



DR. FISHER'S
ORATION,
ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

JULY 4, 1799.

AN
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT KENNEBUNK,

ON THE

Fourth day of July, 1799 ;

BEING THE ANNIVERSARY OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.



By DR. JACOB FISHER.



"We contend not for glory or conquest ; we exhibit to mankind
"the remarkable spectacle of a People attacked by unprovoked
"enemies. * * * * *

• • • • • Arise then, AMERICANS,
"to your tents, and gird you for battle."

Contin. Cong. '75 & '78.

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1799.

Kennebunk, July 4th, 1799.

SIR,

THE Committee for arranging the Festival of the day, in this place, are desired by those who joined in its celebration, to return you their thanks for your very ingenious and patriotic ORATION, and to request a copy for the press.

In behalf of the Committee,

NATHANIEL FROST.

To Dr. JACOB FISHER.

GENTLEMEN,

THE *approbation* and *request*, by you communicated, do me honor; and rather than fail to comply with the wishes of my friends, I will *suffer Criticism*.

I am, Gentlemen, with esteem,

Your humble servant,

J. FISHER.

To the Committee of }
Arrangement. }



ORATION.

JUST twenty three years have rolled on, since the patriotic HANCOCK pressed the sacred seal of our Independence : Nor trembled his hand, nor recoiled his soul at the bold deed, “ big with fate.”

THE affairs of our revolution, abound with the sublime, and the beautiful : but every part of this ample field has been explored—every important plant gathered, and every flower cropt : To dwell, therefore, on that which has been so often and minutely detailed, would be but a dry repetition ; and is a sufficient reason for my not following the common track and converting the history thereof into an ORATION : I shall but sketch the out-lines, by observing—that if the first glow of our patriotism—the unanimity, firmness and perseverance which succeeded—the deeds of valour per-

formed in the field, without discipline, & almost without arms—the wisdom of our councils—the renowned INSTRUMENT which gives immortality to the DAY WE NOW CELEBRATE—the treaty of PEACE—the orderly return of the army to their several homes & domestic employments—the Government, * plenty and happiness which followed—all these great acts and events, I say, if they had happened but a few centuries ago, would have been ascribed to inspiration and miracle. Indeed, the ignorant and the learned, the believer, and the infidel, unite in this, that fortune or providence were exceedingly propitious. Eternal praise and gratitude to the GOD of HEAVEN, who ordained, that we were born and do exist at a time when HE thus pours a profusion of His blessings on *the land we live in.*

BUT the treat of human prosperity and happiness is never served up without mixture. Our most eligible condition could not last forever. It is not in the nature and constitution of things. Man was not made for complete felicity here below—he participates the changes of all things with which he is conversant; continually revolving on the *axis* of FATE; whose rotations bring him alternately Health and Sickneſs, Prosperity & Adversity, Respectability and Contempt; to-day he is riding triumphantly on the clouds of popularity, to-morrow the buoyant gas is exhausted, and he sinks to disgrace and infamy. Thus revolve EM-

* Federal.

PIRES—thus revolve WORLDS—nothing is permanent, nothing certain ; we know that there are some natural bodies, and some moral or political ones, which have constitutions favorable to longevity : There are also means to be used with success for their preservation ; as temperance and exercise for the human body ; knowledge & wisdom for the body politic—but soon or late they both must have an end. Again, as in medicine, so in Government, there are many unskilful physicians, quacks and mountebanks, who sometimes lull their patients with opiates, at other times fire them with stimulents, which produce lethargy or inflammation, and premature death ; but if every earthly thing contains the inherent principles of its own dissolution, what occasion is there for wars and fightings to promote the work ?

