

ORATION

DELIVERED IN THE MEETING-HOUSE

IN

WAREHAM,

AT THE

REQUEST OF THE INHABITANTS,

IN

CELEBRATION

OF THE

ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

ON THE

FOURTH DAY OF JULY,

1804.

BY JOHN MACKIE, A. M.

NEW-BEDFORD :

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1804.

Warcham, July 4th, 1804.

SIR,

AT the desire of the inhabitants of this town, we present you with their thanks, for the ingenious and patriotic Oration by you this day pronounced, and request a copy for the press.

NOBLE EVERITT,
BENJAMIN FEARING, } Committee.
ROWLAND LEONARD. }

Doctor JOHN MACKIE.

GENTLEMEN,

THE thanks by you communicated, are gratefully accepted, and in compliance with the polite request, a copy of the Oration, this day pronounced, is delivered to you for publication—accompanied by the hope of the Author, that the short notice for preparation may, in some degree apologize for its defects.

JOHN MACKIE.

Rev. NOBLE EVERITT,
BENJAMIN FEARING and } Committee.
ROWLAND LEONARD, Esqs. }

AN
ORATION, &c.

Hæc olim meminisse semper juvabit.

VIRGIL.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS,

THE dictates of reason and patriotism unite, in evincing us of the importance of preserving and transmitting to posterity, the remembrance of that day, which gave birth to our national Independence. Impressed with these sentiments we have now assembled to commemorate the most important era, in the history of our nation—to celebrate an anniversary, which ought ever to be consecrated to the joys of freedom, and sacred to the cause of liberty—the day, in which, the citizens of these United States, then Colonies of Great Britain, disencumbered themselves of the shackles of dependence; burst asunder the bands of servitude; rose to an exalted station; and enrolled themselves amongst the free and independent nations of the earth.

OFTEN, on similar occasions, have Demosthenian oratory, and Ciceronian eloquence described, in glowing terms, the memorable events of

our revolution—a revolution so glorious in its consequences, and so happy in its effects, that it stands unparalleled, in the whole history of man; from that period, when the Almighty's breath animated the first lump of clay, down the long series of ages unto the present day. “Our pride has been heightened, our passions warmed, and our patriotism kindled, by the splendid picture of a nation;” untutored in the savage art of human butchery; destitute of almost every means of defence; and, at first, unaided by any friendly and powerful alliance; but relying on the justness of her cause, and looking to the God of armies for assistance, nobly disdaining to comply with the unjust demands of a potent nation; boldly contending for her unalienable rights; bidding defiance to the superior strength and inexhaustible resources of her enemy; and yet, finally, rising victorious from the ruins of a long, cruel, and bloody war, to freedom, prosperity, and happiness. “The canvas of the painter, the pen of the poet, and the tongue of the orator, have already immortalized every scene” of that great drama, which was opened upon the green of Lexington, and closed upon the plains of Yorktown. Already has Fame sounded to the remotest corners of the earth, and “registered, on the golden scroll of immortality,” both the names and characters of our revolutionary heroes; many of whom have long since, descended to the mouldering caverns of the dead, there, in awful silence, to mingle with

their native dust, having left to their posterity an inestimable patrimony, purchased by their wisdom, their virtues, and their blood.

BUT still it will be productive of pleasing sensations in the minds of the grateful sons of freedom, again to retrace the history of our nation; recount the great achievements of our fathers; and, while thus favored with a peaceful seat under our own vine and fig-tree, having none to disturb, nor make us afraid; gratefully to acknowledge the many obligations, we owe to them, for the numerous blessings we now enjoy.

