

AN  
**ORATION,**

PRONOUNCED AT BOSTON,

ON THE FOURTH DAY OF JULY, 1811,

BEFORE THE

**SUPREME EXECUTIVE**

AND

IN PRESENCE OF THE

**BUNKER-HILL ASSOCIATION.**

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# ORATION.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,

WHEN the patriot, statesman and hero of future generations, shall read the history of that instructive period, from the dawn of our revolution to the present momentous epoch, with what glowing enthusiasm must they dwell on the annals of that perilous, but glorious warfare, which eventuated in the effectual establishment of an Independent Government.

Until the rights of subjugated man, were proclaimed in the western continent, by the adventurous and hardy champions of liberty, the world had been bound in the manacles of slavery, since Cæsar's towering ambition induced him to trample on the sacred rights of his deluded countrymen. When the conqueror of the world halted his victorious squadrons on the banks of the Rubicon, the destinies of empires were poised in awful equilibrium.

It was not, whether the devastation of Germany, and plundering warrior of subjugated Gaul, should sway the imperial sceptre, or disband his triumphant legions beyond the ramparts of freedom; but whether the laborious efforts of civilized man, in the advancement of science and establishment of his natural rights, should end by the irresistible supremacy of a military despot, or extend the blessings of liberty to the farthest confines of the globe. It was not the pause of patriotic virtue, where conflicting reason left unmarked the path of recti-

tude ; doubtful to retire from the portentous storms of civil discord, or with his returning armies establish on a lasting basis rational independence, and governmental prosperity, by distracting the patricidal machinations of unprincipled ambition and arresting in their proud career the infuriated partizans of licentious rebellion—but the wary hesitation of a remorseless tyrant, estimating the dangers of premeditated usurpation and the precarious chances of eventual success.

It was not the guardian contemplation of an illustrious Roman citizen, watchful of national honor, dwelling with magnanimous solicitude on the accumulating wrongs of internal faction, but the cold reflections of a relentless despot, concentrating the collected energies of his vigorous and expansive mind on those desperate designs which involved, not only the ruin of his country, but broke down the opposing barriers of Gothic barbarism, wrapt in clouds of ignorance and superstition succeeding generations, and spread the broad mantle of a long and dreary night over depopulated empires, which might have flourished under the meridian effulgence of extended science through centuries which now leave a melancholy blank in the annals of mankind.

Individual aggrandizement and personal revenge rent asunder the social bonds of domestic tranquility ; general commotion and wild misrule raging with ungovernable and demoralizing fury, subverted the stupendous foundations of popular government. Justice was hurled from her seat ; her statutes obliterated ; and her sacred courts converted into the polluted tribunal of lawless oppression. The Genius of Literature was haunted from her Tusculian groves, and the arts and sciences buried in an Herculanium of oblivion. The inflexible

advocate of the people's rights, were either expelled the Senate Chamber, ostracised, or immolated on the reeking altars of patriotism, by the encrimsoned sword of slaughtering persecution. The massy pillars of liberty were subverted, and the mutilated fragments of her prostrated temples scattered over the wide spread ruins of devastation. The last refuge of freedom was destroyed.

From the decline of the Western Empire, the history of the world unfolds but melancholy recitations of bloodshed, ignorance, superstition and ignominious vassalage. If illustrious examples of individual greatness, splendid instances of heroic virtue, and the philanthropic efforts of superior genius, sometimes fling a transient gleam athwart the dreary waste, like the unfrequent flash of the vollied lightning through the nocturnal storm, they serve but to display the tremendous horrors of the overwhelming gloom.

The unalienable and indefeasible rights of man, had not been strenuously asserted, and effectually maintained until the insulted and outraged citizens of these United States indignantly revolted at the arbitrary impositions of imperious Britain, and bid defiance to the haughty mandates of regal vengeance.

