

ORATION,

DELIVERED AT FAIRFAX, VT.

ON THE

ANNIVERSARY

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

JULY 4TH, 1811.

BY JACOB COLLAMER, A. B.

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1811.

Fairfax, July 10, 1811.

DEAR SIR,

As President of the day, by the request of a large and respectable number of the audience, which attended the celebration of our nation's birth day at this place, on the 4th instant, I return you their sincere thanks for your ingenious, learned and patriotic Oration that day delivered, and I with pleasure request a copy for the press.

I am Sir, yours, &c.

JOSEPH BEEMAN, Jr.

MR. JACOB COLLAMER.

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St. Albans, July 20, 1811.

HONORABLE SIR,

The extent of my wishes on the subject of my Oration is answered by the assurances contained in yours of the 10th instant. The situation of a speaker on the subject of politics, to a mixed audience at the present day is peculiarly ill calculated to please the whole. If he is a man in any degree adequate to the performance of this part, he undoubtedly is a man who has sentiments of his own. These sentiments, under the present existing circumstances, and on such an occasion it becomes his duty openly to avow, with the ground of his faith. If he does not avow them, but labors to please all in the servile business of courting popularity, he is a deceiving hypocrite and deserves the approbation of none. If he does avow them and discharge his duty, he can expect to please but a part. The copy, which you request, is at your disposal, and to which you may add the honors of the press, as you have added the highly gratifying compliment of your own approbation, if you consider it will be of any utility.

I am Sir, yours sincerely.

JACOB COLLAMER.

HON. JOSEPH BEEMAN, jr. Esq.

AN

ORATION,

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July 4th, 1811.

THIS, my fellow citizens, is the political sabbath day of our nation. On this day let not the argus eyes of freemen sleep in dangerous indolence ; but watch with eager and anxious care over foreign invasion and domestic faction. Rest not with ease in false security if the storm roars at a distance, lest it rock you to sleep in the cradle of destruction. On this day let freedom be born anew in every heart. Let the sound of liberty rend the astonished air, and the hovering spirits of departed fathers will echo back the joyful sound. Filled with such ideas, let us proceed with that freedom, which becomes us as citizens.

The political duty of every citizen is, to review the present situation of our country, to observe the dangers to which we are liable, and to remark the agents, which serve to oil the wheels of State on the high road to glory and national prosperity ; and this must be the order of the present discourse.

Let the definition of civil liberty be well understood. It exists not in the symbol of a cap, a flag staff, or an eagle. It resides not in the cries of thousands of infatuated mortals. Its residence is in that government, where the people make and expound the laws of their choice. It has been truly said, " where there is no law there

is no freedom ;" and tyranny is the depriving a man of any natural right, when not required by the public good. It requires not the proof of logical investigation to convince you, that ours is the government favored of heaven, congenial to the soul and the spirit of freedom, for to the noble mind a glance at our blessings flashes a conviction of the worth of our government. Need you again be told the price by which it was obtained? The road to liberty up the craggy mountain's side of revolution is marked with your father's blood. Shall you again be told that Britain's tyrants essayed to grind our fathers with accumulated despotism? Shall the recital again excite the feelings of sensibility and the tears of benevolence? How the yells of savage vengeance excited by our enemies startled the watchful slumbers of midnight. How the infant shrieked as it was scalped in its mother's arms. How the hell hounds of tyranny, an ungoverned soldiery, with the torch of war and a sword of destruction, spread wide the scenes of desolation and murder.

" Sack'd towns and midnight howlings through the realm,

Received their sanction."

How despairing mothers and orphaned children fled before the dreadful conflagration, the objects of compassion and excitors of patriotism. How danger stalked at mid-day and assassination lurked in the foldings of the curtains of night. How our fathers, without arms, without ammunition and without a leader, scattered through a howling wilderness, still dared to be free. Yes, even in this situation, they dared to shout liberty with-

in the hearing of a British tyrant whose power was commensurate with the dominion of the globe. They dared to erect the standard of republicanism and to rally round it while liberty descended with valor and victory attending her, waiting employment. Every heart beat liberty and every arm was nerved. "They fought and bled and conquered." The lion of Britain retreating, howled again in the caverns of his despotism, lest the undazzled eye of the republican eagle as she soars aloft in this clear sky of liberty should mark his eyes as food for her offspring. This was the price of our present blessings. Learn then duly to appreciate them.

To increase the internal prosperity of a nation; the three grand objects are agriculture, commerce and domestic manufactures. From Maine to Georgia, our country yields in the greatest profusion every article calculated for the nourishment and happiness of man. Our western frontier smiles with the newly raised work of the husbandman, and where so lately trod the foot of a savage, on rising villages descend the blessings of heaven. Our country is the farm yard and granary of the world.