WAR, in general, is not only one of the most extraordinary and wicked, but is one of the most ridiculous things in the world ; and it affords abundant incitement both to the laughing and crying philosopher. Who could have commanded his risibles, when an infatuated *Bohemian* General, who, that he might animate his party, when dead, ordered that his skin should be dressed and made into a *drum* ! A furious war between the *Greeks* and *Trojans*, and which ended in the extirpation of the latter, was on account of an individual woman. An important change in the *Roman* Government was once produced, because the wife of a *Plebeian* was not treated

with so much respect (perhaps in a company of gossips) as her sister, the wife of a public officer ; what a glorious cause for revolution ! Nine tenths of the bloody contests between *citizens* and *nations*, have as frivolous a beginning. A sovereign affronted in the person of a contemptible minion, his horse, his mistress, or her favourite lap-dog, kindles the flame, and the whole realm smokes like a fiery furnace : The military redoubt and quake with very rage ; the peasantry rave in paroxysms of madness ; they arm with clubs and stones to beat out the brains of their neighbours, or that of the peasantry of another country, who know no more of the quarrel than the inhabitants of the moon ! If any should be dilatory, the despot drives them to their duty and loyalty ; for he claims an exclusive property in his subjects, as well as in the earth they tread, and the air they breathe ; he thinks the man sunk in turpitude, who will not come forward with his person and purse, (tho' he should lose his life, and starve his wife and children) when his sovereign has a passion to gratify ; the value of ten thousand groveling lives is nothing in his estimation, but as they minister to his pleasures. How long shall mankind be made the tool of mean revenge, and at the same time despised by him who makes use of them ? O shame ! O scandal to the human character !

If mankind had always been at peace, the earth is large enough to have supported them all, 'till Death in his own natural way should have taken them off one by one. If there be any who doubt the truth of this position, let them consider the sumptuary economy of the *Lacedæmonians* : Their whole nation would feed on less than would satisfy one *epicure* ; yet their frugal fare afforded sufficient nutriment to produce the greatest strength and vigour of body and mind. A *Roman*, on less than four acres of land, supported himself, and reared a family of heroes ; let any one acquainted with these facts, cast his eyes on the map of the world ; see the thousands of uncultivated acres in *Europe* ; the tens of thousands in *New Holland*, and other islands ; the millions in *Asia* ; the millions in *Africa* ; the thousands of millions in *America* !—Many of these lands invite mankind to come and live on their spontaneous productions ; almost all of them would yield abundantly by cultivation. Surely we are not stinted with a scanty pittance. Man need not clear himself a *place* with the *sword* and the *bayonet* ;—the axe and the hoe are sufficient.—War, therefore, does not arise from necessity, but from the turbulence of man.—Moreover, the bulk of mankind derive no advantage from a conquest after they have achieved it. What have the *French* soldiery gained by their conquests in *Italy*, and elsewhere ? Not an acre, or a dollar, falls to their lot : Duped by a few over-bearing avaricious cowards, who, secure themselves, do gascenade, cry havoc, and

urge the *dogs of war*—then let them lose on the human race, that they may share the spoils of the dead, or have their spacious domains enriched with blood.

THERE is no war justifiable, but an unavoidable defensive war. Such an one is founded in nature ; and such an one, my fellow *citizen-soldiers*, we are likely soon to have on hand. “ *We contend not for conquest or glory* ”—we want *not* the lands of *Frenchmen*—we want none of their goods or money, except on the fair principles of commerce, and where the advantages would be mutual. But this “ *worm-eaten* ” method of doing business is too ceremonious ; they have therefore adopted the more expeditious mode of *requisition*.*

CITIZENS :—If we had patience and courage to follow an *ignis fatuus* thro’ a rude and uncultivated country, then might we trace the *French* revolution. After leaping a few walls and ditches, † we set for-

* This new system of commerce may be explained in few words :—BEONAPARTE offers to release the *Mulids* from their “ ancient tyrants ”—they close with his generous proposal, and “ submit to the Yoke,” (these were his own words)—he plunders the public treasury, and proceeds to emancipate the oppressed *Egyptians*, obliges the merchants of *Alexandria* to give specie for his bullion. Soon after writes from *Cairo* to Gen. KLEBER, who was at *Alexandria*, “ There is here an excellent mint— we shall again have occasion for all the *lago’s*. Call the merchants together and re-demand the metal. I shall not fail to pay them in produce “ at a future day.”

