

AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED IN THE COURT-HOUSE, CINCINNATI,
BEFORE THE
CITIZENS AND VOLUNTEER COMPANIES
OF THAT PLACE,

On the 4th of July, 1807,

BEING THE THIRTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

At the request of the Democratic Republican Committee of Arrangements for the Day.

By Thomas Henderson.

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“WHERE LIBERTY DWELLS, THERE IS MY COUNTRY.”
FRANKLIN.



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CINCINNATI:
FROM THE PRESS OF JOHN W. BROWNE,
OFFICE OF LIBERTY HALL.

TO gen. David Zeigler, a faithful veteran in the cause
of liberty ; and the hon. Daniel Symmes, one of the
judges of the Supreme Court of judicature for the State of
Ohio ; president and vice president for the day ;— Aaron
Gosforth, Esq. maj. John Riddle ; hon. Wm. M'Farland ;
James Ewing, Esq. capt. James Christy, Messrs. Jacob Fow-
ble, and Hezekiah Flint, jun. being a Committee from the De-
mocratic Citizens, for making arrangements for celebrating
the thirty-first anniversary of American Independence—
without apology, and with all its imperfections ; this Ad-
dress (which was prepared and delivered at their especial
request, and committed to press at their solicitation)—

Is most respectfully inscribed,

By their Friend and Fellow-citizen,

T. H.

Oration, &c.

MY FELLOW-CITIZENS,

CALLED by your request, I appear in this place to address you on this auspicious day : sensible of my inability to perform the duties reasonably to be expected on such an occasion, I do beseech your indulgence, while attempting to display the theme which now animates every bosom : at the same time permit me to assure you, that it shall be my endeavor not to wound the feelings of any ; however, those principles which I have ever professed and endeavoured to practise, shall not be shrunk from.

To recapitulate the events which led to the revolution, and to recognise those principles which breathe the spirit of our republican institutions, shall be my aim.

In all ages, it has been customary among nations and men, to celebrate particular events, by the observation of anniversary days ; to hand on to posterity thereby the causes which produced their achievements, and to impress on the minds of succeeding generations, the benefits flowing therefrom.

We, in the celebration of this day, bring into view a great event, which forms an epoch in civil government : a great people declaring themselves to be free and independent ; who, in opposition to a tyrannic power, secured their rights ;—that after eight years of carnage, in which courage and patriotism repeatedly shone forth and astonished a wondering world, they were admitted to rank “ among the nations of the earth.” That the heroes accomplishing these prodigies, manifested unequivocally in simplicity and truth, to the world, that they had undergone the toils of war, suffered the fatigues of discipline and routed a veteran foe, with no other view than to establish the liberties of their country upon a firm and sure basis. In the dignity of their souls they declared it. They recognized the rights of human nature. They proclaimed to the world that all men are born equally free, possessing “ certain

unalienable rights"—That governments are instituted among men, for the mutual advantage of the governed, and that none can be just, which does not emanate from the people; and that all in authority executing them, should be amenable to the power from whence they derive their authority.

A further object in the celebration of this day, is to impress on the mind of the rising generation, the great benefits they receive from the efforts of their fathers; to instil in their juvenile hearts the gratitude which they owe to the illustrious warriors who established those principles of truth and justice, which exist among us and distinguish our country from all others. To teach them to venerate and adore liberty as a primary enjoyment; and that without it all earthly blessings are not worth possessing; at the same time to instruct them to resist tyranny and oppression in every shape in which it may appear;—to make them acquainted with the magnanimity of their fathers, to set a true value upon their principles, defend them with their lives, and seal with their blood (if necessary) their attachment to them: To suffer no mutilation to weaken the chain of liberty, but to preserve it pure as received, and to transmit it under the same injunctions to their children. Begin, says Mirabeau, "with the infant in his cradle, and let the first word he lisps be *Washington*; let his first lessons of instruction be the Declaration of Independence—the wrongs you have suffered, and the courage which set you free."

