

AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

NEW-YORK

TYPOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY,

ON THEIR SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY,

JULY 4, 1816.

BY ADONIRAM CHANDLER.

NEW-YORK:

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1816.

New-York, July 8, 1816.

Sir,

In conformity to a resolution of the New-York Typographical Society, passed at their last meeting, we have the honor to request a copy of the appropriate and patriotic oration delivered by you before them, on the 4th inst. for publication; and we do this the more willingly, as our private opinions coincide with the sentiments expressed by you, and approbated by the Society.

We have the honor to be,

With respect, &c.

*I. HOIT,
J. R. REYNOLDS, } Committee.*

Mr. A. Chandler.

New-York, July 8, 1816.

Suffer me to assure you, gentlemen, that in complying with the wishes of the members of the Society, I am aware of the criticisms to which the few sentiments I had the honour to address to them will be subjected. The consideration that they originated in a desire to acquit with propriety only, the duty required of me by my fellow associates, ought to screen them, however, from the too strict scrutiny of the critic's eye.

With esteem, gentlemen,

I am yours, &c.

ADONIRAM CHANDLER.

*Messrs. I. Hoit,
J. R. Reynolds, } Committee.*

ORATION, &c.

Friends and Fellow-Associates,

THE day has again arrived which demands from the votaries of liberty the expression of their gratitude to the o'er ruling providence that permits them to enjoy, and attribute of respect to the virtuous, whose blood has profusely flowed to establish, upon the sacred soil of Columbia, the natural rights of man. This, added to the pleasing reflection, that the members of our institution have for seven years, happily united in promoting each others good, and extending, as far as their circumstances would permit, the hand of benevolence, forms the subject of our congratulations and rejoicing.

Under a conviction of my incapacity to do justice to the theme which is presented by the occasion, I must confess that I feel a degree of diffidence in attempting to address you, which, but for a knowledge of your candour and generosity, would have wholly retarded me. Placing myself at your disposal, should I overleap the narrow limits of my capacity, by endeavouring to fulfill the duty assigned me, your indulgence, I am persuaded, will not be withheld, since motives of the purest sincerity alone shall lead me into error.

The mind, impregnated with a true sense of liberty and benevolence, can never cease to contemplate with peculiar delight the justice and philanthropy that so evidently actuated the heroes of our revolution: just, in having so nicely drawn the line of distinction between the arrogance and assumption of hereditary government, and the heaven-born right of self-control: philanthropic, in having framed for their posterity, after annihilating the power that oppressed them, a constitution of government so perfectly conciliatory to the idea of liberty; and which has extended to so large a

proportion of the human family the full enjoyment of the privileges designed by heaven for their convenience.

It may truly be said, that the laws of nature furnish not the least vestige of assurance by which one man can claim exclusively the control of another. A long succession of power vested in the hands of a monarch, has seldom failed to terminate in its own corruption, and the oppression of its subjects.

Our fathers, labouring under the numerous oppressions which a corrupt and assumed administration found necessary to impose, in order to maintain its own existence, resolved to cut the cord that bound them, and be free: Not with a view to establish on this side the Atlantic a succession of hereditary power; nor with a view to raise a monarch, who should sway the sceptre over the sons of Columbia; but with a view to establish a form of government, founded on the principles of man's unalienable right, of liberty and equality. Experience has fully shown that the human mind, however assiduous may be the minions of power to hold it in awe, by casting a veil of darkness and superstition over the evil machinations of assumed authority and despotism, still possesses a power of discriminating between right and wrong, between good and evil: and there is but a certain degree of oppression which a heart habituated to obey the dictates of tyranny, is capable of sustaining. When oppression is forced beyond its limits, the heart and mind giving way to its natural reason, must revolt; and to repress its impetuosity, or enforce its acceptance of a milder course from the same ministry, cannot easily be accomplished, however abundant the power that assails it. Annihilation would appear preferable to submission. Not to say that our fathers were held in awe by superstition; for literature had too universally spread its influence, to suffer their oppressors to avail themselves of such an instrument, for the purpose of furthering their views. They had raised the sword over the heads of the oppressed, thinking to accomplish their designs by severity. But so far from its having the effect for which it was administered, it only served to rouse to action the indignant spirit of the sons of freedom;

and amidst the thousand votaries of despotism set to watch and extinguish the infant dawnings of liberty, did they raise the standard of virtue, and lay the foundation of the temple of independence. No sooner had this glow of patriotism kindled to a blaze, than its influence caught the heart of every man that possessed one spark of animation. Few there were indeed, who, consulting their own immediate interest, deserted the ranks of freemen, and joined, in opposition to the most strenuous dictates of reason and justice, the common foe. But, poor pusillanimous souls! they have met their reward; they met the contempt of the very foe they joined, as being unworthy of trust, the main prop to society; and incurred the just execrations of a free and independent people. In the main, however, individual considerations were sacrificed to the general good; and a determination to persist in the accomplishment of a design, rendered imperious by their sufferings, was irrevocably fixed upon the mind of every American.

