

ORATION,

DELIVERED

IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH,

ON

*The Fourth of July, 1800:*

BEING

THE TWENTY-FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR INDEPENDENCE,

BEFORE

THE GENERAL SOCIETY OF MECHANICS & TRADESMEN,  
TAMMANY SOCIETY OR COLUMBIAN ORDER,

AND OTHER

ASSOCIATIONS AND CITIZENS.

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By M. L. DAVIS,

*Of the General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen;*

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NEW-YORK:

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*Matthew L. Davis,*

*Citizen,*

*We are a Committee, appointed in behalf of the different Societies, to return you their thanks for your excellent Oration, delivered before them on the 4th inst. and to request of you a Copy thereof for publication.*

*P. H. WENDOVER, } Gen. Soc'y of Mech's  
C. CRYGIER. } & Tradesmen.*

*G. J. WARNER, } Tammany Society.  
J. MERCEREAU. }*

*New-York, 8th July, 1800.*

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## AN ORATION.

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*Friends & Fellow Citizens!*

THE commemoration of great events is an interesting and instructive employment. Most nations have set apart particular days for the celebration of such achievements as are considered productive of national prosperity and glory. We have met to congratulate each other upon the most important and distinguished occasion which occurs in the annals of our country. On me has devolved the pleasing, though arduous task, of speaking the sentiments and feelings of America.

WHEN these fair and extensive domains were rude and inhospitable wilds; when the towering oaks, and lofty pines, and impenetrable forests cast around a gloomy shade; when wild and ferocious animals divided the empire of this continent with human savages, still more barbarous and untractable than themselves, our fathers, persecuted and oppressed at home, in these far distant regions sought for freedom and repose—braving the inclement skies and boisterous ocean—struggling against the hardships, and encountering the numerous perils of

a new and untried situation, and perpetually contending with the fury of a jealous, exasperated, and unforgiving foe. Vanquishing every danger, and encountering every difficulty, by exemplary constancy, fortitude and perseverance, they established the charms and enjoyments of civilized society in these remote dominions of the West. Possessed of industry and knowledge, and inspired with ardent and manly virtues, their wisdom and their labours introduced the various blessings which proceed from agriculture and the arts.

An unremitting series of misfortune and persecution, and an experience of the calamities resulting from misrule, had furnished our ancestors with a correct and comprehensive view of the natural and social rights of men. Hence it was that the principles of moral and political rectitude became cherished from the origin of our empire, and a love of liberty and attachment to civil order, were happily blended together from the earliest commencement of our institutions. Detestation of tyrants and an affectionate obedience towards the government of their choice, were the original sentiments of Americans, which uniformly possessed an equal influence in their minds.

UNSHACKLED with baronial tyranny and pride; delivered from all hereditary aristocracy; strangers to those unnatural and anti-social distinctions, so

pernicious and destructive in their consequences, our manners, our laws, our policy, commenced, progressed and ripened in obedience to the dictates of justice and wisdom. Though subjects of a monarchy, the waves of the wide and impetuous Atlantic rolled between us and the imperial person of our prince. The splendor of his sceptre and the halo of glory which encircled his throne, like the concerns of foreign empires, or the tales of ancient times, amused our imaginations, and might sometimes gratify our vanity, but as we felt not, we did not dread the ascendancy of his power. Our domestic habits were republican; our immediate governments were principally representative. Thus humble, happy and obscure, we then enjoyed tranquility, and many a season of serenity, in soft succession, glided over the American Colonies.— We then retained an enthusiastic affection towards the inhabitants of Britain; we boasted of our common ancestry, and while remoteness of space could neither lessen nor destroy the powerful claims of consanguinity—generously forgetting the wrongs which impelled the migration of our fathers, we cherished the most ardent solicitude for the welfare, and the most loyal veneration for the person of the common sovereign.