Letters, July 27, '98.

† *Bahig.*

ward on a spacious plain of principle; the prospect is charming; the trees large and fair; here grew the benevolent CAPET, (tho' entwined with the poisonous ivy of MARIA ANTONIETTA)—here grew NECKER, FAYETTE, and their associates; proceed but a little further, and we are entangled in the briars and underwood of envy and conspiracy. The noble trees of the forest are scattered with a furious whirlwind, or felled with the *national axe*—the sun of reason hides himself beyond *their* western horizon. Following our guide, we now ascend the burning “*mountain*” of ROBESPIERRE, DANTON, MARAT, and other inexorable *Cyclops*. Here roars the hoarse thunder, and here shoots the vivid lightning—torrents of *pure* blood roll down its sides and tinge the distant seas!—Courage! we must now descend down—down to the regions of the Directory—where our glimmering taper disappears, and leaves us in terrible apprehension. A “*great dismal*” of horror—a “*black forest*” of thick darkness—a cursed bog, a quicksand, full of pits and snares of *death*. One while we see a howling wilderness—there vegetates the deadly Nightshade, Manchineel* and *Bubon Upas*—

* “A tree of Terra Firma—It bears a fruit resembling an apple; but under this specious appearance contains the most subtle poison. The malignity of this tree is such, that if a person only sleeps under it he finds his body all swollen and racked with the severest tortures—the beasts from instinct always avoid it.”

Gournais, though undiligently, has here represented the *Tree* in a masterly allegory.

there the envenomed spider weaves her net for innocent victims—there the wily serpent sings to the harmless bird, and charms it to destruction—there the wolf and fell Hyena rush openly to drink the blood of the lamb—there the tiger and catamount conceal themselves among the fern and brakes, to spring upon the prey—and there the ruthless crocodile “weeps and then devours.” A most treacherous, sanguinary and carnivorous scene ! When lo ! Anon—we behold a troubled ocean ! impelled by storms and raging hurricanes—the waves thereof surge and lash the stubborn shore, overwhelm their ancient and appointed bounds, and engulf the neighbouring nations in oblivion !—Again, they raise their rebellious and *atheistical* heads in the face of high Heaven !—Will the great God, who sits enthroned in calm omnipotence, suffer his vengeance to sleep forever ?

But let us descend to plain language, and contrast the beginning with their succeeding conduct :—This revolution was planned and prosecuted at first, (ostensibly at least) on the principles of humanity and the rights of man : Their “ Constitution renounced all wars undertaken with a view of conquest.” If such was its commencement, what a departure from original principles and motives ! Now, conquest, rapine and murder, lead the van ; and we are induced to believe, that instead of philosophers, and lovers

of humanity, that ALL HELL had opened, and vomited forth its felonious inhabitants to give rulers to *FRANCE*.

WE hear much of the liberty and equality of this *regenerated nation*. Pray what is the emblem of this renowned liberty?—I will tell you—it is a little instrument of a cubit's length, called a dagger, decorated with the best blood of her own citizens—with that of *Lombardy*—with that of half *Europe*;—The Goddess of Gallic liberty wields in her own right hand this murderous steel! She is a goblin of infernal origin, and takes possession of the heart, not thro' the proper medium of the *head*, but thro' the medium of the breast—she outstrips the savage cannibal in cruelty—the dying shrieks of infants snatched from the mother's breast, is music to her accursed ears—her reign is equivalent to severing the heart-strings with red-hot pincers!—Is this the Government, the liberty to be wished for by you? Yet you must submit to it, or support your own: Choose you, therefore, which you will have—there is no halting here between two opinions—defend your rights or surrender them. “Your money or your life”—that's their language. Think you, that the inhabitants of *Holland, Venice, Switzerland,* Egypt*, and others, on whom the curse of the fraternal embrace has fallen, were sinners above all men against the *Terrible Re-*

* See J. MALLET DU PAN, on the destruction of the *Helvetic Union and Liberty*.

public.—I tell you nay—but except you are vigilant, you shall all likewise perish.

