

AN  
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT WORCESTER,

ON THE

ANNIVERSARY

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

JULY 4<sup>th</sup>, 1805.

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# ORATION.

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**H**A I L, sacred day, that gave existence to a nation and freedom to Creation's "noblest work!" Hail, glorious sun, that beheld the fortress of oppression demolished, and the temple of Liberty erected on its ruins! On this auspicious day, we celebrate not the mad victories of successful ambition, but the temperate triumph of eternal justice. We commemorate not the usurpation of provincial dominion, but the confirmation of the rights of man; not the birth of a tyrant great only by prescription, but the nativity of an empire *free, sovereign and independent.*

**FATHERS, BROTHERS, FELLOW-CITIZENS,**

We are convened to gratify national pride in the contemplation of our prosperity and fame, while dotting memory reviews the story of our fortunes and success, with joy and exultation.—Our forefathers, whose stubborn minds could not bend to the obliquity of episcopal intolerance, exercising their inherent and indefeasible privilege, abandoned a government of arbitrary power. The constant derision of the proud waves, they were guided by the dove of peace, to a resting place on these rude shores. Here their accommodations were nakedness and destitution, with the accumulated horrors of a rigorous climate. Here their greeting was the midnight howl of hungry monsters, prowling for their prey—their welcome here, the hideous yell of savages. Stayed by an omnipotent arm under this aggregate of difficulty and danger, they encountered and overcame. Unsupported by the nursing hand of maternal care, strangers to the protection of

parental solicitude ; our growth distanced the calculations of experience, our progress outran the forward hopes of patriotism. By industrious perseverance the desert was made a garden, and the wilderness to blush with roses. Laughing plenty wantoned on the plains, which erewhile wore the livery of meagre famine. Where barren wildness frowned throughout the scene, the peopled villages crowded into view.—Our unnatural parent, who had resigned us to the caprice of chance in the days of tottering infancy, now assumed maintenance from the enterprize of her vigorous progeny. We acknowledged our tutelage—dutifully acquiesced in her requisitions. The tables of her luxury groaned with the fruits of our toil. Our valor was the vanguard of her armies. The glory of Britain was the boast of Americans.

FILIAL submission but encouraged the aggressions of encroaching domination, and exposed us to the exactions of ministerial rapacity. In violation of our natural and our chartered rights, the British parliament arrogated authority to tax us, unrepresented, and imposed laws in contradiction to our will. Thus were we unjustly subjected to double legislation and complicated taxation. A troop of Myrmidons were commissioned to proclaim the madness, and enforce the measures of Grenvillean policy. A host of taxgatherers followed in their footsteps. The locusts of spoliation battered on our harvest. In vain we complained of grievances. We solicited redress in vain. Royalty turned a deaf ear to our remonstrances. The footstool of majesty was inaccessible to our petitions. But though spurned from the presence of our sovereign, loyalty still “cast a longing, lingering look behind.” The Helvetic cantons bore testimony, the United provinces were witnesses, and Corsica, an example of the difficulty of subjugating a people animated by the spirit of Liberty. To America it was reserved to enforce the impressive lesson. Constrained by reiterated and aggravated injuries, she reluctantly prosecuted her ap-

peal to Heaven. The fortune of War was variously contested. Our proud invaders brought their memorial marble to Marathon, and inscribed a "*hic jacet*" for the grave of American Independence. Peril and trepidation were the heralds of their approach,—Spoil, havoc and desolation, the melancholy attendants of their train. Our grounds were fattened with the blood of their cultivators, our towns smoked their funeral pile. The callow eagle, frightened by the angry lion from his nest, soared on adventurous pinions. Columbia rose in her strength, and put on the armor of her might. Victory long hovered o'er the field on hesitating wing, but perched at length, on the striped standard of freedom. Liberty waved her cap triumphant, and proclaimed this land her abode forever. Peace planted her olive on the plains of death, and mirth and gladness frolicked in its shade.

AH! Why is the festive song echoed by the sigh of regret? Why is the bitterness of grief infused in the flowing cup of our joys?—Memory, thou spectre of departed good! We will pause with thee on the tombs of the brave, the noble martyrs of our cause.—The gloom of sorrow is illumined by the splendor of their fame. Lamentation has become a dumb listener to their praise. Their names, engraved on tables "not made with hands," will live and flourish in immortal youth. Their renown will extend from the threshold of the morning, to where the Ocean rolls his farthest wave.