HITHERTO an obscurity only constituted our protection; as yet we were not supposed to pre-

sent allurements, or furnish temptations for the attack of ambition: But from the moment our prosperity became apparent, and our situation less humble, the eye of tyranny became fastened upon us. Those haughty and imperious islanders no longer recognised us as their friends and their brothers, but viewed us with the hateful jealousy of rivals. Then it was that the ministry and parliament of England, inflamed with resentment, and intoxicated with power, with deadly grasp endeavoured to deprive us of our privileges. They pursued us with merciless tyranny, and with unrelenting cruelty exerted all the fury of oppression. In vain we expostulated: No language however calm or conciliatory could divert them from their vengeance, for their system was premeditated and determined, and their hearts were steeled. At this solemn crisis we wielded the sword of defence: Upon the sacred altars of Truth, and in the awful presence of the Almighty, we swore fidelity to our country and to Liberty.—The event is known; happy America, thou art free! O my beloved country, how transporting is the theme, thou art independent! Favoured land of Heaven; nurse of exalted sentiments and heroic sons, at the mention of thy name, the thrill of sensibility extatic rushes through our frames. Well dost thou deserve the enthusiastic attachment of thy children.

Inspired with thy virtues, and partaking of thy common happiness, in the hours of difficulty and danger they will never forsake thy banners.

Yes, our beloved country is now free and independent, no longer the submissive vassals of a haughty and imperious power, we have acquired an honourable and elevated rank among nations.—

Four and twenty annual seasons of prosperity have passed away, and demand the effusions of gratitude to Heaven, for the many blessings we have enjoyed.

FELICITY uninterrupted, and unalloyed, belongs not to man. Our day of life is marked by a perpetual succession of vicissitudes. By turns it presents the cheerful sunshine of prosperity, and exhibits the gloomy appearances of adversity: Just so with nations.—Empires, as well as individuals, are perpetually exposed to the evils which arise from the errors, imperfections and vices of humanity.

THE hostility and depredations of foreign states, the rivalry and jealousy of contending parties, and the effects of aspiring ambition, are sure at one period or at another, to present a front of danger which can only be encountered by a happy combination of fortitude and wisdom.

THIS is the Anniversary of our existence as a people:—It constitutes an era calculated to in-

inspire us with sublime and enthusiastic emotions.—  
 It is a day which should ever animate our hearts  
 with gladness, and swell our bosoms with expanded  
 and patriotic feelings. On each annual recurrence  
 of this memorable period, we should call to our  
 remembrance those scenes of peril and of glory  
 which conducted us to freedom: We should re-  
 count to our friends and our children, the repeated  
 injuries we suffered, the numerous hardships we  
 endured, and the invincible constancy with which  
 our soldiers conquered in their country's cause:  
 We should tell them how our little band of heroes,  
 unprovided with the conveniences, and scarcely  
 supplied with the necessaries of war, braved the  
 summer's scorching heat, and winter's freezing  
 cold, and vanquished armies numerous, organized,  
 and disciplined: We should remind them of the  
 arrogant pretensions of our implacable foe, and the  
 inveterate resentment with which they endeavoured  
 to subjugate America: We should unfold their  
 cruelty, and record how pestilence, fire and famine,  
 were united with the sword, with the intent to ac-  
 complish our destruction. And while we kindle  
 in their breasts the pious flame of patriotic senti-  
 ment, we should teach them to dwell with fervent  
 rapture upon the virtues of our illustrious generals  
 and statesmen, who in the season of adversity stood  
 foremost in the glorious rank of saviours of their  
 country.



In the moments of safety and tranquility we are too prone to forget the perils and difficulties which are past. How different is our situation at present, from our condition at the commencement of the late war: Seryile and dependent colonies, we had drank the dregs of humiliation. Petitioners for clemency and supplicants for justice, at the footsteps of thy throne, O proud and infatuated Prince! was the majesty of a brave and too loyal people repeatedly insulted.