OUR forefathers, denied the enjoyment of freedom in their native land: oppressed, and persecuted for their religious sentiments, nobly determined to bid a last adieu to the place of their nativity, in quest of one where they might have the peaceful enjoyment, both of civil and religious liberty. They embarked, "approving Heaven beheld the favorite ark, wafted o'er the billows of the raging ocean, and graciously preserved it, until the chosen families were brought in safety, to this western world." Deceived by the treachery of their commander, instead of here being received into the arms of friendship, and embraced by those, who would alleviate their distresses, and administer to their numerous wants; they found themselves, not only exposed to the inclemency of the season; but to all the evils which savage ingenuity could invent, and cruel barbarity devise. Constantly subject to the

repeated attacks of the roving savage; who, as yet ignorant of all social affection, and his heart steeled against every movement of human or social sympathy, would neither harken to the voice of humanity, nor listen when injured innocence cried; who would not approach them, but when bearing the instruments of death, nor extend a hand to their relief, but when grasping a weapon of destruction. Thus encompassed by dangers on every side, and having suffered distress in almost every form; yet trusting for relief to Him, who can soften the most savage heart, and cause the barbarian to pity; they, at length, surmounted every obstacle and succeeded in the establishment of a settlement, "making the wilderness to blossom like the rose, and become vocal with the praises of their God."

FAVORED with the smiles of prosperity, so rapid was their increase, in wealth and population, as soon to attract the attention of the parent country, from which they had descended; who, under the specious pretence of affording them protection, was unwearied in her exertions, insensibly to impose upon them, such laws and regulations, as were dictated by her own interest; although unwarranted by any principle, in that constitution, by which she professed to govern them. To these they, at first, quietly submitted, not because they were insensible of the unjustness of their principles, nor from a want of discernment to discover their injurious effects;

but from a want of power to resist, and force to repel them. But menaces and threats soon became ineffectual, in enforcing obedience to such repeated acts of tyranny : Yet determined on their submission, she now had recourse to the force of arms. The tragical events of this arbitrary measure, are recorded, in the history of the transactions of that dismal night of *March the 5th, 1770* ; when *Maverick, Gray, Cadwell, Attucks,* and *Carr,* fell victims to their unbridled fury.—Such grievances were no longer sufferable—such glaring infractions of the rights of a people, jealous of their liberties, and determined to vindicate them, whenever violated. But in soliciting a redress, in vain were the humble and suppliant posture of the petitioner ; and the earnest and importunate demands of a remonstrant : still injustice followed injustice, injury succeeded injury, and oppression trod upon the heel of oppression. But so painful was the idea of a separation ; so great the attachment to the parent country ; that not until every reasonable and honorable concession had been made in vain, and the cup of reconciliation exhausted to the bottom ; not until then, did the venerable band of patriots of '76, having called Heaven to witness the rectitude of their intentions, declare to the world that these *States* were, and of right ought to be, *Free and Independent.*

THE standard of independence was now erected, around which, thousands assembled, ac-

B

uated by the same patriotic spirit, and animated by the same ardour for liberty ; resolved to secure the enjoyment of freedom, or perish in the attempt. Yet unequal was the contest. A people, but few in numbers, undisciplined, and without most of the powerful means of defence, externally attacked by a numerous army in conjunction with a formidable fleet ; while, internally, harrassed every day by wolves in sheep's clothing, who were ever preying upon the vitals of the state.

AT this eventful crisis our political horizon began to darken, and clouds of danger thickened around us. We beheld our fertile plains laid desolate ; many of our cities in the possession of the enemy ; while others were either wrapt in flames, or buried in ashes ; and our citizens, pierced with British steel, agonising in the pangs of death. When lo ! Heaven interposed, and smiling on our cause, directed our patriots in the choice of a leader, who, like *Joshua* of old, should be able to subdue our foes, and conduct us to victory and freedom. This was the immortal WASHINGTON : in describing whose character ;

“ Flat’ry would faint beneath the sound,
 “ While hoary Truth inspir’d the song ;
 “ Envy grow pale, would bite the ground,
 “ And Slander gnaw her fork’d tongue.”

Guided by his precepts, and animated by his example, our little band was soon enabled to check the enemy in their rapid career of conquest.