FATHERS, soldiers of the revolution, champions of liberty, partners in danger, compeers in glory! Yours is the honorable meed of merit, the reverence, the applause, the thanks of freemen. When your exploits can be learnt alone from the lifeless volumes of history; when the arm, that revenged the injuries and vindicated the rights of America, shall rest from its labors; when the garrulous age with pride will recount your achievements, and lisping infancy hang delighted on the lips of narration; while manhood, stimulated to deeds of great-

ness, shall emulate your praise. When the workmanship of art shall fail, and the devices of ingenuity be forgotten ; when the laurelled victor shall sleep in oblivion, and the plotting statesman be the dust of the earth ; your names will be remembered in the eternal beadroll of fame, and the bosom of gratitude be the living monument of your glory.

PROPRIETORS of a country, where the bold hand of nature had exerted her utmost cunning and lavished her exhaustless resources ; inhabitants of a region enjoying all the pleasing varieties of climate ; where we freeze not in the relentless winter of the poles, nor faint in the fervid noon of the line ; husbands of a soil pregnant with luxuriant harvests, independent Americans, knew but one wish, felt but one want. That necessity was happily supplied, and that desire fulfilled in the adoption of the *Federal Constitution*. For this the hero fought. For this the patriot bled. This has occupied the meditations of the philosopher, and wasted the midnight lamp of the profound politician. Revolving ages had collected materials for this magnificent edifice ;—successive centuries gleaned wisdom for its construction. May its impregnable strength mock the violence of every assault, and survive, the last wreck in the deluge of time.

AMERICA pursued her course rejoicing. Implicitly confiding in her political guides, she followed their wanderings unconscious. She sported within the jaws of the pit, heedless of danger, till warned by the growing shadows of impending darkness. The mists of error and delusion encompassed her about. Frequent snares beset her feet.—Conductors more wise rescued her from destruction, and restored the lost Eurydice to light.

THE enemy came, and the sentinel slept at his post. The spoiler was at the gate, and the watchman loitered in his patrol. Well-nigh, was our citadel betrayed to the foe by remissness, and our liberties made the booty of lawless ambition. Well-nigh, with toil

and blood, had we erected a splendid trophy for remorseless tyranny.—Was Liberty wooed and won to us with a smile, that we tolerated the impious profanation of her altars? Were our treasures of so little price, that we left them unguarded?—Shall I waken in your ears the cries of the wounded, the groans of the dying, the shrieks of violated chastity, and the screams of murdered helplessness? Shall I call to your view, towns, the prey of hungry flames, and villages, the victims of ravage and devastation, with all the horrors of the tented field? Shall I direct you to the dungeons of despotism, the nurseries of pestilence, where the gorged vulture snuffs the tainted wind; where rank contagion withers the vigor of the arm, extinguishes the lustre of the eye, and stifles the expiring sigh of bravery enthralled? Shall I lead you to the wigwam of the merciless savage, the instrument of royal vengeance—show you the scalps, that decorate his hall, where the breathing of the mournful blast waves the tresses of your butchered wives—and there compute the wondrous purchase?

O, tell it not to posterity, that this asylum of the oppressed, this sanctuary of freedom was shut against the objects of persecuting violence! Let it not be known to future generations, that *American Citizens*, who wore not a seal on their lips; languished in the prisons of usurping power, while echo dared not repeat their complaints! Let it not be heard by the children of after time, that the *Citizen Soldiers of Columbia* have hidden behind the ranks of a provisional army from the terrible name of the "*great nation!*" Let not the bards of the days to come remember this hiatus in the song of our praise! Let these shaded pages be blotted from the history of our country, and there be no memorial of political apostacy!

We pause in consternation on this terrific, this portentous crisis, which, like the previous crush in the successive roar of a mighty hurricane, but spares the trembling victims for the next. Let us leap the

gloomy chasm, the cheerless view of late events, gladdened by the bright realities of present times.