Those primary and fundamental principles of a well organized government, which for ages had been merely the pleasing theme of learned disquisition, or theoretical speculation, were by the adventurous advocates of freedom, established as the broad basis of an Independent Republic. The combined energies of an exasperated and heroic nation, were marshalled in hostile battalia, for the vindication of those inestimable sentiments which were implanted in the breast of every American,

nerved the patriot's arm with vigor and enkindled the emulative enthusiasm of an undaunted people, determined to maintain their natural and indisputable rights, or perish in the glorious conflict. Succeeding generations will peruse the historic volume of the revolution, with wonder and admiration. What scene more magnificent can be depicted to an enlightened mind, than a whole nation rising in the majesty of their collected strength, and proclaiming to the astonished universe, this irrevocable declaration, that all mankind are born free and equal, and that "these United States were, and of right ought to be, free sovereign, and independent."

When the impartial American in future times shall run the broad parallel of the unequal belligerents, incredulity at the momentous events and glorious result of that arduous struggle, ought not to derogate from his understanding, and cannot attach to his heart the damning epithet of literary ingratitude, with more propriety than to the modern antiquarian, who regards the fabulous accounts of Greek and Roman origin as the visionary chimeras of poetic enthusiasm, or the legendary tales of untutored idolatry.

Unappalled by the sanguinary denunciations of their implacable enemies, firm and unshaken amidst the gathering storm which threatened ruin and devastation on this devoted land, each patriot breast opposed an impregnable rampart to the impetuous assaults of lawless invasion. The strong arm of hardy valor wielded the irresistible sword of emancipated vengeance—the noblest energies of enlightened man, were roused into generous devotion to that sacred cause which demanded the most liberal sacrifice of every citizen.

When the loud clarion of battle sounded to arms, the determined champions of their country's rights rushed from the calm enjoyment of domestic tranquility to the field of slaughter; unfurled the standard of liberty, and appealing to the God of armies for the justice of their cause, advanced with martial intrepidity, to certain victory, or honorable death.

On Bunker's ever memorable heights, was first displayed that lofty spirit of invincible patriotism, which impelled the adventurous soldier to brave the severest hardships of the tented field, and endure in northern climes the rugged toils of war, uncanopied from the boreal storm and rude inclemencies of Canadian winter. On that American Thermopylae, where wrapt in the dun smoke of wanton conflagration fought the assembled sovereigns of their native soil the everlasting bulwarks of freedom, and thrice rolled back the tremendous tide of war, was evinced that unconquerable intrepidity, that national ardor and meritorious zeal, which secured victory on the plains of Saratoga, stormed the ramparts of Yorktown, and bore the bannered eagle in triumph from the shores of the Atlantic to the farthest confines of the wilderness.

By that destructive battle were awakened the most exalted faculties of the mind; reason unrestrained burst forth in the plenitude of its effulgence; man regenerated and disenthralled, beat down the walls of slavish incarceration, and trampled on the broken chains of regal bondage; the vast resources of an emancipated people were called into generous exertion. An enthusiastic spirit of independence glowed in every breast, and spread the uncontaminated sentiments of emulative freemen, over the broad extent of an exasperated republic.

The united energies of a virtuous people, were strenuously directed to the effectual accomplishment of national independence. During those portentous times were achieved the most honorable deeds which are inscribed on the ever during records of fame. Stimulated by accumulating wrongs, and elated by the purest feelings of anticipated success, no disastrous events could check the progress of their arms; no fascinating allurements deflect them from that honorable path which they had sworn to pursue, or perish in the hazardous attempt.

Inspired by the guardian Genius of Liberty, no barriers could oppose their impetuous career. Like the "Pontic sea, whose icy current and compulsive course ne'er feels retiring ebb," the irrefluent tide of freedom rolled unrestrained. By the courageous virtue of our illustrious heroes were secured those inestimable blessings which we have since enjoyed. To the warriors and statesmen of the revolution are we indebted for all those distinguished privileges, which place the citizens of the United States beyond the predatory vengeance of ruthless oppression. This invaluable inheritance is the prize of slaughter acquired by the lives of contending freemen, secured with the blood of battling patriots.

While the kingdoms of the eastern continent have been convulsed by the ravages of war, we have flourished in the sunshine of peace. While contending armies have depopulated the plains of Europe, and whitened her fields with the bones of her slaughtered inhabitants, the agricultural enterprize of our industrious citizens has subdued the wilderness, and numerous constellations rising in our western horizon, have increased the splendor of our political galaxy.