Our fathers, who possessed an inherent spirit of liberty, upon being denied the exercise of their religion—when denied that toleration which all men are entitled to, we learn they left the land of their nativity, in search of a spot, where they could offer up their prayers to the God of nature, in a manner agreeably to their profession, and without molestation. In doing which they traversed a trackless path over an extensive ocean; they at length arrived in this land of uncivilization, where many difficulties presented: A wilderness, overrun with beasts of ferocity, and man in a state of nature. Here, in manly opposition to every opposing dif-

scourge. they established themselves and soon began to prosper. Soon the rapacity of their former oppressors followed them across the deep. Soon did their injustice appear in America. From the patient suffering of one injury, to the imposing of another, they went on, till at length the souls of men, scorning slavery and disdainng the trammels of oppression could no longer submit, but burst forth and made known their sufferings, declaring that life, without liberty, was not worth enjoying. The Declaration of Independence, which you have just heard read, carries with it an enumeration of their wrongs, and what impelled them to a separation from their oppressors, and called on mankind to support the common cause of human liberty, against oppression and tyranny which had assailed it. To effect which, the collected representatives of the people, then in Congress assembled, "pledged their lives, their properties, and their sacred honor."

Long and sanguine, frequently doubtful, was the struggle which followed: many now present, with hasty remembrance can trace back, in memory's eye, the loss of some relation, friend, or acquaintance, who fell victims in the contest.—" *At such a place fell my father, "fighting the battles of my country, opposed to the "mercenaries of despotism. There the cruel enemy "sacked and destroyed a rising settlement. On the side "of yonder brink, my dearest friend paid a sacrifice to "his country's liberties with his life." But providence directed the armies of liberty, and finally led them to conquest. In this drama, shone forth characters which astonished the world, and filled the historic page with their wonders. Men fetched from the plow; unlettered and unpractised in the art of war and military science, overcoming the tactics and discipline of veterans.

Yes, ye heroes who bled in fighting your country's battles, permit your votary feebly to invoke your shades and offer at your shrines the tribute of thanks for the privileges and blessings enjoyed from your energies. The only asylum on earth where the persecuted

* This quotation is from M. Rabreau, but is perhaps not literal; not having the work, nor having read it for several years, it was supplied from memory.

patriot can rest his wearied head ;—the seat of liberty and free government, remain as monuments of your labors. Eternal gratitude be paid to your memory by surviving generations.

Let us lift up the bloody mantle and view the mangled remains of a *Montgomery*, a *Burser* and a *Ledyard*, all of whom fell covered with glory in the defence of liberty.

At length when the wounds of an afflicted country had bled with profusion, but yet when victory had favoured the soldiers of liberty, we view a proud and tyrannic enemy contrary, to what they had declared, in defiance to their own mandates, and their conduct during the period of affliction and warfare, acknowledging the sovereignty and independence of a free people. At the close of this arduous struggle which had "tried men's souls" our patriots having accomplished the end for which they had taken the field, with hearts of thankfulness and filled with gratitude, returned to the plow from whence they had been called. Their chief set them the example ; he too was a patriot ; and to pursue his monitions, and to imitate his example, was their pride. Yes, the heroic commander of the American armies, taking Cincinnatus for his model, when the cause ceased to exist, which had called him to arms ; having obtained the liberties of his country, and set it free from the yoke of tyranny, returned his sword to its scabbard, and presented his commission to the representatives of the people from whom he had received it ; retiring as a private citizen, to pursue his domestic avocations.—But the exigencies of his country again demanded his services, and again he leaves his home for the stage of public concern. Such was a Washington, and such were the patriots who composed his army.—But when time began to pinch him with weight of years, and he also desirous of the solace of retirement and domestic comfort, he again quits the scene of action ; yet in doing this, he does not leave you alone, he deposits a legacy, he publishes a farewell address, wherein he points out what is proper to be

done, to preserve the blessings of liberty and a free government.

Have we not then reason duly to appreciate those inestimable blessings, so procured, if we for a moment bring them into our view and contrast them with slavery. “ O disguise thyself, how thou wilt, still slavery itself, thou art a bitter draught, and through thousands, have been made to drink of thee, in all ages. thou art no less bitter on that account: ’Tis thou, Liberty, thrice sweet and gracious goddess, whom all in public and in private worship; thy taste is grateful and ever will be so, until nature herself shall change; no tint of words can spot thy snowy mantle, or chymic power turn thy sceptre into iron: with thee to smile upon him, as he eats his crust, the swain is happier than his monarch, from whose court thou art exiled.” Yet in the enjoyment of liberty, in order to preserve its blessings and to prevent the vices from creeping in, which stand in contrast with it and support kingly power, the practice of virtue in all within its influence, is indispensable. In a republic, a regard for virtue and justice, an indefatigable perseverance in the diffusing of knowledge, an acquaintance with the principles of government, together with an enthusiasm for liberty, are essential for every citizen to possess and practice. In it Government founded upon right and reason, where the people are sovereign and those holding delegated power servants; where no superiority is known, save that of merit and distinguished talents; though situations of trust and power are of necessity to exist, for the safety of the common weal, and the conducting of the political machine; yet those executing them, are placed in them by the suffrage of the people for a constituted term; at the end of which, the elective franchise is again exercised, during which, should the confidence be bestowed, have been misplaced, should those representing their fellow citizens, in any degree have abused their trust, disregarded right and principle, forgot the common weal, and preferred their personal aggrandisement to duty and public benefit; the people have it in their

