

AN
ORATION

DELIVERED

AT DANBURY, NEW-HAMPSHIRE,

JULY 4, 1809,

IN COMMEMORATION

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

.....
BY JOSEPH FARRAR.
.....!!.....

- “ Let this auspicious day be ever sacred....*
- “ No mourning, no misfortunes happen on it. .*
- “ AMERICANS all join to make it holy....*
- “ This happy day that gave us INDEPENDENCE.”*

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1809.



Oration.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

WE have assembled on this auspicious day with bosoms glowing, with hearts filled with gratitude, to the Author of our existence, and once more hail the returning epoch of our National Jubilee. This day will be ever dear to those who have passed through the various scenes of life and death, while struggling under the despotic arm of her who vainly thought herself the mistress of the earth. But God, who governs the fate of nations, and from the weakest instruments produces the greatest effects, heard the groans of that feeble band, who in the land of their nativity were deprived of the best gift heaven could bestow, their liberty. Feeling a divine enthusiasm originating from that holy inspiration which the Gospel of God our Saviour inculcates, they broke through every opposition, passed the boisterous main, hailed the happy shores of Columbia, and dedicated their all to that God, who had wrought such wonders for them. But still the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience sought to enslave them. The powers of Great-Britain were combined against them. They hampered and checked the rising prosperity of their colonies in this country, by lawless taxations and oppressive measures. They spurned at the idea; their holy indignation could not indulge the thought. Their vengeance was roused. A convention was held at Philadelphia, with that patriotic chief, **GEORGE WASHINGTON**, at their head; they pronounced themselves a Free and Independent Nation. And while true merit is esteemed, the Fourth of July will ever be revered by the free born sons of light....while gratitude remains in the human heart,

the praises of WASHINGTON shall be engraven on every American heart as on adamant, which shall never be effaced until the last shock of time shall bury the Universe in one undistinguished ruin.

But what sad and awful catastrophes ensue! Here we behold men originating from the same soil, speaking the same dialect, fed, as it were, at the same table, educated at the same seminary, taught the same holy religion, and in fine bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, in all the martial appearance of invading hostility, laying waste our peaceful clime. Here we behold the fruitful field, richly laden to repay the sultry toils of the laboring husbandman, fall an easy prey to the ravages of the insatiate maws of the British troops. Our rising cities, which promised ere long to vie, in strength and splendor, with any in Europe, Asia or Africa, out of revenge and wanton cruelty, were laid even with the earth in one general conflagration. Yonder we discover fragments of bodies in confusion lie. Your ears were saluted with the dying groans of the young hero, who fell a victim in the cause of his God and his country....while the tender mother, in an agony of grief, beholding the breathless corpse of the dear object of her desires, exclaims, My son, my son! my youngest born is no more! The aged father, trembling with sad disappointment, sees the mangled body and breathless remains of his last hope. The tender sister finds herself deprived of a tender and affectionate brother, and what is still worse....be it spoken to their everlasting contempt...deprived, forever deprived of that which was more precious to her than rubies....I mean her youthful vivacity and angelic innocence; and all this to satisfy the hellish passions of those demons of destruction.

Perhaps you beheld the aged dragged from their peaceful habitation....the weeping child torn from the distracted mother and dashed against the side of the wall. Ye, whose hoary locks bespeak your departed days, whose trembling limbs declare your many hard campaigns, were present at these distressing scenes; they are now confessed in your memory. Already I see the martial fire enkindle in the palpitating breasts of the aged hero! The battles he has fought...the forced marches he has made...the victories he has won...the lasting laurels he