Is there a word in any of the tongues or languages under Heaven, which can convey all the ideas of such complicated villainy ? If so, that word is *Jacobinism*. But as jacobinism in this country has dwindled to the mere phantom of that uncleanly monster it formerly was, I shall say but little respecting it, and even the *honour of censure* is more than it deserves : The spirit of the times, *which commands Kings*, has laid it low in the dust.—JUDAS sold his master, and ARNOLD his country, for a sum of money ; RANDOLPH, 'tis said, attempted the same, failing in *de l'argent*, he wrote a book, and swell'd his finances by—securing “*copy-right.*” JEFFERSON—(holds a dignified office)—MONROE, instead of attending to his diplomatic duty, made a fortune by speculation, and now casts a longing and retrospective eye on the delicious *onions and garlicks of France*—BARLOW is a fallen angel, and assimilates with the cloven-footed TALLEYRAND*—But the scum of our lank *honeftine* Jacobins, have no such golden excuses to offer in palliation---*they* verily commit iniquity for its own dear sake, which infernal propensity in the breast of a wicked man is delineated by the poet, as follows :

* TALLEYRAND is deformed in *both* his sect—so that in this respect as well as many others, he is worse than the devil.

- " Birds feed on birds, beasts on each other prey :
 " But savage man alone does man betray,
 " Press'd by necessity, *they* kill for food ;
 " Man undoes man, to do himself no good :
 " With teeth and claws by nature arm'd, *they* hunt
 " Nature's allowance, to supply their want :
 " But man with smiles, embraces friendship's praise,
 " Inhumanly his fellow's life betrays ;
 " With voluntary pain works his distress ;
 " Not thro' necessity, but wantonness."

WHAT possible advantage can a man propose to himself by upsetting his own government and laws : If they are as free and perfect as the nature of such institutions will admit ; more liberty would place us in a state of licentiousness : Indeed, we border on it now. Hear the sentiments of a celebrated author, (MILLOT) : " If the abuse of authority is dangerous, rebellion against that authority is more so. Seditious liberty is worse than the transitory despotism of a monarch. In modern States, the laws and opinions of the public are a powerful barrier against the excess of tyranny." If these maxims and doctrines are true as it respects *Europe*, how much more forcibly do they apply in our country ? How many thousand years of sad experience must mankind have, ere they will be convinced, that the abuse of liberty is the very cause why the reins of Government must be drawn tighter and tighter ? The predominant vices and crimes of any particular nation may be

known by their *penal code*.—If we had had no seditious Jacobins in this country, there would have been no necessity for the “*Sedition Act*.” If we therefore are obliged from time to time to relinquish more of our individual rights to society, we may thank, or rather execrate, our licentious democrats for the sacrifice.—*These* are the animals who have the consummate effrontery to denominate themselves *exclusive patriots*, and who, at the same time, would persuade us to give up our country, and all that is honorable, to *France*, and become their “hewers of wood and drawers of water,” without a single effort to retrieve our insulted character.

BUT I hear some very *honest* people *whine* and say, it is madness to venture on a war, when our coasts are defenceless, our militia undisciplined, and destitute in a great measure, of experienced officers. Alas! they cry, “where are our GREENES, our MORGANS, our WAYNES, our GATES, and the long list, adorned with never-dying garlands, who lately trod the dangerous field! They have been made thin by the destroyer, and who can supply their places?” Who, do they ask?—Where were our Generals before *seventy-five*? They were employed in the arts and professions of peace; some steered the honorable plow; the same arts and professions employ our undeveloped heroes now, but let a proper opportunity offer, and *they* will find the same souls which animated our former Generals, shine

