

MR. LOCKE'S

Prædication.

AN
ORATION,

PRONOUNCED AT BILLERICA,

JULY 5, 1802,

In Commemoration of the Declaration

OF

American Independence.

BY JOSEPH LOCKE.



YOUNG AND MINNS, PRINTERS, BOSTON.



THE Subscribers, appointed a Committee to wait on JOSEPH LOCKE, Esq. hereby present him the thanks of the Town for his patriotic and judicious Oration; and request a copy for the press,

JAMES ABBOT,
JOHN PARKER, junr
EDWARD FARMER,
JOSIAH BOWERS,
JEREMIAH CROSBY.

JOSEPH LOCKE, Esq.



GENTLEMEN,

IN complying with your flattering request, the sacrifice I make of judgment is compensated by the gratification it affords my ambition. I am, Gentlemen, with respect, your very humble servant,

JOSEPH LOCKE,

JAMES ABBOT, Esq.

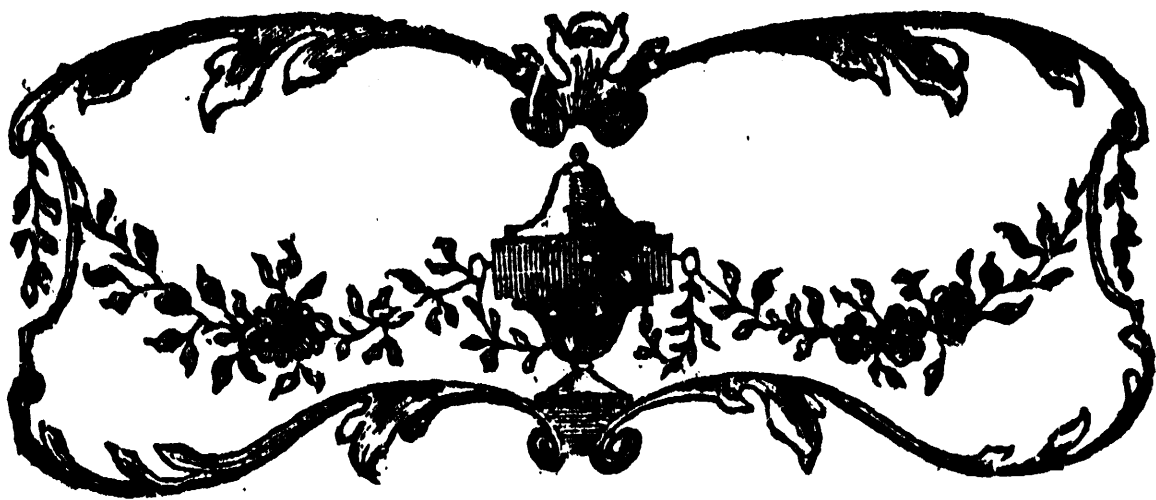
Maj. JOHN PARKER,

EDWARD FARMER, Esq.

Capt. JOSIAH BOWERS.

Capt. JEREMIAH CROSBY.





ORATION.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS,

SO often have pre-eminent talents been called forth on this anniversary, so frequently has this field of oratory been gleaned for your entertainment, that I should have declined the honor of addressing you on this occasion, did I not rely on the interesting nature of the subject as a sure pledge of your candour and attention.

It would be arrogance in the speaker, who had scarcely entered the threshold of existence, to detail the transactions of the late revolution, in presence of many, who were conspicuous actors in that drama. It will suffice my ambition, if I may but strike out a spark of the patriotic fire which glowed in their breasts, to light up the sacred flame in the hearts of their successors.

TWENTY-SIX years have performed their revolutions, since the "recording Angel" enrolled the *United States of America* on the list of nations. The decree of *Independence*, proclaimed in the American Congress, was ratified in the council of Heaven, and

and, in accents of terror to our enemies, was echoed from the skies.

If the motives which influenced the illustrious characters of that memorable drama, the relation they stood in to *Great Britain*, their scanty resources, the immediate and remote consequences, be duly considered and appreciated, perhaps no era in the history of nations can be found, at once so interesting, so important, and so glorious, as the birth-day of our national existence and independence. It will influence the destinies of mankind beyond the ken of human calculation. Our patriotic fathers, watching, with a jealous eye, the rights and privileges they had purchased at the risk of all that was sacred and dear to them, saw the whole apparatus of slavery in motion, and greatly dared to wrest from the tyrant's grasp, the chain which lawless ambition had already forged, and emancipate themselves and their future sons. Until the name of *America* shall be blotted out forever, the sweet incense of gratitude, from the united hearts of her citizens, shall not cease to be offered up to their memory, nor His high praises to be celebrated, whose divine interposition gave efficacy to their exertions.