has obtained, and that spirit of indignation which roused them to action---cause the crimson fluid to flow with redoubled velocity, and, like a shock of electricity pass through every power and faculty of the immortal mind. But many of us, who have assembled with you, to celebrate the day, were then not advanced to the threshold of life ; we were then embryos slumbering in our sires ; life's theatre as yet was shut, and we could not discover the twilight of our day. *We had no part or lot in this matter.* But while we shall retain the powers of recollection, and reason shall sway her sceptre in our breasts, we will with joy, with grief, sit attentive to your strain, and hear the mournful truths as they pass from your trembling tongues. We will pride ourselves in our relation to you ; and while the principles of humanity shall pervade our youthful minds, you shall be revered by us. You shall not go down to the land of forgetfulness without the tokens of our affection and thankfulness ; and while your souls shall rest in light, we will embalm your ashes with our tears, and they shall be as monuments to warn us not to depart from the spirit of our ancestors. Under then existing circumstances, roused as you were at one call, actuated by one spirit, your country had great things to expect from you. You, my fathers and fellow-citizens, more than justified her expectations. You wanted every thing which was requisite to make the war successful. Here then, your magnanimity still more conspicuously shone....*you supplied every thing.* Your enemies were convinced that they were engaged in an unequal war. God was on your side. He was your shield, bulwark and protection. The anticipated success was blasted. After the painful and destructive effects of an eight years war, through the medium of the wisdom, virtue and patriotism of those veteran chiefs and worthy administrators whom God had designed to lead us forth to certain victory—I say, through the medium of those, you came off victorious. Your hostile foes were glad to fly for an asylum at a British court, and ask protection under the blushing mantle of his Britannic Majesty.

You, my countrymen, as possessing the most philanthropic disposition, sheathed the fatal sword—withdrawn from the field of action—let tears of heavenly pity fall—pardoned the aggressor—ratified a peace on honorable

terms, which guaranteed immortal honors to those boasted sons of liberty. Now those who had borne the heat and burden of the day with every degree of triumphant joy, in peace and tranquillity returned to their domestic employments in the full enjoyment of that peace they had bought so dear. Having thus discovered the achievements of Jehovah's arm, and the happy consequences of being separated from a foreign power, it will not be amiss to make some observations upon the blessings which accrued to this country in consequence.

Here then we observe, with pleasure I pronounce it, that the reins of government are lodged, not in the hands of an hereditary band, who neither have heads nor hearts, morals or virtues, calculated to govern a great and enlightened people ; but in the hands of those whose morals, virtues, powers of intellect, and strength of genius, are such as to merit the station they fill. It may well be said in this favored land "there is no difference ;" the President and peasant have both an equal right in the choice of those who legislate for them. RELIGION, the bulwark of our nation, is here placed upon its proper basis. *Its author is its protector.* We are not consigned to the sacrilegious pardons of the sons of Antichrist. Neither is it interwoven with the powers of state any further than the laws of right, reason, and christian decorum require. Say ye, who delight in the Christian religion, who enjoy the privilege in this Immanuel's land of worshipping God agreeable to the dictates of your own conscience, is not this the greatest blessing indulgent heaven can bestow ? Go on then in the enjoyment of your God, and, agreeable to our dignified constitution, there shall be none to molest nor make afraid. Happy people, highly favored of the Lord !

Here also we discover the most powerful exertions to promote the different branches of science and literature. Not in this as in other countries where tyranny prevails, the more ignorance the more peace ; but in consequence of the sun of science spreading his prolific rays through these Northern climes, we can boast of men who with a NEWTON, have sailed from orb to orb, and discovered the magnitude, velocity and number of the heavenly bodies—with a LOCKE, have analyzed the human mind and trod a metaphysical soil—with a BOYLE, have chased

coynature through her various windings, and discovered the natural and theological operation and system of nature—with HUME, have discovered the powers of eloquence. All have equal rights for improvements.

Commerce, which is the soul and main-spring of our national action, is coextensive with the earth. Deprived of it, all nations feel the direful wound; blessed with it, all nations are enriched. This land, which was once a waste howling wilderness, a covert for the savage, wild beast and raven, is now become, through the powerful exertions of the yeomanry, as the garden of God.

Manufactures find the fostering hand of the Legislative authority united with the powerful exertions of the mechanic, and promise ere long to vie, in use and structure, with any in Europe.