THE inflexible and obdurate perseverance in cruelty which marked the British councils, taught America that her safety and happiness demanded an instant dissolution of her foreign yoke. A conviction of danger united us in effecting a separation from the government of Britain, and by impressing us with the important truth, that independence was essential to our prosperity, hastened the brilliant destinies of this western republic.

MANLY and energetic was our declaration of independence. Solemn and impressive was the sound. It was the voice of a free, united and indignant people. It displayed a spirit of firmness and magnanimity which no consideration could divert, no danger dismay, and no human power could subdue. Speaking a language more powerful than the eloquence of Demosthenes, more energetic than the pen of Tacitus, it at once enlist-

ed the hearts, the understandings and the generous passions of the people—inspired them with heroism and resolution, armed them with invincible courage, and animated them to contend with undaunted prowess in defence of freedom. Even after the lapse of time; when the tempestuous passions have subsided, who can hear the recital of this interesting model of manly eloquence, without feeling his mind and bosom warmed with the most elevated sentiments and enthusiastic emotions? It was the capacious mind and nervous pen of Jefferson, which thus portrayed his country's injuries and rights. Excellent and enlightened citizen! Thou art superior to the voice of adulation! Yet on this day thou shalt receive the tribute of feeble, though well deserved praise: United with the names of Washington, Montgomery and Mercer; surrounded by a glorious constellation of fellow statesmen and patriots, thy fame shall descend unsullied to posterity, and millions of freemen yet unborn shall bless and strive to imitate thy virtues.

I perceive the momentous events of this arduous contest passing before me in a rapid, though interesting succession. Gloomy and hopeless at first: Black and menacing was the cloud which overshadowed us. Surcharged with fury, the heavy thunders roared, the forked lightnings flashed: Calm and collected the Guardian Genius of Ame-

rica, viewed the impending tempest.—Though not insensible of her danger, she viewed it undismayed. She knew the resources of her proud invaders, and eyed their preparations for the combat. She saw their numerous armies, their mercenary bands of foreigners, enforced by powerful fleets. Appealing to the protection of an over-ruling Providence, she trusted to the justice of her cause, and to the superior gallantry of her sons. Between *slavery* and *battle* could there be room to hesitate? For submission was worse than death and desolation, it was servility, degradation, and perpetual unlimited subjugation.

'Twas then the battle rag'd—

“For mad Ambition forg’d the galling chains,  
 “Which Freedom loathes, and man disdains;  
 “Then Cruelty, fell murd’rer, stood,  
 “Thirsting, panting for our blood,  
 “And carnage strew’d th’ ensanguin’d plains;  
 “Then curst Oppression, with gigantic stride,  
 “Spread desolation far and wide;  
 “Then harvests perish’d, cities blaz’d,  
 “And lawless Power advanc’d with arm uprais’d,  
 “To crush the hallow’d fanè which Freedom rear’d,

'Twas then—

“Our shield, our strength, our best resource,  
 “The mighty WASHINGTON appear’d;  
 “And turn’d aside its vengeful force:  
 “When Perseverance shrunk aghast,  
 “And Hope’s bright rays were overcast;  
 “When, paraliz’d and weak, our little band  
 “Of suff’ring heroes mourn’d, that soon their land

" Would groan beneath a foreign yoke,  
 " Their gallant leader, in that trying hour,  
 " Exerted more than mortal power :  
 " He rous'd Columbia's energies once more ;—  
 " Columbia from her lethargy awoke ;  
 " Himself a host, the champion rose,  
 " He hurl'd War's thunder on our foes ;  
 " Th' embattled foe astonish'd, fled ;—  
 " Immortal laurels grac'd the victor's head ! "

SAM. LOW'S POEMS, V. I. P. 12.