MANY venerable patriots, whose presence dignifies this assembly, shared largely in the toils, the councils, the dangers, the losses, and the glory of that contest, which terminated in the reluctant acknowledgement, by *Great Britain*, of the sovereignty of the *United States*. They cherish a lively and indelible impression of the scenes of that eventful crisis.

crisis. *America* was in her infancy; unpractised in self-government, untried in armour, and to human appearance, destitute both of the power and the means, not only of annoyance, but of self-defence; yet, roused by the repeated indignities and oppressions of a cruel parent, animated by the hope of liberty, and relying on the God of armies, who gives not the battle to the strong, she boldly bid defiance to the proud threats of the European GOLIATH. The event was auspicious to liberty and America. It furnished a striking proof, how feeble is the power of tyrants, though supported by hosts of mercenaries, when opposed by freemen, energized by the love of their country.

BUT the grand object of the revolution was but half achieved by the acquisition of Independence. To establish such a government as would secure respect and justice from foreign nations; confirm domestic liberty and tranquillity, and "restore harmony to social intercourse," demanded the united wisdom and experience of our most enlightened citizens.

THE first moments of peace are the most dangerous to the internal liberty of a nation. So long as it was necessary to repel the assaults of a common enemy, all hearts were united; a sense of common danger absorbed private and local interests, and concentrated the energies of the nation to a focus. The restoration of peace gave leisure for the ardour of patriotism to abate, and for individual and party interests to radicate and strengthen.

THEN appeared the difficulty of harmonizing the supposed jarring interests of the various classes of citizens,

citizens, and of the several states. To provide for the support of public credit, by the payment of the public debt, taxation became indispensable. Either the war-worn veteran, who had sacrificed his health, his social enjoyments, and risked his life in the cause of his country, must be defrauded of his hard-earned compensation, by the most flagrant violation of the plighted faith of government; or labour and industry must contribute a share of their scanty wages. Justice could not hesitate in the decision.

THE people of the *United States*, just escaped from the snare of the fowler, while the clanking of the tyrant's fetters still sounded in their ears, viewed every degree of power vested in their rulers as a proportionable diminution of their freedom; not considering that true liberty does not consist in an unrestrained power of violating the rights of others, but in having our own rights protected from violation. It was, therefore, impossible to cement the union, by giving sufficient energy to government, without alarming their jealousy.

THE ghosts of departed nations, whose ruins mark with desolation the course of history, solemnly admonish statesmen in all succeeding ages to shun their errors, or expect their fate. None of the *simple* forms of government had been found without great imperfections. Monarchy possesses the advantage of greater energy, but does not ensure wisdom and virtue. Aristocracy will, perhaps, exhibit a greater degree of wisdom than any other, but is destitute of sufficient virtue and power;

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It ; and Democracy, pre-eminent in virtue, can boast of very little wisdom or energy. It is especially inapplicable to an extensive territory, or a populous nation. "The motion of the people is ever too fast or too slow ; at one time, with a hundred thousand feet, they creep like insects ; at another, with as many arms, they prostrate all before them." It is the perfection of *our constitution*, that it partakes, in such proportion of the several forms, as to unite the excellencies, and exclude the defects of each.

THE rock on which former republicks have generally made shipwreck, is the want of a proper balance of power amongst the several departments of government. The sage patriots who were deputed to the arduous and sublime undertaking of forming a constitution, which should serve as the basis of government, not for three millions of people only, but which would, in a short period, embrace a nation more populous than any in *Europe* ; saw the necessity of distributing the several powers into departments, which might serve mutually to check and controul each other. They ordained the Legislative to restrain in the Executive the ambition of arbitrary power ; the Executive, to retard the impetuous torrent of the Legislative, or popular branch ; and the Judiciary, to maintain the equilibrium, and correct the abuses of both. Hence the necessity of its *Independence*. As some high cliff, whose head transcends the clouds, stands equally unmoved by the sunshine or lightning above, and the storms and billows below ; so ought the Judiciary

ciary department in our government to be equally beyond the influence of executive favor or resentment, and the *encroaching spirit of the popular branches*

