a small number of that illustrious band of veteran Patriots, who despised the perils of war, and even death itself; and who vowed, solemnly, that they *would be FREE, OR DIE!*

RESPECTED FATHERS! Methinks I see, in your venerable countenances, the beams of rapturous joy, which gives us an inexpressible delight to participate with you, in mutual congratulations. The conflict of America was glorious, for her cause was that of Justice; her triumph was glorious, because it separated her from the iron grasp of a foreign *Despot*, and gave her an honorable station among the nations of the earth.

Hitherto we had fought only for *Independence*; a field *now* presented itself, big with the most perilous and critical uncertainties. Now was a work before the People of America, upon the performance of which depended the glory of the present age, and the wonder, admiration, and happiness of posterity! And, among the many important causes which we have of joy and gratulation, fellow-citizens, this is not the least, that Heaven should bless America with Statesmen equal to

her Warriors ; that she should be able to secure, with the strongest ties, that invaluable prize which her intrepidity and valor had obtained ; and, thereby, stamp the seal of immortality on her glorious exploits !

Notwithstanding the exertions of European Potentates to poison the councils of this infant Republic, and stop the progress of Republican Freedom ;—notwithstanding the maxims and prophecies of *aristocrats* and *monarchists*, the CONSTITUTION of the United States will stand an everlasting monument of the wisdom, virtue, and firmness of the Americans ; and a conclusive evidence of the feasibility of Republican forms of government. In the formation of this political compact, was displayed a profundity of wisdom which does honor to America ; inasmuch as it is founded on the principles of political Equality, and the natural Rights of mankind. Under this excellent government, the people of the United States have enjoyed a singular degree of prosperity and happiness. But it should be remembered, that every treasure should be watched and guarded with the strictest attention.

Ancient *Greece* was a Republic, which in a short period of time attained a high pitch of national glory ; yet her citizens suffered one degree of infringement of their Liberties after another, until *Pisistratus*, at the head of a military force, usurped the authority of the government, and overturned the liberties of that People, who had been the admiration and wonder of the world.

Rome enjoyed a Republican government four hundred and fifty years ; during which time she arrived to a superior pitch of greatness—which evinces to what a state of glory a people may arrive, when actuated by the principles of Freedom. But *Rome*, at length, suffered herself to lull in the lap of ease and luxury, until *Julius Cæsar* finished the horrid stroke of her ruin—triumphed over her dearest rights, and completed her disgraceful fall.

Many *false* politicians have inferred from these instances of the fall of Republics, that “*Republican forms of government cannot stand :*” but, my countrymen, if we attend a little to the advantages which we have over the ancient Republics, I presume we shall all be convinced of the absurdity of this position.

The American government is founded upon principles quite different from those of *Greece* or *Rome* ; principles which are calculated to obviate the evils which those governments were subject to. And if it is urged that “*human nature is the same in every age and generation*”—I answer, that human nature must be very much depreciated since those times, if we cannot profit by the precedents and experience of so many nations who have gone before us ; and whose transactions we have plain before our eyes on the map of history. On this map are delineated all the *rocks* and *quicksands* upon which our predecessors have split :—and we must be very impolitic and blind, if we at this day, cannot steer clear of those monuments of destruc-

tion, which are rendered conspicuous by the ruin of Empires.

Besides this map of the *ancient* political world, we have another glorious privilege which the ancients were not blest with; for the *Art of Printing* was unknown. There are no less than *Two hundred and fifty thousand* publications disseminated weekly among the citizens of the United States--by which they are immediately informed of the approach of the enemies of their liberties. There is not a citizen of the United States who cannot have the requisite information to judge correctly of our national affairs. Consequently, no aspiring usurper, or base faction of deceitful Demagogues, can have an opportunity to trample on our dear-bought liberties, and overturn our happy government.

AMERICANS! You have an exquisite inducement to watch over your liberties—for the happiness of nations is depending. It seems that the ALMIGHTY had reserved America for the habitation of *Freedom*. It was here that the sacred flame of *Liberty* broke the yoke of oppression:—and hence was the heavenly spark caught by the sons of distant climes; and already has its power burst the bars of despotism, in the greatest nation of Europe! All mankind look up to COLUMBIA, as the author and supporter of that system of *free government* which begins to make the Crowns of *Despots* sit uneasy on their heads. Then let us cherish the heavenly flame, which promises, ere long, to free all nations from tyrannic chains.

