

AN ORATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE
CITIZENS OF LENOX

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF

American Independence,

1802.

BY LEVI GLEZEN, A. B.

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*And let me perish, but in CATO's judgment,  
One day, one hour of virtuous Liberty,  
Is worth a whole eternity in Bondage.      ADDISON.*  
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PITTSFIELD :
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REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE.

LENOX, JULY 2, 1802.

SIR,

At this late hour we are obliged to request you, to prepare and deliver an ORATION, to the Inhabitants of LENOX, &c. on the ensuing Anniversary occasion.

We are, Sir,

With great esteem and respect,

Your Obedient Servants,

J. GOODWIN,
A. EGLESTON,
C. HYDE,
D. COLLINS,
J. WILLARD, } Committee of
Arrangements.

Mr. LEVI GLEZEN.

GRATEFUL TRIBUTE.

LENOX, JULY 5, 1802.

SIR,

In behalf of the Audience, we return you many thanks for the well-timed and excellent ORATION delivered this day, in commemoration of AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE; and we beg leave to request of you a copy for the Press.

We believe the sentiments contained in it will be agreeable to Republicans, friends to order; and are conformable to the principles of the Government under which we live, and are determined to support.

We are,

With the highest esteem and respect,

Your Obedient Servants,

COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENT.

Decorative flourish

MR. GLEZEN'S REPLY TO THE COMMITTEE.

LENOX, JULY 5, 1802.

GENTLEMEN,

Accept my acknowledgment for the polite manner, in which you have made known to me the will of the Citizens of LENOX, &c. It would have been agreeable to my feelings, that the imperfections of the Oration, prepared hastily and exhibited this day, should not again have come to the notice of the Public. But by your approbation of its contents, and request that it may be printed, I consent to its publication with a few verbal corrections only. I beg you, however, and all others, into whose hands it may fall, to observe that in stating the claims of Great-Britain upon this Country, I kept in view the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, the Petition to the King, and the Bill of Rights, and have sometimes intentionally made use of the phraseology of those instruments; but as I wrote from memory only, and as those papers are in the hands of all, I found it difficult and think it unnecessary to note the extracted phrases. In the two or three pages, where they appear, all may insert quotations, wherever they please.

I am with the warmest esteem,

Gentlemen,

Your obliged humble servant,

LEVI GLEZEN.

The Committee of Arrangement.



Oration, &c.



CALLED upon, Fellow-Citizens, by a short notice, to address you on this *Anniversary Occasion*, I do it with a *willing mind* indeed ; but with a *trembling heart*. Having had no time to make rhetorical corrections myself, I leave them to be made by the *candor* of an *ingenuous audience*.— But as I feel the rights, **GOD** forbid that I should not speak the sentiments of an American.

THE authors of the *instrument*, called the *Declaration of Independence*, have often been panegyricized for their patriotism and firmness of soul, manifested on the *fourth of July* one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six, a day which gave birth to the *United States* as a nation ; a day which will be interesting to all succeeding generations, and call forth their warmest expressions of praise, wonder and adoration. Situated as they were, at that awful moment, nothing could have supported them but an unlimited confidence in their constituents. This confidence was well placed. Many of the American people, then living, had drank large draughts of *British vengeance*, administered by the hands of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny. From the scourge of oppressive cultivation, they had fled to the protection of the wilderness ; from the rod of refined hierarchy to the liberality of savages. From necessity, they were addicted to labor and habituated to industry, economy, frugality and all the virtues of a simple,

rural life. Scattered over an extensive territory, the riches of whose hills and vallies were the gift of the GOD of nature, oppressed by poverty, but sharing equally the munificence of Heaven, they had not yet been infected with dissipation, nor had they been seduced by the arts of corruption. They were simple in their manners, pure in their morality, indued with vigor, firmness and integrity and inspired with patriotism, which at that time blazed throughout the Continent. They had a strong attachment to the *Liberties* of their Country.— To the love of *these* they had been inured by education. Their customs, their manners, their ideas, habits and local circumstances nourished them, and knowledge, experience and trial had ripened and nearly brought them to perfection. LIBERTY is a plant conatural to the American soil, whose roots sink deep and grow firm, and whose branches are terminated only by the bounds of Heaven. All these circumstances from their nature conduced to render the people of these States indignant to any aggression which should be made on their privileges and immunities, and furnished a strong presumption that they would make a firm and united resistance to any power which should have the hardihood to make an attempt against their freedom. But events had then occurred, which made such a resistance patriotic, necessary and inevitable.