SUCH, fellow citizens, is the constitution which the collected wisdom of our country, matured by the experience of past ages, has formed, and the good sense and virtue of the citizens adopted; which has attracted the admiration of the world; and which, in your esteem, ought to be second only to holy writ. It is this, which confirmed that Independence we now join to celebrate, and which, twenty-six years since, in a voice of thunder, you asserted as your birth-right. Under this you enjoy, not that *ignis fatuus* liberty, which leads blindfold into the giddy whirlpool of anarchy; but all that rational freedom, which is consistent with individual or national happiness; which, like the sun, diffuses a vital heat and energy through the whole body politic. During twelve years, under this constitution, administered by rulers which heaven lent us, the prosperity of our country is not only unparalleled in history, but has exceeded the most sanguine expectations of its warmest friends. The desert is literally converted into a fruitful field, and the wilderness blossoms like the rose; the hills echo responses to the numberless flocks and herds that graze them, and the vallies and plains wave with a golden harvest; the increase of manufactures has almost precluded the necessity of foreign importation; our commerce, which at the close of the revolution, consisted of little more than a few coasters or fishing-boats, now whitens every sea with its sails,

sails, and brings home tribute from every clime; the arts and sciences, under the genial and fostering influence of liberty, have made such rapid progress towards perfection as to acquire for the *United States* a respectable rank in the republic of letters; the wide-spread population of the union has increased in an unexampled ratio; "returning justice has lifted aloft her scale," and, with equal beam, weighed the rights and injuries of the citizens; and peace has waved the olive-branch over our favoured land.

THRICE happy *America*, hadst thou known the things that belong to thy peace! Here the genius of liberty, long since exiled from the old world, sought a retreat, and here, on the basis of reason erected her empire. Would to Heaven her throne may not be usurped by licentiousness, and she, like *Noah's Dove*, finding no resting place for her foot, return to her native skies.

Is then, the prosperity of *America* limited to the short period of twelve years? Are its days already numbered and finished? Has faction reared her snaky crest, and the wild misrule of anarchy commenced? Has restless and disappointed ambition sown discontent, jealousy and sedition amongst the citizens, and excited them to pluck from the brow of merit the well-earned laurel? To precipitate from office our long-tried, native patriots, to make room for modern philosophists and foreigners? Have foreign influence and intrigue insinuated themselves into the councils of our nation, and "bursting open the doors of honor and confidence," seized upon the birth-right of native citizens? Is a system of Machiavelian

chiavelian policy, of demoralizing principles, and that religion, which, like a cloak, may be assumed and laid aside at pleasure, which, as interest and ambition dictate, can worship JESUS CHRIST or Mahomet, marching through our land with gigantic step? While the Pagan Athenians, who never had the beams of revelation to guide them "through nature up to nature's God," caused the works of PROTAGORAS to be burned, for saying, "he could not tell whether there were any Gods;" do enlightened Americans foster in their bosom the ministers of infidelity, whose professed design is to unchristianize the world by diffusing their atheistical principles more pestiferous than the *Upas* or *Pandora's Box*? Is the sword of malice sharpened against the pacific apostles of our holy religion by men high in office under the government? And has intoxicated power laid its sacrilegious hand on one of the consecrated pillars of our political edifice, and exposed the whole fabric to fall to ruins by its unequal incumbency? Or is all this the picture of a phrenzied brain, the dream of a maniac?

THANKS to the guardian Angel of *America*, who has not permitted her to slumber in the lap of delusion to awake, like SAMPSON, shorn of all her energy. Still she has virtue and resolution to do herself justice. Reason resumes its empire, and will point out to the people their true interests. The clouds are passing off the political horizon, and the *eastern stars* especially, in the federal constellation, are rising with increasing splendor. The late renovation of our state government, and the acquiescence of the citizens in the will of the majority, furnish

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nish a striking and joyous proof of the prevalence of correct principles.

It is a strict adherence to this principle, that the will of the majority shall govern, that constitutes the first law of an elective government. A dereliction of this will set us afloat on the tempestuous sea of anarchy; it opens wide a door to ambition and faction; and inevitably terminates in civil war. From the very nature of such a government flows jealousy and opposition. Where each individual has the right of choosing his own rulers, he has incidently the right to judge of the wisdom and fitness of their administration; and it has hitherto been the felicity of the *United States*, that such has been the diffusion of literature and information amongst the freemen of the union; so just and rational have been their ideas of liberty, as to qualify them for the exercise of their invaluable rights, and restrain those party prejudices and passions so pernicious to social order. So long as the freedom of speech and of the press are preserved inviolate, and the measures of government are liable to be arraigned at the bar of public opinion, there will always exist a difference of sentiment, and government will meet with a greater or less degree of crimination. But while this is restrained within due bounds, while it proceeds no farther than a fair and manly discussion of public measures, while reason and argument do not give place to personal abuse, to calumny and falsehood; it may be regarded as beneficial rather than injurious. It excites vigilance and energy in the citizens, and prevents injustice and a spirit of domination in the rulers; as winds and storms
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serve to clarify the atmosphere, and render it more elastic and invigorating.