CAN this day ever be forgotten? Or what is worse, be solemnized with stoic apathy and coldness? Immortal spirits of our departed worthies, your bones are mouldering in the silent tomb, can it be possible that your toils, your sufferings, and your virtues are forgotten? O Washington, thy country's faithful, best of friends, the tear of sorrow for thy loss still trickles down our cheeks, and can thy venerated name be uttered with indifference? Or can the sentiments of liberty and justice, which thou hast cherished and enforced, have ceased to influence our minds?—And O illustrious band of sages, ye who planned and pronounced our independence, can we insult your consecrated graves, by a criminal supineness towards our country's interests and rights? To a degradation so unworthy of freemen, we are incapable of submitting. On each return of this memorable day we will pledge ourselves to Heaven, that we will preserve the liberty and independence which we received from

you, safe in our hands, and transmit them pure, unsullied, and undiminished, to the latest posterity.

At the conclusion of the late war, we were indeed emancipated from foreign bondage, but we were threatened by a calamity still more perilous and formidable. The imbecility of the confederation, which had been hastily framed in a moment of difficulty and danger, now became manifest. A spirit of jealousy, dis-union, and selfish policy, already began to distract our councils. The bonds of political fidelity, originally feeble, became more slender and relaxed, and public credit and confidence were rapidly declining.

No sooner did the danger appear, than the Guardian Genius of America interposed her protecting power. Again we behold a sage assembly of venerable patriots; by them we are presented with a civil constitution more pure, more perfect and excellent, than any which human policy has hitherto devised. Happy were the effects it instantly produced; mutual confidence was revived; public credit restored, jealousy, doubts, and fears were dissipated, and Columbia again beheld her children firmly united by the endearing ties of political consanguinity. This glorious event completed the establishment of our freedom. By affording security to our revolution, it consummated and enforced it. It secured our liberties by the solemnity of an organized social code. From this

auspicious period, we became *free* and *united* as well as independent.

HARK! the shrill clarion sounds! Listen to the warlike trumpet from afar: Be firm and collected, my countrymen! We shall indeed feel somewhat affected by the conflict, but the dreadful tempest shall not reach our peaceful shores. Europe is convulsed to the centre; her sons are destined to suffer and to bleed. It is France, that with the strength of Hercules, and the inflexible perseverance of the fabled Antæus, is combating with the oppressors of mankind. She had not yet been guilty of those enormities which afterwards disgraced a revolution so exalted and noble in its origin. Could our sensibility then withhold the effusions of sympathy towards a people struggling for the attainment of liberty? Could we feel wholly indifferent towards a contest in its commencement so congenial with our own?—No: The love of freedom so ardent in our breasts animated us with enthusiastic emotions. If our feelings were mistaken, they sprung from a pure, exalted and amiable source. Our attachment to the French was sentimental and not national; it was directed towards the principles of justice, and did not arise from a servile partiality towards that people. Friendship and affection are sentiments wholly individual, and cannot, should not exist in the intercourse between nations. Upon this subject let us profit by the

lessons of experience. The depredations upon our commerce may not be unproductive of benefit: They may serve as a beacon to guide us in our future connection with foreign nations. We are not again to be reminded of the fate of Switzerland and of Venice. But let me pass over these disgraceful acts, and turn to a prospect more pleasing.— We will indulge a hope that negociation will forbid the sanguinary streams to flow; and be it hereafter our universal practice, *to treat all mankind as enemies in war—in peace as friends.*

SEPARATED from Europe by the vast and extensive boundary of the Atlantic, why should we join in her disputes, or participate in her quarrels? With almost equal propriety might we engage in the wandering excursions of the Arabs, or unite in some rash crusade against the infidels at Mecca or at Palestine. True to justice and to ourselves: Firm and united—we are invincible. In contests for supremacy, in imaginary balances of power, we have no interest and no share. To us it is indifferent whether France or Germany becomes the possessor of the Netherlands: whether the Rhine or Danube; the Alps or the Appenines are marked as the boundaries of national territory: whether the Crescent or the Imperial Eagle waves proudly triumphant over the walls of Malta or of Belgrade.

Separated from the infatuated folly and mad ambition which perpetually distracts and convulses the empires of Europe, let us rise superior to the dazzling and meretricious attractions of false glory, and pursue felicity in the aimable paths of equity and freedom.