THE principal of these was the enormity of the claims recently advanced by *Great-Britain* and resisted by *America*. These claims may all be summed up in one sentence, viz. “*Great-Britain* has ever had and of right ought ever to have full power to bind the Colonies in all cases whatsoever.”— *Great-Britain* had assumed the power, without the consent of her Assemblies, to keep in this Country a *Standing Army*, with a naval armament, and to quarter Soldiers upon the colonists in time of profound peace; professedly for the purpose of protecting them, but in reality with a design to enforce the collection of taxes and to compel them into obedience

ence to her will and pleasure. *America* asserted that these were repugnant to the genius of her free Constitutions ; and that her citizens, the cultivators of the soil, were able and willing to defend themselves. *Great-Britain* claimed a right to make the civil power dependent on and subservient to the military ; in time of peace to increase the power of the *Commander in Chief* and under him of the *Brigadier-Generals*, to render them supreme in all the civil Governments in *America* and to make them the *Governors of Colonies*. *America* maintained that, by the *British Constitution*, the civil power ought ever to be superior to the military. *Great-Britain* claimed the privilege to send hither swarms of officers to eat out our substance and devour our living. *America* preferred officers and rulers of her own choice and attached to her interest. *Great-Britain* had empowered the *Officers of the Customs* to break open and enter houses. *America* said this was against law, unless with the authority of a civil magistrate founded on legal information. *America* claimed that her Judges should have fixed salaries and be independent of either branch of the Legislature. *Great-Britain* had decreed that the Admiralty Courts should receive their salaries and fees from the effects condemned by themselves ; that the Common Law Judges should be dependent on one part of the Legislature for the payment of their salaries and the duration of their commissions. *America* maintained that her citizens, as *British* subjects, were entitled to the privilege of trial by Jury and to be presumed innocent until proved guilty.—*Great-Britain* had decreed by extending the powers of the Admiralty Courts, that the trial by Jury in many civil cases should be abolished ; that in others the burden of the proof of innocence should lie upon the accused ; that the colonists might be tried in *England* for offences, alledged to have been committed in *America* ; and that for certain crimes persons might be indicted and tried in any shire or county within the realm. *America* asserted that the ancient Constitutions and Laws which had descended to her citizens from their ances-

tors, ought ever to be holden sacred, and that they were bound by no laws to which they had not, either in person or by their representatives given their consent. *Great-Britain* would allow them no representation but in name; Parliament had undertaken to give and grant their money without their consent; repeatedly and injuriously to dissolve and suspend the Assemblies of the Colonies; to alter fundamentally the forms of Government established by charter and secured by acts of its own Legislature, solemnly confirmed by the Crown; and to erect, in a neighbouring Province a despotism, whose encroaching nature was dangerous to their political existence. *America* claimed only the enjoyment of her accustomed privileges; she asked but for *Peace, Liberty and Safety*; she required only the favor of *life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness*, under the protection of her ancient usages and laws. *Great-Britain* had undertaken to deprive them of every thing dear to *freemen*; of the power of self-protection, of complaint, of justice, of their lives and liberties; they had assumed to take away their property without their consent; to deprive them of the right of representation; to make them entirely dependent on the will of their King; to erect over their heads a despotic tyranny; and, in one word, the climax of arrogance, "to bind the Colonies in all cases whatsoever." These claims on the part of *Great-Britain* were not merely speculative; but they had been asserted with confidence and partly enforced. *Great-Britain* advanced her plans with a dark, intriguing policy; they were discovered by the American Patriots, who trembled and paused.

