
*Mr. Longfellow's
Oration.*

ORATION,

PRONOUNCED

July 4th, 1804,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE SELECTMEN OF

Boston,

IN COMMEMORATION

OF THE

ANNIVERSARY OF

American Independence.

BY STEPHEN LONGFELLOW, JUN.



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~~Portland, July 5th, 1804.~~

Sir,

THE subscribers being thereto authorized, by the Gentlemen who assembled yesterday at Union Hall, to celebrate the Anniversary of AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE, present their thanks to you for your ingenious and pertinent ORATION, and request a copy of it for the press.

Your very humble servants,

SAMUEL FREEMAN,
JOSEPH H. INGRAHAM,
JOSEPH TITCOMB,
JOSHUA ROGERS.

Andreas Lovvater, jun. Esq.

~~Portland, July 5th, 1804.~~

GENTLEMEN,

I have just received your polite Letter, in which you do me the honor to request a copy of my Oration for the press. As it was a hasty production, composed in a few hours of ill health, and amid numerous professional avocations, I indulged a hope that it would not be printed. But it is yours. May your candor protect it.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect,

Your very humble servant,

STEPHEN LONGFELLOW, JUN.

To the Subscribers of Portland.

An Oration, &c.

LOVE of liberty is a spontaneous emotion of every heart. It inspires the hero with courage, glows in the bosom of the patriot, warms the heart of the christian, and adds lustre to the eye of beauty. It is the vital principle of republics, the strongest band of society.

This noble principle produced the American revolution, and gave birth to our independence as a nation. The injustice and oppression, the cruelty and outrage, which hastened on this glorious event, will never be forgotten. Not like modern revolutionists, indulging boundless ambition, and under the sacred name of liberty, conquering to enslave, the American people demanded those rights and privileges, which had been wrested from them by the hand of tyranny, and magnanimously re-

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resolved to perish in the conflict rather than relinquish them. Their object was the emancipation of three millions of people, whose humble petitions had been answered by additional burdens ; whose manly remonstrances had been treated with contempt. Unawed by the majesty of power, and unintimidated by the dangers that opposed them, the fathers of our country, the representatives of the people, appealing to heaven for the purity of their motives, and confiding in the justice of their cause, on the fourth of July, seventeen hundred and seventy-six, declared these states free, sovereign, and independent.

THE firmness and resolution, the patience and fortitude, the ardor and enthusiasm, with which this patriotic declaration was supported by the American people, excited the wonder and admiration of the world ! Every citizen became a soldier, and the genius of our country arose in the vigor of manhood. Our politicians were inspired with wisdom, and the illustrious, the immortal WASHINGTON led

our armies to victory and glory. Under the auspices of heaven our independence was acknowledged, liberty established, and peace restored. The fatigues of the campaign were forgotten in the enjoyment of domestic bliss, and the wounds of the war worn veteran were healed by the balm of peace and friendship.

To secure these blessings, and confirm the union of the States, a Constitution was formed on the pure principles of civil liberty, and happily adapted to the genius and habits of the people. The unparalleled prosperity, which our country enjoyed, during the faithful administration of the general government, loudly proclaimed the wisdom and perfection of the system. The nations of Europe saw with astonishment the stupendous fabric, which we had erected, and sighed for that freedom which Americans enjoyed.

On our attachment to this constitution, and a sacred adherence to its principles, the peace, liberty, independence, and happiness of our nation depend.

From the experience of ages may we learn wisdom ; and may the misfortunes of other nations teach us to preserve our liberty. The rapidity with which other governments have been destroyed, and the cruelty with which the rights of man have been sacrificed, should admonish us of our danger, and excite us to vigilance in defence of our rights. Where are the celebrated republics of Greece and Rome ? Do they not slumber with the heroes who bled in their defence, and like them are they not forgotten ? Where are the more modern republics of Europe ? Have they not fallen victims to the treachery of perfidious friends ?..... While they indulged the delusive dream of liberty, their chains were riveted, and they awoke in slavery. Under the pretence of extending the blessings of liberty, France has subverted every free government on the continent, and has herself become the prey of those false principles, and that wicked policy, by which she sought to enslave others.

AMERICA is the only nation, that can boast

a free republican government. And it remains for you, my fellow citizens, to perpetuate your independence, and transmit to posterity that liberty, for which thousands of your brave countrymen have bled.

WHERE virtue reigns, and knowledge diffuses its beams, there civil liberty will find protection, and the rights of man will be respected. Impressed with this idea, the revolutionary philosophers of the present day have found it necessary to demoralize mankind, in order to enslave them. Professing the most zealous attachment to liberty, and the most ardent friendship for the rights of man, they have inculcated principles, and disseminated sentiments, which threaten the total extermination of freedom, and the entire subversion of government. Presses have been established, and societies formed, for the express purpose of revolutionizing the world. They have flattered the ignorant, and deceived the unsuspecting. Human nature is represented, as capable of infinite perfectability, and man is descri-

bed, as rapidly hastening to that state of perfection, when all restraint will be unnecessary, all law and government will be done away; when unbounded liberty will prevail, and universal benevolence pervade the earth. The distinctions between virtue and vice are broken down, and morality is represented as an artificial restraint. The sacred ordinances of religion are derided as superstitious rites and ceremonies, and the holy gospel of Christ is denounced as a cunningly devised fable of wicked priests. But these, my fellow citizens, are magical delusions, which exist no where, but in the distracted imaginations of visionary enthusiasts. Experience should have taught these disciples of infidelity, that human nature is composed of passions and prejudices, which require the strong arm of law to controul them, and that government will ever be necessary to protect the weak, and secure the life, property, reputation, and happiness of every member of society.