forth from a thousand new bodies.---This is admitting the worst, which is by no means the fact.---We are *not* destitute of experienced leaders---we boast a LINCOLN, a PINCKNEY, a KNOX, and many others.---He also, who before led us to victory and glory is still alive.---“Yes” they reply, “but what can be expected from a man of sixty-seven years?”---In answer to this question I will state a fair case, which may serve for a criterion to judge by ; look about and select a number of your acquaintance of that age, who have lived temperately, and are remarkable for retainining their bodily and intellectual powers (all these apply to the person under notice) are not these men as capable of *planning* and *superintending* business, *in their own line*, as ever they were ? I answer for you, they are---Remember that the laurels of CINCINNATUS blossomed afresh in his autumn of four score. Review the long catalogue of worthies from old ADAM to the present day, and see if there is one who may compare with our WASHINGTON ;---Some of them were lost in ambition, some in debauchery, others in superstition ; not one without some fault. Our worthy (being of the human nature) may also have some faults, *but they have not yet appeared* : I repeat it with *emphasis*, tho’ he may have faults in general, yet there is no man who can point out any particular one.---He is pious, brave, humane, patriotic, prudent, temperate, candid, active, industrious, with not a *virtue*, *good* or *great* quality wanting : What would you have of the man ye jacobini-

cal blasphemers of his character---would you have him more *good*, or more *great*? Raise him but one *small* grade higher, and he is no more of our *order*.

AMONGST the great, we recognize a HAMILTON, to whose abilities even the arch-fiend FAUCHET subscribed; he is the *prophet* of politics; his *telescopic* mind kens futurity, and contemplates it, as tho' it *now is*.

WE have moreover a man preserved of GOD, and his name is JOHN, our President, mighty in word and deed; a *Hercules*, wrestling by turns, with the giant of tyranny, and the hydra of anarchy---an atlas, sustaining the political world on his potent shoulders.

THE oracle of DELPHOS dictated *wooden walls* to the *Athenians*; so advises our President, and so echoes the oracle of reason to *Americans*. We have already experienced their advantage. Magnanimous TRUXTON! may the music of thy thunder vibrate on the *nerve-strings* of every brother commander, and inspire them to deeds of heroism like thine!

CONSIDER but for a moment, my countrymen, the price of your liberty---lay it not in the mental balance to be estimated with gold, but turn back a sympathetic eye, and view the fields of carnage. Your fathers and your brethren---where are they?---

Stretched on the bare ground—plundered—uncovered, in a burning sun—their life-blood gushing in irregular streams, from their convulsed and dying arteries—their eye-balls glazed in death—deprived of interment—the voracious birds prey on their flesh—the wild beasts scatter their mangled limbs upon the face of the earth—the winds pass rudely over their bleached bones—their hallowed shades cry from the crimson ground, life, life's the price of your liberty.

AMERICANS, you want none of the inflammatory writings of *Tom Paine*, to awaken your indignation—a man must have a character, as well as a pen to merit your attention—(he who prostitutes shining talents, and degenerates into a vile *time-server*, deserves to live and die in infamy, and his name to rot)—You want no DEMOSTHENES to arouse you to just revenge; the eloquence of injured and violated humanity, weeping and weltering in her gore, more effectually excite you to action. Fall in to the background of the picture then, ye *smooth*, luke-warm, faint-hearted patriots—go till the soil, or assist the women at their dairies. Go, ye are not worthy of Liberty.

ARISE, and come forward, you *prominent* children of *Mars*! *favored of the lovely fair*—you who prefer to shed your blood in a glorious defence, rather than shed your sweat for the emolument of an imperious master.—Come forward, you who “in-

quire not the number of the enemy, but where they are to be found"---come forward, like the fabled *Mammoth*, who wards off the thunder-bolts with his mighty forehead---come forward, again, ~~say~~, and present your dauntless fronts to the shafts of tyranny, backed by avarice, with all the mean and detestable passions in train---resist them, and like their father they will flee from you---pursue them, and the whole herd will rush violently down the precipice, to be choaked in the lake of black despair.

THUS perish all our *incorrigible* enemies.