THE inhabitants of this country had proceeded too far to recede. They had manifested a violent opposition to the first encroachments on their liberties, and so early as the year 1765, had procured the repeal of the *Stamp Act*. The citizens of *Boston* had thrown overboard the teas, on which a duty was laid; and when for their offence, their port was shut by a navy, they had received assistance from every part of

of *America*. The Assemblies remonstrated; but their remonstrances were treated with neglect. In the year 1774, Delegates from the Colonies met in Congress, published a *Declaration of Rights*, sent a *petition* to the King and *addresses* to the inhabitants of *Great-Britain*, of *Canada* and of the several States. After *Great-Britain* had laid burdensome restrictions on their trade and fisheries, and their various petitions had taken no effect; after the agents of the people had been repeatedly dismissed and the Governors instructed to prevent the payment of their salaries, preparations began to be made to oppose aggressions by force of arms. *Lexington* drank the first blood shed in this civil war. The scenes at *Ticonderoga*, *Quebec* and *Charleston*, with other events soon followed, which rendered all hopes of reconciliation desperate. The *Americans*, tho' cool, determined and moderate at first, had now assumed the voice and conduct of a man. Their resentment was raised by the savage manner in which the war had been commenced. *Charleston*, *Norfolk* and *Falmouth* had been wantonly laid in ashes; their countrymen had been murdered; women and children had been put to flight; and their complaints and their privileges were trampled under foot. Tho' the power of *Great-Britain* was formidable; tho' unrivaled at sea; tho' her coffers were replenished and the number of her citizens and arms were countless; tho' she was flushed with a recent triumph over her hated enemy and rival; yet the hearts of the *Americans* were not appalled by these considerations; but their souls were united more strongly in defence of a common cause, interest and country. No conditions were proffered them but *slavery* or *death*. One enthusiastic flame of resentment for injuries committed, glowed from *New-Hampshire* to *Georgia*. These States, weak in themselves, destitute of resources and credit and untutored in arms, saw the red scourge of bondage brandished over them; they knew no refuge but in unanimity of resistance; in this they sought it, and in this they found it.—

“ In their own native land, in defence of their freedom, which

was their birth-right, for the protection of their property, acquired solely by honest industry, against violence actually offered" out citizens took up arms. "With a humble confidence in the mercies of the Supreme and Impartial Judge and Ruler of the Universe," and relying on the support of their constituents, the Representatives of the *United States* in Congress assembled, published to the world the *Declaration of Independence*; and the inhabitants pledged themselves to each other by their *sacred honor* to defend with their lives and fortunes, their liberty and country from every hostile aggression. *America* then closed with her adversary in an appeal to arms, and submitted her cause to be tried by the great arbiter of the fate of Nations.

THE particular scenes of this eight years contest, are many, various and interesting; they have employed the best geniuses of the American Orators, poets and historians; it is presumed they are fresh in the memories of all and need no recapitulation in this place. Suffice it to say, that the *Americans*, tho' they suffered many defeats and endured unparalleled hardships; tho' at the close of the year 1776, weakened and disheartened, they could boast only of their gallant exploit at *Trenton*; yet in 1777 they were successful at *Berlin* and *Saratoga*; in 1778 they vanquished the enemy at *Monmouth*, and made a Treaty with *France*; by whose assistance, in the succeeding years, they were conquerors at *Stoney-Point*, *Savannah*, *Rhode-Island*, *Guilford*, the *Eutaw Springs*, and finally on the 19th of October, 1801, they triumphed over the *British* arms at *York-Town*. On the 30th of November, 1782, the provisional articles of Peace were signed at *Paris*, and *England* acknowledged the *Independence* and *sovereignty* of the *United States of America*. Thus closed the *Revolution*, disgracefully for *Great-Britain*; honorably for *America*.

SCARCELY is it probable, Fellow-Citizens, that the *American Patriots* foresaw, that in all succeeding generations, the

the *Day* on which they published the *Declaration of Independence* would be numbered among their happiest Anniversary Occasions. Yet they have lived to see this, in a measure accomplished ; and no nation can boast of an Anniversary in which JOY may be more rationally expressed than our own.