AMERICANS! Your government embraces a territory of vast extent; including all the rich varieties of nature, from the torrid zone to the wilds of Canada: and we anticipate the day, when our boundaries shall be those which Nature has formed for a great, powerful, and free State.—When we shall hail as Brethren, all the inhabitants, from the *Atlantic* to the *Pacific*; and from the vertical sun of *Darien* to *Arctos'* frozen pole. And already have we realized the commencement of our anticipating hopes: Behold the rich and vast territory of *Louisiana*, whose inhabitants have long groaned under the galling yoke of transatlantic tyranny! Now do we behold them coming, as the aged prisoner of the Bastille—now do we hail them as brethren, and invite them to *Freedom's* pure enjoyments:

*No more to clank the galling chain,
Nor bow to slavery's yoke.*

When we contemplate the rapid population of America; the progress of scientific knowledge; and the unexampled industry of her citizens—we are led to the most sublime and philosophic reflections.

Three hundred and twelve years ago, America was not known to a civilized man. Then was this vast half of the terraqueous globe immured in an unfathomable wilderness, whose gloomy majesty had been saluted only by the savage yell of nature's ferocious inhabitants. Now do we behold, with pleasing

transports, *the wilderness blossoming like the rose*. The howling desert is *now* a fruitful field; and spiry domes ascend to grace the village plain. The margins of our rivers are lined with opulent cities, which rise with splendid magnificence;—our buoyant floods are covered with ships,

..... *with flowing sails unfur'd,
Not to corrupt, but socialize the world,*—

whose fleecy canvass invites the friendly breeze to waft from zone to zone the riches of the earth. Now do *we realize* the golden dreams of COLUMBUS! Now do we see Science spread her silver rays over the uncultivated fields of nature—we see academies and colleges opening their richest treasures to the rising generations. Americans! this happy country is *ours*—and these *our* glorious privileges. Who, then, would not hail the DAY which gave us INDEPENDENCE?

It is a matter of serious regret, my countrymen, that there does exist, in the United States, a *party* who are disaffected with our excellent government; and who are cunningly, and deceitfully, exerting all their powers to bring America to a disgraceful ruin! This *Aristocratic Faction* have existed in the vitals of our country from the beginning of our Revolution. They were against the *Independence* of America;—they joined with our common *enemy*, and even lifted the *savage poniard* against their own Countrymen!—Although they did not dare to shew their heads boldly, in

the administration of our beloved WASHINGTON—yet the combined league of American *Aristocrats*, and European potentates, seized the critical moment of his exit from office to overturn our Republic and establish a Monarchy upon the illustrious ruins! The horrid plan was but too well concerted:—But the *FREEMAN* of America, ever jealous and watchful, saw, with keen resentment, the base machinations of their enemies; and how quick did the free-born sons of Columbia arise, and drive from their strong holds the enemies of their country!

REPUBLICANS! you have once more exhibited to the world, a proof of your invincible firmness; you have once more saved America from the yawning gulph of tyranny, and gained a *laurel wreath* of immortal glory!—Many of our respectable, well-meaning citizens wandered awhile in the mazes of delusion, not knowing whether to turn; but no sooner did they observe “the base *Dæmon of Aristocracy*, under the garb and similitude of

“*Heaven-born FREEDOM's sweet guise,*” —

no sooner did they perceive the deception, than they turned with astonishment, from the deceitful *fiend*!—And now do we behold our deluded brethren fast returning to the principles of Republicanism, leaving their deceitful *leaders* to wander and perish in the labyrinths of wilful error! All their spiteful envy is now unceasingly employed in the most nefarious abuse and

investive against the Constituted Authorities of our government. The greatest *STATESMAN* America ever produced, and whom you, Republicans, have wisely entrusted with the Chair of State, is calumniated and vilified, by this *unprincipled faction*, in the most contemptuous manner. But all their spiteful malice, and senseless clamours, serve only to bring his shining talents into view; “and all their pointed shafts of malignity fall every way around him, blunted by the invincible dignity of his character.”

REPUBLICANS! What have we to fear?—
 “*The reign of terror*” is now over; and our internal enemies are reduced to a contemptible *faction*; and they, by their base conduct, have lost the confidence of all Freemen. Our nation is in a prosperous and flourishing condition; we, through the blessings of God, enjoy peace, happiness and prosperity. Possessing the finest country and the happiest government on earth, how tenacious ought we to be of both; and how vigilant in guarding our liberties! Let us remember, that

“UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL!”

Let this sacred *adage* of '75 always be our *motto*; and may it inspire us with the purest emotions of fraternal affection. May the last prayer of the immortal WASHINGTON ever be ours—“That our UNION and brotherly affection may be perpetual.” And let *that man* be treated as an *enemy* to the American Republic, who would wish a separation of these happy States.

Let us remember that *Reason, Science, and Industry*, are the main pillars of all Free Governments ; and when these are broken the finest fabric must fall ! Let our hope and trust be in that Almighty Being who has ever been America's Guardian and Protector. Let *Reason* guide our conduct ; and let *Science* dispell the dark gloom of ignorance and superstition. Then will the *GODDESS of FREEDOM* delight to dwell with us ; and the Independence and happiness of America shall be protracted to the last verge of time--and her glory shall be immortal as the pillars of Heaven !

F I N I S.