The jarring opinions of our fellow citizens with regard to commerce demand, that divesting ourselves of every prejudice, we should attend to this subject with the strictest candor. Commerce is an object of the greatest importance to an agricultural nation when it can be carried on in safety, without endangering a greater benefit.

But Britain is determined to usurp the dominion of the seas and monopolize the commerce of the globe. With this view, and contrary to the

accepted laws of nations, she has practised every species of depredation and usurpation over the commerce of every kingdom in Europe for almost half a century. Her paper blockades and orders in council have produced that train of retaliating decrees by whose direful effects our commerce has at length so deeply suffered. It is folly and mere delusion to say, that because commerce produces money, riches and the luxuries of life we must attempt to cope the British navy. Appealing to your own candor, I would ask, shall men be offered up by thousands at the shrine of teas and muslins? Is there any present who is willing to have his son groan for years in a British man of war, or Gallic dungeon to enhance the value of his yearly crops? Humanity answers no! You wish for the benefits but despise the means.

Let lambs whiten your thousand hills, let every dwelling be a factory, let wives and daughters be taught to consider its importance and its honor, and let your garments be independant as your spirits, and firm in texture as the limbs they cover.

The prosperous state of our domestic manufactures must be contemplated as a source of joy to every citizen; for dependance on a foreign nation is incongenial to the spirit of republicanism, and in every bail of imported broad cloth is wrapped an essence which is the nutriment of faction and worse than the plagues of Pandora's box.

Where is the man who is the votary and supporter of *party spirit*, which, like the pestilence that walks in darkness holds its midnight orgies in planning the destruction of our government.

Is there any one among you, who attempts to alienate your affections from your country? *Then he is the man.* Is there any one among you, who endeavours to justify the depredations committed on our commerce? *Then he is the man.* Is there any one among you, who has proscribed this government and doomed it to tyranny? *Then he is the man.* Let the eye of suspicion be upon him, and if he ever has been, let him no longer be supported. Lift not that man up the ladder of promotion, who will "laugh in his sleeves" and shake off the dust of his feet against you. No matter in what garments he is clad, though their name should be christian, if villany lurk beneath, which is not impossible, for Satan assumes the appearance of an angel of light: It poisons religion, if politics tincture its current. If any mix ought but morality with their religion, you have just grounds to suspect them. Shall that man be protected and upheld and appointed to legislate in a government, whose measures he affects to despise? Shall that man be selected to nurse the body politic of our country, on which he has already pronounced the sentence of destruction, who has already chartered its funeral dirge and danced to its imaginary death nell.

Much has been said on the refusal to renew the charter of the United States Bank. How is it possible, fellow citizens, that they could renew it, when they considered it unwarranted by our constitution? It would evidently be an encroachment of the national, upon the exclusive rights of the state governments. Shall it be said, that congress manifested a spirit hostile to commerce and banks as its handmaids in this measure, when

in the same session they established several banks within the district of Columbia, which lies solely within their jurisdiction and not within that of an individual state.

But no extension of commerce, though its sails should whiten the ocean ; not the riches of agriculture, nor the death bed of faction, nor the independence of domestic manufactures is proof against foreign invasion. Switzerland, whose name is proverbial of industry and peace, once delighted every traveller with her romantic scenery. In her plains agriculture smiled. Around the aerial top of the towering Mont Blanc, and its grotesque group of surrounding Alps once delighted to flutter the republican eagle. But lo, "the cruel spoiler came." Napoleon "cried havoc and let slip the dogs of war," who spread afar destruction and tyranny. Instead of the hum of industry and the rural notes of a shepherd's pipe, nought now is echoed from the surrounding hills but the lengthened sigh of national distress, and all the fertile kingdoms of Europe lie half unpeopled by the wild ambition of this fell destroyer. For his imprisonment of our men and spoils of our property, no excuse, no palliation can be offered. The groans of our captive citizens and the reeking gore of slaughtered millions cry to us in language louder than the roar of his artillery, and pointing to the tyrant with the withered finger of death, they bid us *beware*.