We are free, prosperous and independent, but let us not slumber in security. A vigilant attention to our interests is essential to the preservation of our happiness, and it is necessary that we should always be prepared to avert the dangers which surround us.

INDEPENDENCE, union, and a constitution combining sufficient energy, with the spirit and principle of freedom—these, my countrymen, are our cardinal, political blessings. Let us not vainly imagine that the preservation of privileges so inestimable, require no care, deliberation and exertion. Be assured that they impose upon us all the most sacred and important duties. It should be our firm and steady determination to continue independent, not only in name, but in reality.

FOREIGN influence is the most dangerous and irreconcilable foe to our independence. Let us beware how we form connections with any of the powers of Europe. Europeans are not our friends. They are jealous of our liberty and rising greatness: They consider themselves as our superiors in eve-



ry physical and intellectual endowment. Even their philosophers—their Raynals and their Buffons have asserted, that not only the inferior animals and plants, but even the men of the old world, have degenerated upon their introduction into the new. Haughty and imperious Europeans! From us shall ye receive the sacred rights of hospitality, but the day has come, in which you shall no longer interfere in our concerns. Approach not with hostile intention! Our hearts beat high with a love of freedom and our country; and we will drive each rash invader with ignominy from our shores. Then tell us no longer of the party of France or of England! Where are the wretched miscreants? If the accursed sin has existed among us, remove the fatal stain! wipe off the foul disgrace! From henceforward let the sacred fountain of representation be relieved from the polluted poison of European infection. Upon this solemn day, O citizens of America, let us resolve to cultivate and cherish a national character, worthy of our country and peculiar to ourselves. Let our manners be domestic, and none but rightful citizens be permitted to unite in our measures, or influence our debates. Delivered from the influence of foreign factions, we shall enjoy the sweets of repose, afford an honourable character to our country, and perpetuate our liberty, prosperity and independence.

WHILE we are jealous of the intrigues of Europeans, let us cultivate harmony, friendship and affection among ourselves. These United States constitute one country, and one republic. Beware of local parties, interests and divisions. Beware of geographical distinctions. The extremities of Georgia, and of New-Hampshire, are equally component parts of our extensive empire. Connected by the most endearing ties, let us cherish a constant intercourse of love, and regarding each other as the faithful members of one happy family, let our union be co-existent with our independence.

UNITE a love of liberty, with a love of social order and representative government. Our civil constitution confers immortal honour upon the discernment of its founders. Cherish and preserve it, for it is truly worthy of our most ardent solicitude and attachment. Cultivate sound political maxims, and blend them with an unconquerable spirit of rational freedom. Liberty can never flourish, unless ascertained and protected by just and equitable laws: Profiting by the lessons of experience, may we never sacrifice our felicity to splendour, or deviate from virtue, in pursuit of the alluring follies of ambition. Let us be true to ourselves, and let affection to our country be the most active emotion of our hearts. So shall that independence which we this day celebrate, continue the blessing

of millions yet unborn. The name of America, rising superior to the tarnished fame and fading lustre of Rome or Athens, will stand foremost in the annals of history, and the mild glories of an empire, shining with celestial splendour, shall continue the inheritance of an enlightened and happy people, “while the loud sounding cataracts of Niagara are heard to roar, and the mighty waters of the Mississippi and St. Laurence, roll in opposite directions, to encompass the land of the free.”

*FINIS.*

# ODE

FOR

*The Fourth of July, 1800.*

By SAMUEL LOW.

[Sung after the delivery of the preceding Oration]

**A** GAIN the signal day,  
To freemen ever dear,  
Whose advent prompts our lay,  
Whose dawn our hearts can cheer,  
Returns to keep the flame alive  
Which warms the patriot's breast,  
The love of freedom to revive,  
And greet Columbia's blast.

CHORUS. Columbia see thy day-star rise.  
Thy shores to re-illumine,  
To cheer the captive's eyes,  
And scatter slav'ry's gloom!