By the American Revolution we were separated from the dominion of a *foreign power*, from all her exorbitant claims and her destructive policy. Her character is thus admirably sketched by Governor LIVINGSTON of *New-Jersey*. “What,” says he, “is their present Government, and what has it been for years past, but a *pensioned confederacy* against *reason* and *honor* and *virtue* and *patriotism* and the rights of man ! What their Governors, but a set of political craftsmen ; flagitiouſly conspiring to erect the Babel of Despotism on the ancient and beautiful fabric of Law ! A *shameless cabal* ; notoriously employed in deceiving the Prince, corrupting the Parliament, debasing the People, depressing the most virtuous and exalting the most profligate ! A Junto of public Spoilers, daily increasing a public Debt, already enormous ! And moreover, she is precipitating her own fall or *the age of miracles is returned.*” “From such a nation,” as the learned gentleman concludes, it was evidently our interest to be detached. What would have been the condition of *America* during the late wars in *Europe*, had *Great-Britain* succeeded in her plans, or had this country submitted on *her* terms. While the reflective mind reviews the bloody scenes, acted beyond the Atlantic, and contemplates the misery, horror and devastation, which have been promiscuously scattered through those fertile fields, the humiliation of *Great-Britain* at the commencement of peace and her impending bankruptcy, it cannot but ascend in grateful praises to Heaven, that in time we were snatched from the jaws of a similar fate, and far remote from those scenes of woe, had become a free, independent and powerful Nation.

THIS joy must be heightened, when we consider the object and principles of the Revolution and the manner in which it was conducted. The war was commenced *voluntarily* by *Great-Britain*; *reluctantly* by the Colonies. *Americans* fought not for conquest, they followed no ambitious conqueror; they were duped by no artifice; but with a full view of their own situation, they risked their all in defence of their freedom, of peace, liberty and security. They were without Law to aid their operations; yet with remarkable unanimity they abode by the recommendations of Congress, like the *Decrees of Heaven*. Inspired with the greatness of the idea of raising a nation from bondage and misery to independence and happiness, they met no danger which appalled their hearts, or paralyzed their arm. They treated their enemies with a noble magnanimity and conformed themselves exactly to the rules of war.—Not such was the conduct of their Adversaries. They considered the Colonists, from the first, as *rebels* and would allow them the benefit of none of the principles, which have been instituted to moderate the fury of civil dissensions. By *them* our citizens were hunted down like wild beasts. Dragged to prisons, or confined in the holes of ships, they were there suffered to pine and starve and die. Many were conducted to secret executions and died unseen, unlamented. Many of our citizens, shut up in towns and not allowed to depart, suffered all the horrors of famine and siege. There are, perhaps, *some* in this audience, who well remember these events and the time, when *Great-Britain*, in her madness and delirium, let loose the Savages upon the defenceless inhabitants; when their ears were daily saluted with the news of families murdered, of women and children fleeing in consternation; when they beheld the conflagration of cities and towns, as *Kingston, Norwalk, Fairfield and Danbury*; when they lamented the loss of public and private property; when they saw with anger, the destruction of houses consecrated to religious purposes and to the cultivation of the arts and sciences.—Rejoice, *Ye Young*, that in the short span of your lives, ye have not witnessed such scenes; but

learn,

learn, they are the offspring and natural result of unbridled, unlimited tyranny.

THE real friends of the American Revolution, will with ever fresh delight review the virtues of the great men who led them to victory and independence; with whom they toiled and bled. Their integrity and patriotism can never be called in question. By all wise men, WASHINGTON, FRANKLIN, JEFFERSON, JOHN and SAMUEL ADAMS, GREEN, JAY, LAURENCE, HANCOCK, R. T. PAIN and many others will ever be considered the most glorious characters, that ever adorned the theatre of action and will ever be quoted as models of republican virtue. Let us entertain a lively sense of their talents, industry, integrity and services; let our country confer on them the reward, due to their merit and beware lest *ingratitude* be named the *vice* of the American Republic.