Such is the rising prosperity of this growing people. They become a praise and joy in the whole earth. Heaven seemed to smile—a universal tranquillity seemed to pervade our political atmosphere. But what unexpected prodigy appears! Methinks I hear the thunders of discord! Already I discover the streaming lightnings of dissolving union—our political atmosphere is darkened. Paleness seized every countenance. No more is the visage of the husbandman and mechanic, those main pillars of our national structure, marked with pleasure and contentment. The gathering storm bursts upon our devoted heads; and showers of needless taxes, standing armies, useless officers, naval establishments, ensue, accompanied by the destructive hurricane, the Sedition Law. Shall I say that the patriot JOHN ADAMS, the first in council, the first in war, the first in peace, was at the head of this atrocious band? True, he was the first in office, yet not in sentiment. It is not the case in this, as in other countries, where the chief magistrate is chargeable with nothing, and the ministers with every thing; but the chief magistrate is chargeable with every thing, and the ministers with nothing. He was surrounded by those who were attached to British laws, to British manners and to British influence. He had the Burrs, the Hamiltons, the Pickerings, and the Gores to contend with. They introduced their plots and plans under the *mask* of the public good, public honor and public safety—insinuating that the people were not calculated to gov-

ern themselves, and that a public debt was a national blessing. They oppressed his accommodating nature; they prevailed upon him by artful wiles and deep laid stratagems. He listened to their syren songs. It was an hour when Adams was not himself. But we rejoice to see him returning to correct principles, and once more espousing the cause of republicanism. "To err is human"—to retract an error argues a great and good mind.

But to return. The people were convinced that their administrators were actuated from wrong motives. The measures were not such as became a popular government—they espoused the rights which the constitution guaranteed to them. They made a shift of national officers. THOMAS JEFFERSON, a man possessing every thing which constitutes the great and good political character, was advanced to the first office in the Union. He neither courted the favor, nor dreaded the power of hostile invaders. The laws of nations and the principles of humanity were the principles by which he conducted our national concerns. Soon we discovered that those clouds which had been collecting, began to disappear. Peace with all nations ensued. The army was disbanded—a host of useless officers were dismissed and again returned to their domestic employments. Our political atmosphere was again cleared, and peace and tranquillity seemed to pervade our nation and land. Seven years passed on with almost uninterrupted felicity. The people were highly gratified. They saw the triumphs of republican principles.

But still the disappointed few wished to sap the foundation of that Government, which originated from HIM, who made all men free. They watched the measures with a jealous eye. They represented the first magistrate as a worthless infidel, who neither feared God nor regarded man. They prophesied of the downfall of religion, of morals, of peace, of independence. But, being actuated by the spirit of the great accuser, they were found to be false prophets. Their fabricated falsehoods could not reach, nor pointed satire affect, the great and dignified chief. He "heard the sound thereof," but it was like the "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal." His mind was too great and too noble to make it an object worthy of his notice. "It passed by him like

the idle wind :” in spite of all their machinations our nation was respected, our administration was applauded at home and abroad, our taxations were small, our revenue was increased, our public debt discharged, and our borders greatly enlarged.

While civil wars have for a number of years marched in rapid strides over the continent of Europe, carrying death and desolation in their direful train; while nation after nation has been overturned, and tyranny on tyranny generated ; while scarcely a nation of the old world has escaped these incalculable calamities ; we have remained a great, prosperous and happy people. But what shall I say ? that we have provoked heaven to anger in consequence of our sins ? Have we been forgetful of that hand which saved us ? I fear that this divine affirmation may be applied to us : “ I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me.” We must expect to be chastised ; we must expect to suffer in common with our fellow men. The day of our adversity arrives ; our examples excite hatred, our happiness envy ; and those warring powers who never seemed to unite in any thing else, have manifested a unity of sentiment in their desires to destroy our political existence. France, guided by a policy which threatens the destruction of all independent nations, conducted by a chief whose law is power, whose reason is arrogance and pride, the object of whose domain is coextensive with the earth, forbade our trading with England—sequestered and confiscated the property of our merchants, burned their ships, and insultingly, though indirectly, told us we must go to war for or against her. Did this nation submit to these insulting injuries ? Did it acquiesce in their decrees, which to us are as impotent as they are insulting ? It did not. Our minister at the French court of St. Cloud immediately asked an explanation—told, that this government would never submit—that it had no inclination to be dragged into a war with any power. What then remained to be done ? To suspend all intercourse with her ; to deprive her of the benefits of our commerce. England, humbled by our independence, revengeful in her temper, has never ceased laboring to promote dissension and to destroy our happiness. Her jealousies great-