The happiness and prosperity of a nation are dependent on peace ; wars have ever been productive of every vice ; corrupted and demoralized society, and reduced to poverty and misery the wretched subjects of all governments, which have been involved within their dreadful vortex.

Conscious of the infinite advantages which ought necessarily to result from a state of impartial neutrality, the wise administrators of our general government have studiously endeavored by the prosecution of an equitable and impartial policy towards the belligerents to preserve unimpaired our national rights. But an amicable disposition and generous forbearance, has been construed into contemptible submission.

Pacific appeals to the justice and honor of the two great hostile powers have produced only reiterated insult or protracted satisfaction. The established laws of nations are put at defiance, and our citizens forcibly enslaved while their property becomes the common plunder of licensed robbery. The most solemn compacts have been wantonly violated, and the extent of our wrongs limited but by the physical power of effecting injury. Every honorable arrangement which negotiation could effect, proved unsuccessful, and tended but to multiply causes of complaint, and increase the already enormous sum of our aggravations.

Unwilling prematurely to plunge the nation into the miseries of war, but indignant at the flagrant violations of our commercial rights, a system of measures were adopted, which, if they had been faithfully observed and rigidly enforced, would most indubitably have compelled the implacable enemies of neutrality to respect



our flag, and give speedy compensation for those numerous acts of unwarrantable outrage which still remain unredressed. But the blasting remains of that restless faction, which frowned on the evolving hopes of man, struggling for his stolen birthright, clandestinely endeavored to palsy the efforts of freemen, beared the sword of regal vengeance against their native country, and stained the fields of their forefathers with blood, spread with maniac fury sentiments of disorganization; pronounced the authenticated statutes of government unconstitutional, tyrannical and oppressive; encouraged by treasonable resolutions hostile opposition to the laws, and by forcible violations, rendered inefficient those pacificly coercive measures which the assembled representatives of the sovereign people have deemed abundantly adequate for effecting those important objects which induced their adoption. When with appropriate and dignified severity, official animadversion falls on the guilty partizans of rebellion, with insolent effrontery they appeal to the immortal heroes and sages of the revolution, for exculpatory examples, in justification of their indefensible conduct. Profanation unparralleled!— Because WASHINGTON, HANCOCK, and ADAMS, with their ever memorable compatriots in glory, resisted with Spartan intrepidity, the tyrannical impositions of an all grasping monarchy, in which the citizens of these United States had no participation, where they were not represented, in the councils of which they had no voice, to which they disclaimed all allegiance; who had appealed in vain to its relentless sovereign and subservient Parliament for redress of grievances; shall the members of

a republic, over which a government has been established by the declared and common consent of all ; under which their rulers are periodically responsible for their official conduct, thus with impunity reflect back their own merited disgrace, and stamp with damning infamy the untarnished lustre of our sainted worthies? Forbid it reason. The demanding gratitude of emancipated millions will indignantly avert the unhallowed attempt.

When characters who were pre-eminently distinguished for their most honorable services during that perilous struggle for national freedom and independence ; whose political integrity and sterling worth, still renders them venerable examples of patriotic virtue, are designated as our chief magistrates, and appointed the guardians of those invaluable privileges, which their indefatigable zeal and laborious exertions tended to secure, the destinies of the Union and the Commonwealth can not fail of being propitious to the advancement of individual happiness and the public good. When such illustrious personages call upon us to watch with unremitting vigilance the ruinous proceedings of domestic malcontents, it becomes the bounden duty of every citizen who is ambitious of transmitting unimpaired those peculiar advantages which he now enjoys, to his latest posterity, to vindicate our civil rulers from the foul aspersion of slanderous detraction, and use his utmost endeavors for the establishment of public tranquility. We are obliged by every principle of national policy to support a government which has been uniformly directed to the advancement of commerce, agriculture, manufactures, literature, and the internal improvements of our extensive territory.

The angry passions of unprincipled individuals may for a period disturb the general harmony of these confederated States, but when cool, unprejudiced reason shall blazon in the vivid colors of resistless truth, the disastrous consequences of exasperating denunciations, the lowering tempests of faction, will retire before its dissipating effulgence.