power, to correct the abuse and preserve their rights by banishing such men from their confidence, and placing others more worthy in their room. In such a government every citizen feels an interest in its support, his property, and his preserving that freedom, which is his darling admiration presses him to an exact obedience to the laws and constituted authorities; from which it clearly becomes the bounden duty of every informed citizen, to use his endeavors for its support. Ignorance is the bane of liberty; therefore diffuse knowledge, stimulate the uninformed with sentiments of virtue, and beget in their minds a love of country.

These are the supports which are necessary to preserve and perpetuate our present happy government; the interests of humanity and science, with the amelioration of man, are deeply involved therein. Liberty which had burst the fetters of tyranny, in the old world, we have the mournful reflection, to see again disappear; from which we are instructed to avoid such a direful catastrophe, by placing the power without the reach of aspiring ambition, to seize the reins of regal power, and place a diadem upon the head of a tyrant. The experience we have had, is sufficient to convince us, of the practicability of a free government. Let each of us then, my fellow-citizens, exert ourselves in so glorious a cause; let us resolve to practice that which is necessary for its preservation. Let us determine, that liberty is the first of all earthly blessings; and with the noble patriots, who achieved it for us, declare that without life is not worth enjoying.

It must be a consolation to every true friend of liberty, to view the present triumph of Republicanism, throughout our country. Notwithstanding the endeavors of its enemies, it has triumphed; this is the surest evidence of the correctness of its principles. Many attempts have been made to divide, harass and destroy our Phalanx; in some instances they have partially succeeded; but these instances have furnished us with lessons, from which we have profited, and our subsequent efforts have been crowned with complete success. Under a wise and virtuous administration, pursuing inva-

riably the good of its citizens, we have witnessed near seven years of prosperity. While torrents of blood have been flowing on the continent of Europe, inundating provinces. While death with gigantic stalk, has been depopulating the human race with the sword of destruction. While desolation with its terrible consequents, are spreading horror and destruction, over a great part of the civilized world. While distressed humanity, has cried aloud to heaven for her sufferings; we have lived in the full enjoyment of peace and liberty. We have in our helm of state, been guided by the man, whom the people delighted to choose for their first magistrate; *the wise and patriotic Jefferson*, a name invulnerable to calumny, whose virtue awes and appals his enemies, whose merit rises superior to all that malice and falsehood can propagate, and whose patriotism shines conspicuous, in all he does.

Yet, notwithstanding the great blessings which we enjoy from our happy system of government, notwithstanding the happiness which it imparts to all its citizens, *Treason* has of late reared its head among us; plans the most diabolical have been laid and systematized for accomplishing the greatest of all public calamities—*a separation of the federative union*. Though they have not succeeded in their nefarious plot; though ~~the~~ patriotism and attachment to the established government has been manifested by a great portion of our citizens; we have been convinced that there are men living in the sunshine of liberty, and enjoying our privileges, who would sacrifice those blessings, trample the liberties of their country under foot, and unfurl the banners of despotism in our land. My fellow-citizens, whence this direliction? Do we cherish serpents in our bosoms vitally to destroy us? Happily, though, such characters are but few, who would sacrifice the enjoyments of freedom and liberty, to ambition and avarice. However, search them out, know them, and detest them: suffer them not insidiously to ingratiate themselves in your confidence; thereby they would be enabled to sap you in a vulnerable part. He who would dissolve the bond of our political union, would inflict in the vitals

of liberty, the most deadly wound it is capable of receiving.