FOLLOWING them through the various scenes of the revolution, our minds are filled with the successive emotions of astonishment, indignation, sorrow, and joy. Often do we behold them struggling in adversity, almost upon the point of despair, and so far reduced as to men and means of prosecuting the contest, that the enemy, elated with temporary success, are ready to shout victory complete. Yet our intrepid *Chief*, himself a host, remained calm and undisturbed amidst the mighty storm; ever supported by the united exertions of all patriots, he continued firm and unshaken, in the resolution of obtaining the grand object of all his wishes, the freedom of his country.

AT length, after the heat and burthen of the day was past, the French nation, convinced that we were determined to persist in maintaining our independence, was induced to afford us her assistance. Not influenced, as some have been foolish enough to imagine, by disinterested benevolence, or national virtue; for these have no existence, except in the mind of an enthusiast; but instigated purely by selfish motives, a few individuals excepted, and a desire to diminish the gigantic power of Great-Britain, her most inveterate enemy. From this period the war was prosecuted with vigor; and the repeated successes of the combined powers were such, as soon to oblige the British nation, after having expended immense treasures, and sacrificed

thousands of her bravest sons, to acknowledge the sovereignty of these United States. Thus the long and arduous conflict ended, in the establishment of American independence.

BUT the revolution was, as yet, but half completed : Independence and government were the two grand objects for which we contended; the former of which being secured, the latter now attracted the public attention. On this occasion our wisest and most experienced politicians were convened ; who soon astonished the world with the production of that eternal monument of their wisdom, the *Federal Constitution*. In this is comprehended a form of government, as far removed on the one hand from the odious tyranny of monarchy, and the grievous oppression of aristocracy ; as distant on the other, from the discord and faction, anarchy and confusion of a perfect democracy ; embracing and securing the advantages of each, while it excludes the evils of the whole. A government possessing energy sufficient to enforce obedience to the laws, by which it is regulated ; dispensing justice to whomsoever it is due ; and affording security to every citizen, both of property and person, the former being no longer exposed to depredation, nor the latter to assassination. Under its wise administration, we have been happy as individuals, and have prospered as a nation ; and, while every member of the body politic has experienced its mild and beneficial influence, have been enabled to com-

mand respect abroad and enjoy peace and tranquility at home.

WE have been rapid in our improvements of all the arts that can embellish human nature. Literature, the legitimate offspring of a free government, has been patronized and diffused throughout all classes of society, each individual having an opportunity to participate of its pleasures. Agriculture, that inexhaustible source of national wealth, has flourished. Manufactures have increased; and where, but a few years since, nature clad in her rude attire, sat undisturbed on her craggy throne; and where “naught was to be seen but the curling smoke of an Indian fire, and naught to be heard” but the horrid din of savage yell, now splendid cities rise to our view.

UNDER the protection of our infant navy, which, though lately waving in the forest, has already, in part, supplied the place of disgraceful tribute, and its thunder caused the barbarians to tremble, our commerce extends her whitened wings, embracing the fruits of every clime.

BUT the history of almost every nation evinces, that to perpetuate the enjoyment of such privileges, and transmit to posterity such blessings unimpaired, some barrier must be erected to guard against the possibility of future dangers, from the encroachments of either foreign or domestic enemies. “This barrier must be formed, not so much by our strength, our opulence, or

our numbers, as by the minds of our citizens." Every nation receives the stamp of infamy or greatness, from the respective characters of the several individuals of which it is composed. It is not the number, so much as the character of a nation, that attracts the attention of him, who meditates an attack. How easy the conquest of a nation, though consisting of millions and tens of millions, if involved in ignorance, corrupted in morals, and divided in opinion; when compared with that of one, though but few in numbers, yet whose citizens are enlightened, their morals undepraved, and their union perfect.