The confidence they reposed in each other, could arise from no other consideration than the justness of their cause. If ever a nation was actuated by one motive; if ever men laboured to promote the happiness of each other; if ever virtue struggled with adversity, 'twas when the citizens of these states struggled for their liberty. They had declared themselves *free and independent*; and resolved to maintain the declaration, or perish in the attempt. Their opponents were powerful, and their progress marked with dismay and horror. The field that nature formed for the resort of innocence, became the field of slaughter: the verdure that had received its moisture alone from the dews of heaven, now became drenched with the blood of martyred freemen. No difficulty appeared to them insurmountable; no sufferings too great. If here and there a hero fell, a hero still remained; till at length, under the immortal Washington, did the votaries of liberty ride triumphant: their foe was vanquished, and the civilized nations of the earth could but admire and acknowledge them *free and independent*.

To the heroes who still survive, it must be a source of consolation to reflect, that while the busy world is engaged in the pursuit of various occupations ; while the monarchs of ancient empires are trembling at the convulsions of their domains, and their subjects for the fate of their monarchs ; while the tyrants of the earth are rivetting faster on the unfortunate victims of their power, the chains that bind them to their servitude ; while the blood of innocence forms a deluge, to gratify the caprice of despotism, their offspring still hail with gladness and rejoicing the era that freed them from the yoke of oppression ; that prostrated the assumed authority of tyrants, and established the will of the people, the law of the land ; that extended to all ranks the free pursuit of knowledge ; and gave to the world an example of wisdom, virtue, and valour, that has excited its admiration.

The events of our late war fully prove that the spirit which animated our sires, is retained with undiminished lustre. Endearing as the fruits of peace may be, should any nation on earth attempt an encroachment on the hard-earned privileges of free Columbia—her banners once unfurled, calls to the field her innumerable train—hurls the destruction of Jove's thunder on her foes—and tells the world again, that "*Americans are freemen!*" Retiring then in social order to their homes, their departed brethren require the first tribute to their regard. Oft will the turf that hides the relics of departed valour, receive fresh moisture from the tear of sympathy. Oft will the philanthropic mind improve the congenial gloom of even-tide, to wander where the warrior fell ; and, in the fulness of the heart, pour forth the eulogy of departed worth. The monuments raised to perpetuate their fame, will waste away ; but the emulation of their deeds will be irrevocably fixed in the bosoms of their latest posterity.

If, to expatiate on the blessings derived from the accomplishment of this day's declaration, could awaken one heart to a more lively sense of the inestimable privileges of freemen ; or extract from the sordid eye one tear of gratitude to the memory of those who have fallen in the achievement, we should indeed be ungrateful in suffering any other considera-

tion to occupy our attention : but, under the impression that there exists upon the soil of freedom not one whose bosom does not swell with gratitude at the recollection of its inheritance ; no eye but softens for departed valour ; no knee but would bend to honour the grey locks of surviving patriotism ; we would manifest our gratitude by endeavouring to enjoy the blessing, and offering our lives a sacrifice to preserve it.

The cultivation and improvement of the arts and sciences, and the general diffusion of knowledge ; the induction of the rising generation to virtue, and the suppression of vice ; the extension of benevolence, and the promotion of harmony, appear to be objects alone calculated to ensure its permanency.

Among the many arts which man, in the exercise of his reasoning and inventive faculties, has produced for the benefit of his fellow-mortals, none can be said to have operated with greater effect, or more universal benefit, than the art of **PRINTING** ; an art truly divine, and the “ *preservative art of all arts* ;” but for which the mind to this day might have slumbered in the lap of ignorance ; the grand and noble sentiments of the more refined of our nature that have tended to humanize and soften the heart impregnated with malicious designs, might have sunk in silence to the shades of oblivion, and left the barbarian to follow the dictates of his rapacity ; the healing balm derived from the reflections of the philosophic mind, that soothes even the rancour of a distempered breast, and unites contentment with a scanty pittance, were lost, but for the art to which all the honours we can pay are far deficient of its merit.

It is not my intention to attempt a detail of its invention, nor to trace minutely its progress and effect upon the civilized world. To give a faint delineation of its origin, and an idea of the progress with which it spread throughout Europe, the liberal patronage it has received under the fostering protection of the mild laws of our happy clime, will fully embrace the limits of my capacity. That it met in its infancy with the patronage of the learned, appears beyond doubt ; but from the illiterate vehicles of delusion, by whom the souls of men were held in awe, it met with the

most strenuous opposition. The clamours raised by them, with a view to put it down, however, fell short of their intended aim; for when it was found that their opinions and instructions could be questioned, the desire of knowing the truth overcame the terror of giving offence to their pretended authority; and its first good effect towards the grand revolution it has caused in human affairs, was the calling forth, as teachers and instructors, men of learning.

To its great utility, not having been immediately perceived, may probably be ascribed the obscurity of its original inventor's name; and consequently the cause of withholding from him the honour and praise to which his genius so justly entitled him. It appears, however, from the best authority that can now be collected, to owe its origin to the inventive genius of *John Faust*, of Mentz, in Germany; to whom, no doubt, through its medium, that honour will be ascribed while the art shall continue to be practiced. From thence it was carried, in the course of a few years, into many parts of Europe; and in about fifty years from the time of its invention, its use became common.