Hail, memorable day!  
Which saw a nation born;  
Oh, may the orient ray  
Which ushers in thy morn,  
Our fair horizon never see,  
With clouds and storms o'ercast;  
But greet Columbia great and free,  
While time and freedom last!

CHORUS, &c.

Once war's infernal yell  
Resounded through our shore,  
Then Freedom's champions fell,  
And drench'd the soil in gore:  
Then Tyranny's remorseless hand  
Our birth-right strove to wrest,  
And Horror, o'er a groaning land,  
Wav'd high his gorgon crest.

CHORUS, &c.

Her bolt Medusa hurl'd;  
Tisiphone her brand;  
And over half a world  
Bellona stretch'd her hand;  
The Hydra Tyranny uprear'd  
His many-headed form:  
His banners dy'd in blood appear'd,  
Amid the raging storm!

CHORUS, &c.

## ODE.

But **WASHINGTON** scope,  
Invincible in fight;  
His sanguinary foes  
Soon wither'd at his sight;  
He knew on **Danger's** neck to ride,  
Whene'er he took the field,  
For **Liberty** was at his side,  
And **Justice** was his shield.

CHORUS, &c.

Oh, dear departed chief!  
Whose name a world reveres,  
Our hearts are pierc'd with grief,  
Our eyes o'erflow with tears,  
That on this glorious day's return  
Thy presence, never more  
Shall make these patriot honours burn  
Which now thy death deplore.

CHORUS, &c.

Illustrious, honour'd name!  
Admir'd, belov'd, ador'd!  
Whose nobly purchas'd fame  
Hath so sublimely soar'd!  
Oh, if thy country's blessings prove  
Secure as thine, renowned,  
The pow'r alone who reigns above  
Can cast those blessings down!

CHORUS, &c.

Columbian! hail the day  
Which made those blessings yours,  
And glad thank-givings pay,  
That freedom still endures,  
That no ambitious, vengeful hand,  
Now makes the battle roar,  
No spoiler's desolating hand  
Afflicts your country more.

CHORUS, &c.

The trumpets clangors cease,  
The fends of war are dumb,  
The gentle reign of peace  
And happiness has come;  
Beneath our vine and fig tree's shade  
Unaw'd by foreign foes,  
Of no terrestrial pow'r afraid,  
Columbia's sons repose.

CHORUS, &c.

Oh, speed the halcyon reign  
Of Liberty and love,  
Just Heav'n! let man again,  
The bliss of Eden prove;  
When sword to ploughshares shall be beat,  
When pruning wield the spear,  
And limbs with soften'd lions meet,  
Invisible to fear.

CHORUS, &c.

# ODE.

When Virtue's sacred voice  
Agais shall be rever'd,  
And Mercy shall rejoice  
The wretch who Justice fear'd;  
Shall, with a smile cherub'd, tell  
The pris'ner he is free,  
Bid slav'ry seek its native hell,  
And Tyrants bow the knee!

CHORUS, &c.

When manacles no more  
Shall human limbs corrode,  
Or stripes they long have bore  
Our fellow beings' good;  
Or cruelty the bosom rend,  
Which bleeds at every pore,  
But man shall be of man the friend,  
And give oppression o'er.

CHORUS, &c.

Hail, Freedom, heavenly fair!  
Without thee life is pain;  
And ne'er the image bear  
Of Truth, in vain!  
Soon may thy piercing ray explore  
The horrors of the mine,  
And break the galley captive's ear  
With energy divine!

CHORUS, &c.

This day Columbia's race  
Enjoy thy genial light;  
Ah, never may thy face  
Look less serenely bright  
On Error's night more lucid shine,  
While time rolls on his stream,  
'Till worlds acknowledge how divine  
Is this delightful theme!

CHORUS. Columbia! see thy day-star rise,  
Thy shores to re-illumine,  
To clear the captive's eyes,  
And scatter slav'ry's gloom!