Americans, guard your rights as the pupil of your eye
Remember that suspicion and jealousy are the guardian protectors of freedom. Place implicit confidence in none. Let actions alone be your criterion in determining on merit. **WATCH THE POLLS OF YOUR ELECTIONS**, there discharge the duties which you owe to your country with fidelity. Suffer not a sopineness or listlessness to embosom you in a fatal security; consider that if these duties are neglected, sorrow and regret must ensue, and will be entailed upon future generations.

Veterans of the Revolution,

You who have survived the casualties and uncertainties of life, while thirty-one revolutions have been accomplished, by the orbs in our system. We are here assembled to commemorate the period of your trials, in which you manifested disregard for danger, and pledged your lives for the emancipation of your country. Your dangers, fatigues and toils are gratefully held in remembrance. Accept worthy sages from us the homage of gratitude!—Behold we venerate and celebrate the work of your hands. You have lived to see those principles in practice which you manfully defended. You have become convinced, that liberty may be entrusted with a virtuous people, without baneful consequences arising therefrom.

May each of you, venerated sires, pass on in life with happiness; may your important services not for a moment be forgotten. May that liberty which derived its existence from your valour, never be destroyed in our country; and may each of you, when the lamp of life grows dim, and death is about to affect that change, which all created nature undergoes; leave us in the full enjoyment of it, and be happy in the reflection, of having assisted in the establishing of it.

Soldiers in arms,

Your country trusting in your virtue with a firm reliance on your patriotism places arms in your hands for its defence ; should any proud supercilious foe, dare to invade our rights ; should any attempt be made, to destroy the fabric of our liberties—the *standard of our country* would be the rallying point of our honoured militia, who are the palladium of our rights ; each would emulate in acts of heroism and valour, not forgetting that their dearest rights have called them to arms ; their families, their homes, and their country have required their efforts : That they are not mercenaries, carrying on rapacity, to gratify the ambition of a tyrannic chief ; but “ *that each is a citizen as well as a soldier.*” Therefore with a strict regard for right, and the eternal principles of justice, perform your several duties to your country, both civil and military, and in the language of your declaration of independence, treat all the world, as “ *enemies in war, in peace friends.*”

Fair daughters of Columbia,

Whose patriotism and personal charms, vie with each other ; form those to your principles, who are governed by your attractions. While those virtues and charms which adorn you are revered and esteemed, all must be subservient to your government. Inspire us with sentiments of duty and patriotism ; let your indignant frowns be felt by those who are not moved, by the incitements of beauty and female eloquence.

And ye, respected matrons, whose province it is to guide aright and instill, in the minds of your lisping offspring, just principles ; and to rear them in their practice ; vouchsafe to implant in their tender minds a love of country, a due respect for the blessings of liberty, and a regard for the happy government under which they live : Then will their preservation be secure.

My Fellow Citizens living as we do in this favored land, in the full possession of liberty ; blessed with the government of our choice, which dispenses equally its benefits to all, and in the full tide of prosperity, both

in our exterior and domestic relations, have we not abundant reason for exultation !

On this auspicious day, with hearts overflowing with gratitude to God, for such signal felicity ; on the altar of our country, let us swear to maintain its liberties, and perpetuate them unimpaired to our children. Let us never lose sight of justice, the principles of which are immutable and not to be violated. Let us regard virtue and knowledge, as the surest means to secure liberty, and labor for their diffusion ; which will beget a veneration for our republican institutions. Let the youth of our country be duly instructed therein ; let them be informed of the peculiar blessings they are born to the enjoyment of, and that the celebration of this day, is intended to convey to future ages, a knowledge of the manful struggles and glorious achievements of their fathers : by so doing our country to the end of time, will remain the seat of liberty ; a portion of the earth giving happiness to man, but disquietude to tyrants : A spot hailed as an assylum for oppressed humanity ; where tyranny indignant hides her head ; where freedom and civilization go hand in hand ; where the human mind free from restriction becomes invigorated in its springs, and stands as an evidence of the effect of freedom thereon ; and where its nearest approximation to perfection is likely to appear.

In one universal acknowledgment, let every friend to his country, bow to the great arbiter of Nations and of men, for these blessings enjoyed by us. Let joy and gladness pervade every bosom. May human liberty be extended throughout the world. May tyranny and despotism be banished from the earth, and may our happy country increase in power to establish its principles of government and the rights of man.

“ COLUMBIA ! Columbia, to glory arise,
 “ Thou Queen of the world and thou child of the skies ;
 “ Thy genius commands thee, with raptures behold,
 “ While ages on ages thy splendors unfold.