HAPPY are the birth-days of nations.—Memorable are the achievements of heroic patriotism.—Truly to be envied are the fathers and founders of their country's freedom! But its salvation, the work of redeeming love and wisdom, has far surpassed the fruits of war and contention, as does the genial beaming of the vernal sun, the destructive chill of a blighting frost. We proclaim the predominance of reason and *philosophy*, the regulations of peace and *religion*, the "*glad tidings of great joy*" to "*OPPRESSED HUMANITY.*"

No longer do we lament accessions of debt, additional taxes and accumulated burthens. No longer do we deprecate crowded prisons, treasons, insurrections, and seditions. No longer do we bewail the mangled victims of criminal laws, and criminal courts. No longer denouncing "*exterminating war*" against the conquerors of a world, our ministers are received and honored in their country's right, with tokens of friendship, and pledges of peace. Our captured flag no longer waves, a trophy, in the courts of an enemy. The ruins of a navy no longer lash our wharves. For foreign necessities we pay not the enhanced price of a war insurance, nor withhold from the Barbary powers their stipulated and merited dues. Our frontiers shudder no longer at the savage warhoop. The stain of blood is obliterated from the council-seats of our red brethren. The hatchet is buried, and the scalping-knife become artificer. For death and destruction, we give them civilization, vintages and harvests. Instead of threats we give them treaties, ploughs and pruning-hooks for bayonets and swords. We receive their submission to the mild reign of benevolence and love, their homage to reason, and their reverence for their great father, our ruling benefactor. Peace and plenty greet them with the dawn, security accompanies them on their way. The tide of feeling and pursuit is changed. On its swelling bosom is proudly borne the pre-

ious freight of numberless felicities. The Mississippi, the Missouri, the Arkinsaw, have become carriers of our goods. Their tributary streams, their boundless margins and sources unexplored, are ours. These are the fruits of the event we this day celebrate—but these are the acquisitions of yesterday.

THE inviolate fidelity of our present rulers has commanded the approbation and confidence of the people. The reformation and improvement in government, under their auspices, are the worthy subjects of gratulation and applause. Yet on their heads have the vials of malignity been drained, and the vocabulary of opprobrium exhausted on their names. Even from the sacred desk, dedicated to the service of truth and religion, consecrated to the worship of Jehovah, the very sacristy of peace, with pain and consternation, have we heard the discordance of calumny, the virulence of reproach, and the bitterness of reviling. “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!”

NATURE will maintain her wonted course. The bramble will still produce its thorn, and the viper retain his venom. The dog will “bay the moon,” and the owl blink at the radiance of day. In the alembic of an unchristianized heart, rankling disappointment will digest its poison for the shafts of calumny, and inveterate rancor, with ineffectual aim, hurl them at the elevation of merit. Hope gives the pleasing assurance, that the time *shall* come, when the fools of their own delusion shall know and acknowledge the preeminent worth and services of our chief magistrate; when history, elated with the acquisition of his name, having labored in vain to find his equal, shall indignantly throw aside her pencil, disdainingly to blot her brightest leaf with the foulness of their slander.

THE hectic of envy has withered the powers of Federalism. Like the tarnished trappings of reduced nobility, her factious malecontents remain the sordid *memento* of lost elevation. These are the illboding augurs of evil, who predicted national bankruptcy, from



a system of economy ; who foretold prostration of law, from the reform of judicial abuse ; who promised subversion of the Constitution, from conformity to its principles, and the dissolution of the chain of union, by the devouring alkahest of democracy.

Is the language of upbraiding dissonant to the festivities of this anniversary jubilee ? We have forborn, till lenity has blushed at his tameness. May our country forgive our concessions to the invaders of her liberty ! Will truth assimilate to falsehood—will right communicate with wrong—will light associate with darkness—nor shall we conciliate the enemies of our country.