It can hardly be imagined that principles

or false, and sentiments so dangerous, should be embraced by civilized man ; but astonishing as it may seem, the blandishments of vice have captivated many honest persons, and led thousands blindfold to destruction.

ANOTHER dangerous enemy of our peace and happiness is **FOREIGN INFLUENCE**. Under the captivating and benevolent idea of "opening an asylum to oppressed humanity," we have invited to our embraces the fugitive from justice, the vagabond, and malefactor. Our country is crowded with foreigners, who are totally incapable of comprehending the principles of our government, and whose ignorance and vice render them fit subjects of despotic power. Not satisfied with enjoying the protection of our laws, these officious, intermeddling, unprincipled aliens, have arrayed themselves against our government, endeavored to excite our citizens to insurrection, profaned the fairest reputations, and wickedly calumniated every friend of his country, who had

independence to oppose their infamous designs. They have violated the silence of the grave; and even the immaculate WASHINGTON is not permitted to slumber undisturbed in his tomb. Still these men are allowed the privileges of citizens, and have equal power with native Americans. And to the eternal disgrace of our country, some of them are admitted to our councils, and entrusted with our most valuable treasures, while venerable patriots, and free born citizens, are neglected and despised, or wantonly hurled from office, because the time has not arrived when virtue, talents, and fidelity entitle men to honor. Yes, fellow citizens, these hirelings of democracy are countenanced, encouraged, and patronized by men, who are intrusted with the most sacred rights of the people.

It is true we are a commercial nation. Our connexion with foreign powers is necessarily extensive, and a large and respectable proportion of our citizens are employed in transporting the surplus produce of a luxuriant soil.

From this source our revenue is raised, industry and enterprize are encouraged, and the toils of the husbandman rewarded. The protection, therefore, of that commerce, which supplies us with the comforts and conveniences of life, and defrays the expences of government, is deeply interesting to every member of society. In vain do we rely on the friendship of nations for the protection of commerce. National friendship, like national justice, is observed only when convenient. The most solemn treaties will always be violated when interest or ambition prompts; and the American Eagle will never be respected, while he soars without talons. While our frigates are mouldering in dry docks, and millions are squandered in the purchase of salt mountains, and boundless deserts, our boasted independence will be the derision of the world.

We are invited to rejoice in the acquisition of a widely extended territory, and the addition of millions to our population. Vast as this speculation may appear to the blind worshippers of

the present administration, it will prove the most dangerous and unfortunate measure, which has ever been pursued by our government. It has destroyed that balance of power, on which the confederation of the States was founded, and must inevitably subject New-England to the absolute and unprincipled controul of Virginia and her southern provinces, or dismember the union.

I AM sorry to interrupt the festivity of this day, by adverting to the dangers and difficulties that surround us ; but safety is our object, and to be silent, when our liberty is invaded, would be criminal. Although the bright sunbeams, that gilded the morning of our independence, are enveloped in clouds, and the morals of our nation are corrupted ; although the principles which inspired the leaders of our revolution are abandoned by many, and the sanctity of our Constitution has been violated ; it is still in the power of the people of the United States, without violence and without commotion, to restore peace, unity and happiness to their coun-

try, and re-establish those virtuous habits, and that reverence for the Constitution, on which the safety of the nation depends. Notwithstanding the change in the moral and political sentiments of many, a majority of the native citizens of the United States are Federal Republicans, and strongly attached to the Constitution of their country. The united influence of Federalism is still sufficient to controul the mad fury of Democracy; and I still indulge the pleasing hope that the virtue, patriotism, and information of the people, will preserve the freedom and independence of America. But, if we sacrifice the public good to private views and personal aggrandizement, we must expect to wear the galling chains of slavery as a just punishment for our pusillanimous behaviour.

By a wise provision in our Constitution the time will soon arrive, when we shall be invited to exercise the most important privilege of citizens, in the election of a Chief Magistrate of the Union. The magnitude of the subject, and the importance of the duty demand

the attention of every friend of man. On the event of this election the fate of America is suspended. Many have abandoned their principles, and relinquished their exertions, because it is easier to glide with the current of opinion than oppose its force; but let such remember, that they are responsible to their own consciences and posterity, for the peace, liberty, and independence of their country. Remember, fellow citizens, "that united we stand, but divided we fall." And may the recollection of past sufferings, excite us all to vigilance, and the blood of slaughtered heroes inspire us with zeal in defence of our rights.