But the fire of jealousy must be guarded with the strictest watchfulness, lest blown up by designing ambition, it burst out in the flames of faction, and, by destroying all confidence in the rulers, paralyze the wheels of government; and thus instead of warming, consume the body politic.

As it is the duty of each citizen to yield to the voice of the majority, so it is indispensably incumbent on all, so long as the powers that be confine themselves within the pale of the constitution, to afford them a firm and cordial support; and if mistaken policy or inexpedient measures be adopted, correct the abuses by a more judicious bestowment of your suffrages. This is the mode pointed out by the constitution; and any other will weaken the energy of the nation, and endanger your independence. On the proper exercise of the right of suffrage depend the freedom, the safety, and happiness of the people; the abuse of it insures inevitable ruin. Those who will suffer their suffrages to be influenced by interested or party considerations, to be made the instruments of accomplishing the designs of factious demagogues, are unworthy the name of freemen. In the selection of characters to offices of trust, whether supreme or subordinate, whether under the general or state government, let merit be the sole criterion of your choice. Let the only inquiry be, "is he honest, is he capable, is he faithful to the constitution." Had it pleased the wise architect of nature to expose the human breast to human inspection, virtue would be sure to receive
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the respect it merits ; and the impious traitor, who, with the hallowed names of liberty and patriotism on his tongue, would sell his country to the highest bidder, would be hunted from the abodes of man. Miscreants, fleeing from the violated justice of their native country, would not then flock hither to devour our "loaves and fishes," as a reward for vociferating patriotism in our streets. Repose not confidence on sounding professions, but on patriotic virtue, attested by steady, undeviating exertions to promote the interest and prosperity of the community.

PERMIT me to remark, that as a sacred, I may say, divine precept, the injunction of the sainted WASHINGTON, *to preserve the union of the states*, ought to be inviolably regarded. At all times should this maxim be kept in view ; but never, since the organization of the government, has it been addressed to the understanding or the interest of the citizens with so cogent arguments as at this moment. Never were the bands of confederation so weakened ; and with the deepest regret we say it, many designing, desperate spirits are scattered through the union, ready to apply the fatal shears to cut them asunder. They would persuade us, that there not only is a hostility between the views of different parts of the union ; that some of the states are establishing a system of usurpation and dominion over the rest ; but if possible would induce a belief that there is an incompatibility of interests. Be conjured by all that is dear to you to reject the idea, as a poison fatal to genuine republicanism,

canism, and spurn the base propagators of it. If there is a political axiom capable of pre-eminent demonstration, it is, that the national prosperity, independence, and even existence of the *United States* depend on the preservation of the *Union*.

THIS consideration is enforced by a view of the present state of the European nations. To every philanthropic mind, to every breast moistened with the milk of human kindness, it must be subject of consolatory reflection, that the ravages of war have ceased on the eastern continent; that the fairest countries in *Europe* are no longer devastated; that rivers and seas are no longer crimsoned with human blood; that "peace with balmy wing" has returned to heal the bleeding nations.

BUT what influence this event is to have on the destiny of *America*, is hidden from us by the impenetrable veil of futurity. Certain it is, the ruling powers in *Europe* will not regard our rising power and greatness with indifference. *France*, inspired more with the ambition of enslaving other nations than the enjoyment of liberty, already begins to cast a jealous eye on the increasing energies and glory of the *United States*. Not content with the empire of half the world, she is laying the foundation of dominion in this western hemisphere, by disgorging on our borders the scum of her revolution, which would endanger her own safety; we do not say with a design to corrupt the virtue of our citizens, and attack our independence by sowing the tares of licentiousness and sedition; but surely it needs not the gift of prophecy to foresee, that if ever our national

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tional glory is to be eclipsed or tarnished, it will proceed from the malign influence of this satellite of *France*.