Friends and fellow-citizens of the **BUNKER-HILL ASSOCIATION**, who, for "the purpose of celebrating the great anniversary of our national independence, and of guarding and perpetuating the well merited fame of the worthies of the revolution, and of all other friends to their country, who have since contributed, or may hereafter contribute, to the permanent union and harmony of these States, have solemnly pledged yourselves to promote and encourage an emulation in virtue, and whatever may tend to the permanence and strength of our Federal Constitution, and to the glory and happiness of these United States," to you I appeal, in the names of those immolated heroes who poured out their blood in the service of their country, by that sacred charter of our rights, which unites under one social compact the whole people of confederated America, I conjure you to perform the high duties which you have so magnanimously undertaken. If patriots in all ages of the world have not set so high a value on civil liberty; if religious freedom and security in the rights of conscience are desirable; if to live under the best organized system of free government which any country was ever blessed with, is an inestimable boon, then have the citizens of the United States more powerful motives, more strong inducements to rally round the ark of their political

safety, the CONSTITUTION, than any people on this globe have, or ever had. Here no unfeeling despot wrings from the hard hands of honest industry the accumulated fruits of laborious years; no clerical institution immures within the gloomy walls of a sacriligious inquisition that upright man who worships the Supreme Ruler of the Universe agreeably to the dictates of his own conscience, uncontrouled by the arbitrary mandates of bigoted superstition, or the appalling horrors of an oto-de-fee.

All our right, our lives and fortunes, are confided to a government which is under the supreme controul of the sovereign people.

Blessed with a soil which embraces all the vast variety of climes from the polar regions to the torrid zone, we are enabled to extend the wide circle of national independence; until it includes all the multifarious advantages of every realm.

If foreign nations compel us to fall back on our own inexhaustible resources, we shall acquire that perfect independence which will render the existence of any other kingdom unnecessary for its support; extending the broad basis of a Republic, which shall flourish in unrivalled excellence and prosperity, although bounded within the huge circumference of an impregnable barrier, high piled to heaven's concave, impassable and eternal.

But the citizens of these United States have such an expansive and illimitable spirit of independence; so deeply implanted are the sterling principles of freedom in any patriot breast, that they will not be circumscribed within the slavish limits of foreign proscription—tamely

submit to unprovoked infraction of their rights, or suffer with impunity an ignominious stain on their national honor. During those sanguinary conflicts which have deluged Europe in blood, we have remained within that awful verge of war, on which we are now placed by the combined outrages of Gallic despotism, and the predatory spoils of imperious Britain. If we are again compelled to take up arms for the vindication of our rights, our valorous countrymen will display that unre-  
laxing ardor and heroic zeal, which triumphed over the boasted discipline of experienced veterans, and entwined around the warrior's brow the never fading wreath of victory. The self stiled lords of the ocean will not find the retaliating thunders of our navy borne on the silenced batteries of a Chesapeake. The imperial conqueror will not plant his blood stained eagle on our shores, or traverse the extent of these independent republics in victorious triumph, each stream will be more impassable than the Danube; unlike the towering Pyrennes or frozen Alps, every mountain will present a barrier unscalable as the battlements of heaven.

That we should remain happy, united, virtuous and free, an exalted spirit of liberty should be excited in every breast; not that turbulent spirit which puts at defiance the constituted authorities of an elective and impartial government, tramples on its laws, provokes licentious rebellion, stimulates to deeds of treasonable desperation, and involves us by false and inflammatory declamations in all the complicated, awful and bloody miseries of civil war; but that generous and noble spirit, which willingly sacrifices every personal consid-

eration, when incompatible with national honor and the general interest of the public weal.

To perpetuate and secure the blessings of freedom, we must liberally diffuse the means of universal information.

It was by a criminal, short sighted inattention to that primary and important object, which must ever constitute the vital strength of all republics, that they have uniformly degenerated into despotism.—Let the citizens of the United States become enlightened by the general dissemination of science; let them be deeply impressed with the unparralleled advantages which they now enjoy, and contrast their enviable situation with the oppressed and impoverished subjects of the trans-atlantic empires; stimulate their adventurous dispositions; give energy to our manufactures, and our hills will be covered with the flocks of the Pyrennes, our plains whitened by the fleeces of Andalusia, and our freighted commerce will traverse every sea with the increasing harvests of extended agriculture and the domestic fabrics of mechanical ingenuity.