In France, England, Germany, and Italy, the art received many improvements; and, in fact, was brought to that degree of perfection, which seemed almost to defy competition. But the human mind, ever approximating to that perfection which it can never attain, has seldom failed in the event of time, to add new lustre, even to the brightest conceptions.—And it is a source of pride and gratification to reflect, that the embellishments our art has received from the brilliant conception of American genius, eclipses any foreign production, since it has been practised upon this side the Atlantic.

To enter here into a detail of the various restrictions that have been imposed upon the free exercise of the Press, since its introduction to man; or an attempt to pourtray the various motives which have obtuded to retard its progress, would hardly be compatible with the occasion: suffice it to say, that at no former period of its existence, has it enjoyed that freedom which it does under the happy government formed by the heroes of our revolution, upon the ruins of monarchy:

where it will doubtless be productive of that true and essential benefit for which it was bestowed upon man ; where people of all ranks enjoy the free privilege of discussion ; where the reasoning faculties of every citizen are called into action ; and the Press, unrestrained, forms the grand bulwark of our National Independence !

If the attachment of a character, famed for integrity, talents, and virtue, to a profession so conspicuous for its utility, can in any degree heighten the regard due to its merit, or stimulate its patrons to greater enterprise, we cite with pleasure the proud name of FRANKLIN ! a name sacred to the sons of freedom ; a name unrivalled in the annals of our nation's glory : and while the land which gave its bearer birth, holds on its surface the faintest glimmerings of civilization, among the most conspicuous of its traits, let there be seen the name of Franklin. A friend to science—in the untutored school of experience and application, he learned a lesson of philosophy that palled the researches of tutored acquirements, and laid a foundation for the literary fame of his country. A friend to domestic happiness—he imparted his precepts, in innumerable strains, pure as the chrysal and unruffled spring, and brilliant as the spangles of the morning dew. A friend to virtue—he overcome by reason the licentiousness of his nature. A friend to liberty—he dared, amidst the minions of despotism, to assert the indubitable rights of man, and declare in the face of that power which thought the homage of the world insignificant to its greatness, that, “ *Where liberty dwelt, there was his country !*”

The recollection that this day completes the seventh year of the existence of our institution, affords the greatest satisfaction, when we reflect that its members have so long happily united in endeavouring to promote the objects for which it was intended. To whatever pursuit man turns his attention, in which he places his dependence, it most unquestionably becomes his duty to use every honourable means to promote the interest of it. Our Society was established under a conviction, that the frequent intercourse of members of the same profession was indispensable to the permanent adoption of a

code of internal regulations, by which the profession might be governed with uniformity, and from which would result that mutual interference and exchange of kind offices, which we are so liable to require from the hand of a brother.

The encouragement given at the present period to literature, and the liberality with which it is extended to all circumstances and capacities, tends continually to augment the number of Typographical professors. Among them will be found, men whom habits of industry have taught duly to appreciate virtue; men who in adversity have felt the benignant effects of a bounteous heart; men who would wish to inculcate in the minds of the unthinking, a just regard for every principle of morality; and men who view with pleasure the progress of civilization, and derive infinite satisfaction from a pursuit which tends to promote or extend it. From an association of such principles much good may accrue.

How far the operations of our institution have been productive of beneficial effects, can best be tested by those who have felt them. But, with a view to the continuance of its exertions, and even its existence, it becomes the duty of its members to watch with unremitting fidelity the motives and objects which call for the exercise of its powers, and to examine with the strictest scrutiny any act which might lead to a violation of the rules prescribed for its government. So absolutely necessary to the existence of an institution is the adhesion of its members to an established mode of procedure, that it would be better to err for once, by persisting in it, than by one flagrant violation, to pave the way for its total subversion and destruction. Without due regard to order; without feeling under some restraint to the regulations which experience has found necessary to impose for the preservation of harmony, the good effect of man's social intercourse would be lost, and the measures of their adoption be marked with the frenzy of a mob.

Friendship, that cement of society, that hovering spirit at whose shrine the heart of hatred softens into sympathy, should ever be the object of our solicitude; and Benevolence, the noblest feeling that can animate the heart of man, find its most strenuous advocates at our deliberations.

Is it for pleasure that we plod along the weary course of life? Behold thousands of our fellows labouring under the remorseless stings of adversity; who would implore the succour of heaven for him that could impart but sympathy alone; and ay, can aught on earth afford more pleasure than the act which softens the pillow of affliction; or snatches from the agony of despair, a heart pregnant with all the noble feelings of our nature, and expiring beneath the ills incident to us all! arouse from the recreant habits of selfishness, and give full scope to every virtuous impulse. Suffer not the soul to be enveloped in the blind precepts of faction, but pursue the unerring dictates of *Truth*, *Justice*, and *Liberty*; then, long shall our country bask in the sunshine of its freedom; and the offsprings of unnumbered ages hail with joy the returning day that gave birth to its *Independence*!