THE conquests of valor and the successes of heroism, have been the darling themes of exulting patriotism. The prevalence of truth, and the triumph of principle, conspire to swell the chorus of its joys. The glorious era of our regeneration rivals the honor of our natal day. WASHINGTON conducted us to victory, and registered in the family of the nations, a people, baptized in the blood of tyranny. Halting panegyric has faltered in his praise. Our *Romulus* has had his fame. Shall not our *Numa* be held in equal consideration, and the savior be ranked with the father of his country ? JEFFERSON has freed us from the iron grasp of usurpation, relieved us from the burthen of fiscal impositions, and the charge of a pension list, has brought us from "the valley of the shadow of death," and led us in the ways of wisdom, the "paths of pleasantness and peace." The lyre of Amphion has rebuilt the walls of our Constitution: America is his eulogist; her unexampled prosperity, his encomium. *Cedant arma togæ, cedat laurea linguæ !*

Will our expression of merited esteem, for a character too good to claim, and too great to need it, appear the offering of adulation at the shrine of power, to the foes of virtue ? Let it be recollected, that theirs has been the graceless weakness of sycophancy ;

theirs the perversion of character, which has eclipsed its lustre, and diminished the aggregate of real fame!

NATURE has opposed her barriers, oceans our moats, and trackless deserts our ramparts, against the incursions of foreign invasion. An invincible militia, "well ordered in all things, and sure," is our garrison of strength. The floating vehicles of our vengeance publish, in deep mouthed thunder, to the globe, a proud tale of American prowess. Before it, the crescent of pagan piracy fades from the sight, sinking in the wave to be seen no more. Law is the faithful guardian of our civil privileges.

COLUMBIA, pride of nations, favorite of fortune—thy prospects still brighten! Wealth, wisdom and fame are thy tributaries. Fairer fruit and fairer clusters on the vine, planted by thy sons, and watered with their blood. Discoveries in the science of government and political progress, daily contribute to swell the Choraspes of American glory. In the event of the late presidential election, has been evinced "*the safety, with which error*" and even calumny "*may be tolerated, when reason is left free to combat it.*" This salutary experiment outweighs the evils, within the control of malignity; and proves more forcibly the wisdom of forbearance, than could the laboring pages of countless folios. Like the majestic orb of light, our national chief magistrate has kept his course undeviating, regardless of the vapors attracted by his splendor from the sinks of slander and detraction.

This is not the only example invaluable, and unprecedented in the annals of government, which he will bequeath to admiring posterity. Demigods of antiquity have relinquished the splendor of office, obedient to the laws and ordinances of their country. Their attention to the calls of duty, and compliance with the demands of necessity, have been the purchase of un fading celebrity. Cincinnatus exchanged the *fascies* and *secures*, for the implements of husbandry, and the master of the world became the lord of an acre. Thom-

sands have retreated from anticipated evil, and concealed the spoils of speculation from public inspection, and the effects of ambition from popular investigation. The declining sun has lighted thousands to the shades of retirement, whose feeble hands could not sustain the weight of empire. The imperial CHARLES abdicated the government of armies, and the dominion of states, for the regulation of clocks, and arrangement of obsequies.

IMMORTAL WASHINGTON reposed on the couch of domestic ease from the toil of state, when lowering clouds deformed our atmosphere. These awful appearances condensed, and the angry thunderbolt of destruction threatened the devoted head of his successor. In the warfare of conflicting storms, JEFFERSON assumes the helm. Late the contention of struggling elements, the ship rights. Extricated from the remora, national prosperity advances. Hope lulls anxiety to slumber in her arms; and the sobs of despondence are stifled in the bosom of security. Blessing succeeds to blessing, chased by a good still greater than the last.

It is the soundest of maxims in a free government, that power should not remain long in the same hands. Bloated by continued occupancy, it dozes in idle security; or corrupted by voluptuousness, squanders on a faction, the illegitimate offspring of luxury, the deeds and rent-rolls of the people's rights. Convulsions, slavery and ruin, have been the fate of nations, regardless of this maxim. On the plan of rotation, to disrobe one's self of authority, is an effort of patriotism sublime as singular. This self-denying devotion to principle and to sentiment will have been reserved, the peculiar glory of the sage of Monticello. Deaf to the voice of public solicitation, blind to the fascinating allurements of power, "in the full tide of successful experiment," on profound and elevated views; at the close of his present term, he will give back the

government to the people, confirmed, embellished, amplified, improved.

MOTHER of Genius, Nurse of Arts, happy AMERICA!  
LIVE FOREVER!