ANOTHER source of joy, which affects our breasts on this day, is the effects, which have flowed from the American Revolution. It has impressed a benign aspect on Religion. Various, indeed, are the forms, under which the God of Heaven is worshiped. The people appeal to their own good sense in the choice of their religious creeds and the rising generation, far from having their minds shackled with false opinion and wild theories, as soon as they commence their existence, which it is lawful for them neither to examine nor contradict, are early invited to the exercise of their reason on religious subjects, and to ground the principles of their moral conduct on truth, derived from the contemplation of nature, of society and the scriptures.—Americans voluntarily support their religion. They throng the temples and perform the worship of their God, because they believe in his existence; they sing hymns to his praise, because they adore his attributes; they support his ministers, because they are his legates and consult their welfare, they are governed by the principles of their religion, because they make the bands of
social

social order more firm, conduce to their happiness *here* and lead to the Gates of Heaven *hereafter*.—Charity exalts her hoary head, reconciles discordant interests and breathes peace to man.

THE American manners and Government have received their impression from the principles of the Revolution. Europe and the world have long witnessed an astonishing order of things ; a priesthood to blind, a nobility to corrupt and a royalty to tyrannize. These orders of men, secure of power independently of the suffrages of the people, treat their inferiors with a contempt and haughtiness, not to be borne by freemen ; while they are met by the arts of the courtier, by a cringing servility and the fawning meanness of sycophants ; the offspring of minds, lost to a sense of moral duty and contented with the shackles of slavery. A great disparity of rank among individuals, is the fond child of an inequality of property and they are both the barbarous remnants of the Feudal System. In Europe the people have not as here, an absolute and exclusive right to the soil they cultivate. The higher Orders have engrossed all property as well as all power, the few are served by the many, while the hungry are not fed and the naked are not clothed. The humble laborer must bow the knee to the Sceptre of power and riches, independence of character is lost, the inferior approaches the superior with profound reverence and awe and sincerity and virtue are forgotten.—A great disparity in the wealth of individuals is the parent of atrocious crimes. While the nobles are attired in all the splendor, earth affords, while they gild their vices with a profusion of equipage and ornament, while they conceal their vices and their acts of oppression under names and titles, while they secure themselves from justice by the grandeur and magnificence of their order, the multitude are caught with the glare and these men and these manners, instead of becoming objects of abhorrence and detestation, become examples for imitation. Poverty it-
self

self will break over all bounds and men will commit innumerable crimes to gratify the cravings of nature ; but to participate the delicacies of life, thus enchantingly set before them, they will spare no exertion, however wicked, desperate, or contrary to Law. Thus the lower and middle classes, among whom virtue naturally dwells, are corrupted by the higher classes, where it seldom dwells. Hence a want of confidence, dishonesty, cruelty, perfidy, brutality and a general dissipation of manners, have pervaded all the populous parts of Europe, and hence *one tremendous groan of millions* is heard from their gibbets and their goals. From the causes of these evils we are, thanks to Heaven, delivered. It might, perhaps be displeasing to *some*, who reside at the Court of St. James' and perhaps at that of Versailles' to assert, that all men are by nature equal. Yet the Americans have so thorough a conviction of this truth, that they have ventured to make it the foundation of their manners as well as of their laws. The manners of this country are republican. They are marked with a familiarity, a boldness, an assurance, dignity and independence, that must at once convince a stranger, that those possessed of them, consider themselves men, and entitled to the rights and privileges of men. Happy are the climes, where an equality of rank prevails. Happy soil which yields an easy subsistence to the cultivator, happy society, where property follows industry, genius and enterprize. There may we hope to find peace and refinement ; there the reign of virtue ; there shall we see a people, possessed of manners, uncorrupted with effeminacy, sloth, pride, extravagance and debauchery ; manners derived from principles pure and simple ; connected with morality, noble, honorable in themselves and producing happiness in their consequences.—Happy Americans ! thus highly distinguished in your morality, religion and manners.—Let us ever cherish the rational freedom and just equality, from which they take their origin. " Begin," says Mirabeau, " with the infant in the cradle, let the first words he lisp be WASHINGTON and Liberty." On this subject,