ly increasing, arising from our unheard of prosperity—before the treaty of 1794 she harrassed and pillaged our commerce on the high seas. In consequence of her instigating the unprincipled savages who inhabited our northern frontiers to war, supplying them with provisions and ammunition, with rifle and tomahawk, we were under the necessity of continuing our forces for the space of twelve years in that part, to prevent their destroying our infantile settlements. Since that period she has done all in her power, and invariably pursued a system to destroy our commerce—unheard of at other times, unknown to the laws of nations. By issuing laws of blockade—by laying insidious taxes on her manufactures—and by unjust seizures and condemnations—she has ruined thousands of our fellow-citizens while under our protection, and at the point of the bayonet forced them into her service to fight her battles, and to assist in plundering their own friends and relations. She has violated our sovereignty by seizing our merchantmen in our own waters. For these aggressions a partial non-importation law was passed, to take effect at a day then distant, that time might be allowed her to reflect on the consequences which must result from her continuance in her unparalleled system of aggressions. A treaty was formed; the signature on her part was accompanied with the reservation of the right to destroy our commerce, if we did not resist the decrees of France in a manner to her liking. It was rejected by our Executive; the partial non-importation law was again suspended; again the olive branch was offered, and again it was trodden under foot. What followed? In June, 1807, your national ship was unsuspectingly attacked in your own waters; your mariners were killed; your frigate lowered her flag, and from it was taken your seamen. The act was said to be disavowed; but mark! one of your seamen, acting under the authority of your government, in contempt of it and the nation, was afterwards *deliberately put to death!* Is there a point beyond which a nation ought not to bear? And did not this nation then reach that point? Still our love for peace prevailed. Once more we ~~tried~~ a negotiation, and once more met insult and contumely. In November, 1807, she by her orders in council resolved

to seize and condemn all commerce bound to every port, those of Sweden excepted, on the continent of Europe. In short, in the language of that instrument which pronounced us a nation "she has taxed us without our consent, cut off our trade with a great part of the world, plundered our seas, and destroyed the lives of our people."

Between these two nations I need not hold the scale of an apothecary to discover whose offences outweigh by grain or scruple. It is evident to every impartial eye. Under these existing circumstances, placed between the two great belligerents of Europe—our executive recommended and Congress established an Embargo. This was conceived the most direct way of saving our honor, our citizens and our property. It had its desired effect. Millions of property, thousands of lives, and the lasting honor of the nation, were secured by the Embargo. But it is the case in all popular governments, that men, athirst for honor and popularity, and unprincipled, will never cease to use their influence to disorganize and subvert the union; they will raise mole-hills into mountains—the smallest error of judgment to a crime of the greatest magnitude; and, if possible, will make the people believe that our rulers are corrupt. May I not say that this has been the case in this country for a number of months past? Men, driven from power by the indignant voice of an injured people, and despairing to regain their office by honest means, have made use of every machination to disaffect the public mind, by propagating the most scandalous falsehoods—declaring that our administrators were governed by foreign influence—that they wished to destroy our navigation, our independence, and involve this country in ruin. These and a number of accusations of like magnitude were alledged against the majority of our rulers, and especially against the first magistrate of these United States. But where is there a trait like this to be found in the whole of his Administration? Is it found in his giving the powers of Europe an opportunity of seizing our treasures upon the high seas, at the time the orders and decrees were issued? Is it found in his acquiescing in the unjust demand of paying tribute? Is it found in his expending millions.

and millions of property for the security and protection of commerce? Is it found in his using every effectual method to prevent a war with foreign powers? Is it found in his resisting the assumed right of England to search American vessels? Is it found in his declaring that the majority shall rule? Is it found in his contending for the honor and dignity of the nation? Is it found in his voluntary departure from public life to the enjoyments of domestic happiness? In fact, where shall we look for accusations of this kind? We look for them in vain, but in the heated imaginations of the firebrands of sedition.