OCCUPYING a boundless extent of territory on our frontier, with the Spaniards in the *Floridas*, and the *West-Indies* under their controul; having taught the savages of the wilderness treachery to their friends and benefactors, and perhaps *imposed* the *yoke of freedom* on the provinces of *Canada*; and, what is most of all to be deprecated, having seduced numbers of our citizens to worship the meretricious goddess of liberty, which *they* have idolized under so many protean forms; could any thing short of Omnipotence save us from *the fraternal embrace*? Yes, *Union, Patriotism, and Virtue*. While these are preserved, all nature may arm her forces in vain.

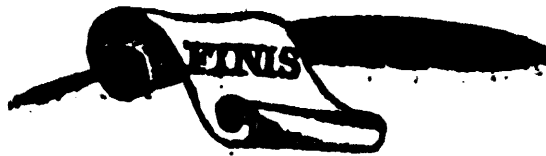
LET, then, this lesson be written in capitals on every heart, and assiduously inculcated by every class of people. Let it especially be engraven on the impressible mind of youth. Let the infant imbibe from its mother's breast the milk of patriotic virtue. Let every child, like HANNIBAL, be sworn upon the altar to make perpetual war with the enemies of his country.

As our hope of defence rests in a well-disciplined militia, composed of hardy, independent yeomanry; let each citizen cherish an ardor for military glory, and every soldier forget not that he is a citizen. Let us as well learn to exercise the musket, as to guide the plough. Let it be the testamentary charge of each dying parent to his children, to consider *rational liberty and independence* as the most valuable inheritance,

inheritance, and place the love and service of their country subordinate only to that of their God.

As the ship-wrecked mariner fondly seizes on the floating plank, let us cling to the last fragment of the Constitution, as the best, and only hope of liberty and *America*.

ACTUATED by such motives and principles, with the fairest portion of the globe for an inheritance, the prosperity and glory of the *United States* shall fill "the fairest page in history" to remotest ages.



Celebration.

AT *Billerica*, Monday, 5th July instant, was celebrated as the anniversary of our national Independence.

THE morning was ushered in by the ringing of the bell, and the discharge of cannon. At eleven o'clock A. M. a procession was formed at the town-house, consisting of a respectable number of the Inhabitants, and many from the neighbouring towns, escorted by a volunteer company in complete uniform, commanded by Capt. JEREMIAH CROSBY. The whole procession marshalled by Major JOHN PARKER. At 12 o'clock they proceeded to the meeting-house, where the throne of grace was addressed by the Rev. Dr. CUMINGS, and an ingenious and federal oration was delivered by JOSEPH LOCKE, Esq. The music of the day *appropriate, harmonious and good*. After service the procession was again formed, and escorted to a rich entertainment, where rational joy was apparent in every countenance. After the repast, the following toasts were given, accompanied by the discharge of cannon from the artillery company commanded by Capt. JOHN KIDDER.

1. The day. On its annual return may it ever find united Columbia in possession of freedom and independence.

2. The national constitution. Champaigne to its real friends, and real pain to its sham friends.

3. The corn of nourishment, the wine of joy, and the oil of gladness to American Husbandmen.

4. A bowl of butter-milk and whey within the shell of the *Mammoth Cheese*, for the WORCESTER FARMER.

4. May the ingrafted branches of slavery, be lopped off the federal tree, that they may no longer obstruct the growth, and blast the fruit of the natural free branches:

5. The memory of the illustrious *Timmocrates*, *Epaminondas*, *Alfred the Great*, and *Washington*. The boast and honor of the countries which gave them birth.

6. The late President, *John Adams*. May those principles pursued under his administration, have due influence on the present.

7. *Goerck*, *Strong*, *Stronger*, and *Stronger*!

8. The Clergy. Shielded by rectitude and religion, may they remain inviolable, amid the fiery darts of democratic calumny, and malicious censure.

9. *Sulphur*. And other vindicators of insulted merit.

10. May every unreasonable foreign requisition be answered by powder and ball.

11. The militia of the United States, may their swords glitter terror into the faces of every enemy.

12. May the light of truth, shining through the medium of good administration, scatter every political error.

13. The fair daughters of *America*. Graced, with dignity of character, with congenial sons, as *Partners* of their bosom. May they populate their country with a race of federal worthies, and forever equal, on the historic page, the brightest ornaments in *Columbia's* crown.

14. May science, virtue and patriotism be the Characteristics of *Americans*.

15. The Inhabitants of *Billeisid*. Impregnable as *Gibraltar*, firm as *Atlas*, may their religion and patriotism stand, against the attacks of mendacity, foreign, or domestic foes, the fawning sycophant and the galle-lover.