Nor is the bull of Europe more to be trusted, whose horns now reek with the blood of innocence. The ocean groans with the weight of Britain's floating sinks of iniquity. The still

smoaking villages of Ireland, the shocking spectacle of perfidy at Copenhagen and every wave of the ocean, echoing the cries of five thousand captive American seamen, bear witness of their accursed domination. Where is impertinence so barefaced, that will dare to imply a shadow of excuse, when they sacrilegiously enter within our waters and search, captive and murder, yes, literally murder, our seamen without the least pretence of right, but that tyrant's plea, *that it is necessary.*

Oh, my fellow citizens, in the name of all you hold sacred and dear, in the name of your domestic "fire side and the tombs of your fathers," in the name of gratitude for all your blessings and in the name of that God, who manifests his good will to our land, let me implore and intreat you to love and support your country ; for rest assured, that when your confidence in your government is destroyed, the foreign tyrant will say, I have a party among you, the door of invasion is thrown open and you must "groan beneath the cruel rod of merciless oppression."

Our administration have proceeded, under existing circumstances, with the deepest wisdom & the strictest integrity, and if any are disposed to condemn its measures, I will venture to say it is either through prejudice, perfidy, or from their information not having supplied them with a view of the whole ground ; and the motto of our administration may be "what could I have done more for the vineyard that I have not done." Trust then my countrymen, only in yourselves.

*Father's of our country's liberty,**

Fain would I address you in the language of gratitude from a heart highly sensible of your meritorious suffering. Through the kindness of Providence, you yet stand the living chronicles to the rising age of our country's struggles for freedom. To you must we refer for the most sublimated feelings of patriotism. You alone can inform us what spirit upheld you amid all your trials. Continue to relate the mournful tale and its glorious issue. In the winter's evening, when seated round the domestic fire side, let the ambition of youth and the sympathy of childhood listen to the dreadful relation. Fire their young minds with all the noble sentiments of man; and when they hang around you with all the sensibility of undissembled interest, eagerly listening to the tale of woe, tell them of *Bennington*. Tell them the dreadful tale of rapine, conflagration and murder, with all the feelings of which you are capable and which you have so often exercised and compared with which "all I can say will be poor and frigid." Amidst all this interesting scene, teach them to support their country and to suspect the man, who sets himself up as a standard to asperse the measures of government. Be not dishartened in your age by the opposers of authority, for so long as vice is inherent in man, faction will exist. May your declining years be sweet. Gratitude passing your dwellings will point and say 'there lives a friend to humanity, a patriot of '76;' and while

* *About thirty of the venerable patriots of '76 were present.*

we look up with humble reverence will not the
God of heaven look down delighted, for,

*If there's a God above, and that there is all na-
ture cries aloud,
Through all her works, he must delight in virtue,
And that which he delights in must be happy."*

And when your bodies must be laid low be-
neath the cold clods of the valley, to repose with
Washington and our fathers and your souls safe-
ly return to God, who gave them, may the "last
words that linger on your lips" be, "now my
country, let me die in peace, for mine eyes have
seen thy salvation."

Gentlemen of the Militia,

Need you again be told, that you are the bul-
wark of our country? You are the substitute for
standing armies, those machines of tyranny and
vicegerents of despotism. We think I see in
every eye the martial spirit inherited from your
fathers. It is you that constitute our watchful
citizens in peace and the sinews of our country
in war. Emulate the deed of departed heroes,
and remember that every step you tread you
may press the dust of a father, for their ashes now
ride on the four winds of heaven from the walls
of Quebec to the plains of Yorktown. Be emu-
lous to equip and ambitious to learn the duty of
a soldier; not because the law requires you to
spend three days in a year in military exercise,
but because it is the duty of a citizen to his coun-
try. Let your officers be chosen from the most
energetic among you, and such as are willing to

support the government for this is the object of militia. Though peace still sleeps in our borders the cloud of war is in our political horizon. The country stands yet unmoved, amid the universal collision of nations. Be yet watchful, as faithful sentinels, stationed on this northern wall of the nation. Your post is an exposed one, bordering on the dominions of a hostile foreign nation. Look out for the watch word and countersign of invasion ; and should the defence of your rights ever call you to the field, when looking at your arms, remember your homes, your friends and your liberties.

Fellow Citizens,

Amid all the dangers to which we are liable, our country is yet prosperous and daily growing more and more independent. Our equally balanced government remains unadulterated. Every citizen yet enjoys his vine and fig-tree, undisturbed. Through the measures of a wise administration the abode of tranquility is still among us. Now " who is here so base, that he would be a bondman ? If any, speak, for him have I offended." Who is here so vile, that he " will not love his country ? " If any, speak, for him have I offended ;" and who is here so mean, that he will court a tyrant ? If any, speak, for him have I offended. Charity answers none ; then none have I offended ; and if I may construe your countenances, you will join me in the sweetest accents of sincerity in saying to our wise and happy government, esto perpetua, be thou everlasting.