But, says one, would you insinuate that all those who were not in favor with what is termed the republican administration are enemies to their country? By no means. God forbid that we should possess so unfavorable an opinion of a part of our fellow citizens. We would rather consider them as laboring under the influence of deception, than designedly hostile to their government. Had their enthusiastic leader even put their seditious plans to experiment, we have no doubt they would have "frowned indignantly" on the unprincipled band, who should have promoted hostilities of this kind. But that such hostilities were in contemplation, none, I presume, will pretend to palliate or deny. Look at the resolves passed in the Massachusetts Legislature, at Newburyport, at Hadley, at Gloucester and many other places; they were pregnant with confusion, carnage and destruction. With every mark of fear and dismay, the friends to their country were looking forward to that distressing morn (my blood chills in my veins when I reflect upon its horrors) when brother must meet brother in battle...when the father should whet his glittering sword to destroy his last hope, and the son should dry the fountain of life, from which he derived his existence; when some tyrannical usurper, like Cesar, or Cromwell, or Bonaparte, should seize the reins of government, set himself upon the throne, and, in haughty accents, declare himself the Emperor of these New-England, if not the United States. The nations of Europe, and especially England, were waiting with earnest expectation, and looking forward with pleasing anticipation, when such an awful tragedy should be put to experiment. They endeavored to pro-

note the spirit of revolt through the medium of their agents, their correspondence and their gold. They anticipated an alliance ; and they refused to grant the demands of justice. But they were at length convinced that the Americans never would submit. This was settled to their satisfaction when we were colonies, at the edge of the Hessian sabre, the Indian tomahawk, and at the mouth of the roaring cannon. They were convinced that the Americans were virtuous, that they were magnanimous. And although one patriot voluntarily leaves the Presidential chair, another possessing like sentiments is immediately elected. They were convinced that the Americans had rather suffer the loss of personal treasure than national honor : that, in fine, they were resolved to live free or die in defence of their freedom. From these existing circumstances, while shame and ignominy marked their visage, they sent a special envoy to this country, and were glad to accept the same terms which government had made them long before. Here then we discover the pleasing effects of the republican administration. It triumphs over all opposition. The standard of republicanism is again erected, and the flag of Independence again unfurled. Thousands, who have been listening to the soothing songs of the disturbers of our peace are now flying to it for protection.

We look forward with pleasing anticipation when the principles of republicanism shall extend from the rising to the setting sun....when all nations shall be free indeed, and the weapons of war shall be beat into agricultural instruments....when there shall be no king but God.... when the principles of opposition shall be subdued by the refulgent rays of grace divine. What then, my countrymen, remains to be done ? To be united among ourselves....to promote with united hearts and hands our present government....the destruction of which would constitute an epoch in the annals of mankind, from which would be dated the conviction that human nature and republican governments are absolutely incompatible, and that all further attempts to establish a republic will be considered as chimerical and absurd. We will then, in the strength and name of HIM who governs the fate of nations, stand firm in our integrity....we will not disturb

the mansions of our departed ancestors with our supineness... we will nobly defend what they have purchased by their zeal, their honor and their blood. We will solve the political problem to a demonstration, *that a nation can be governed and yet be free*. For this end, my countrymen, in the name of your honor, your liberty and your God, away with every sentiment that is not congenial to the public weal. Let our own private concerns yield to the calls of our country. Let us not grudge the earnings of a day, a month, or a year in support of the government of our choice. Let us reconcile jarring opinions. Let us animate each other in the discharge of every duty. Let us throng the temple of wisdom, of morality and religion. Let us inform our minds, purify our hearts, and with our expiring breath pray for the peace and prosperity of America.