In a republican government, where all officers, legislative, judicial, and executive, are chosen by and from the great body of the people; when these are destitute of political information, they are ever in danger of being deluded, by the intrigues of the ambitious and designing. Ignorant of the value of the privileges, which they possess, they are too regardless of their preservation; and unqualified to judge of the intentions, from a knowledge of the actions of their enemies, they remain insensible of their designs, until they realize them in the loss of their dearest rights and liberties. But when the minds of the people are well informed, and public opinion becomes enlightened, their liberties are watched with all the eyes of Argus, while no infringement of their rights passes unperceived, nor is made with impunity. None are intrusted with

authority, who have not previously given repeated evidence of the sincerity of their attachment to the public interest, and afforded undoubted proofs of abilities adequate to discharge the duties of the office, to which they are to be elected; and so soon as they dare to violate their trust, they find themselves reduced to a level with their fellow citizens, and like Lucifer, never to rise again.

BUT political information, unrestrained by virtuous and religious principles, will only facilitate the practice of iniquity, and afford ability for the commission of crimes, with the greater impunity. Solomon in his wisdom has declared, that virtue exalteth a nation; and our late venerable sage, in his valedictory address to the citizens of the United States, has asserted, that "of all dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who would labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens." Without a sense of religious obligation, mankind would have no restraint upon their passions. It is this, which whispers destruction to the unfeeling robber, when ready to deprive the indigent widow and helpless orphan of their mite. It is this which arrests the cruel hand of the assassin, and prevents the effusion of innocent blood. Destroy this, and not all the afflictions of a prison; not all the horrors of a dismal dungeon; no, not

even death itself, now divested of its terrors; will prevent mankind from perpetrating crimes the most atrocious. When a neglect of religion, and a contempt of virtue, become prevalent in a government of any form, they never fail to unnerve the arm of justice, and strengthen the hand of venality. Vice with her whole accursed train, is supported in all her wished for wantonness. All sense of duty is destroyed, in the minds of the people, who, no longer restrained by any laws, either human or divine, will break down every barrier which protects society, and riot on the commons of their own-created wretchedness.

But the source from which has originated the destruction of most governments, either ancient or modern, is the spirit of party. To verify this assertion, we need only turn to the pages of history; we shall there find many mournful proofs of its baneful effects. It ever has, and still does exist, in a greater or less degree, in all governments; since there are none exempt from those, who are always dissatisfied under the freest government, and discontented under the mildest laws. But its appearance is most to be dreaded, in those of a republican form, as possessing the least power to restrain and suppress its influence. Attended by its inseparable concomitants, discord and anarchy, "it distracts public councils and enfeebles public administration." By promoting riot and insurrection, it not only dis-

turbs domestic peace and tranquility ; but opens a direct avenue to the introduction of foreign influence. It irritates the minds of the people, who, no longer united in sentiment, but impelled by opposite interests, and enraged by mutual injuries, are hurried on to the commission of enormities, the mere recital of which would put humanity to the blush. Factions alternately prevail, until one more successful than the rest, finally predominates, and establishes its own private liberty, upon the ruins of that of the public. But union, by harmonizing public and private interest, excludes the possibility of such evils. It gives unanimity to constituted authorities, and thereby facilitates the administration of justice. It adds respectability to individual, and dignity to national, character ; while it gives strength and energy to government.

SUCH, Fellow-Citizens, is the contrast between the effects of ignorance, irreligion, and the spirit of party ; when compared with those of political information, virtue, and union. Let us, therefore, as we regard the preservation of our liberties, discountenance the former, while we encourage the latter—Let us be unwearied in our exertions, to diffuse useful information ; to support all virtuous and religious institutions ; and to promote a general spirit of concord and unanimity. Let us cling to these, as the pillars of our political salvation ; and con-

sider them, as the palladium of that fair inheritance, whose birth we this day celebrate ; and though, as individuals, or even as states, we may differ in political sentiments ; yet let us all ever be firm and united in that in which we are equally interested, the defence of our national Independence ; and when

“ Th’ Omniscient calls, attend the warning cry,
“ Ye live *united, or divided die.*”

TO THE CITIZENS UNDER ARMS, COMMANDED BY Brigadier General ISRAEL FEARING.

GENTLEMEN,

To hail the peaceful and happy return of another anniversary of our Independence, must afford peculiar pleasure to you, some of whom bore an active and honorable part in its acquisition.

WHEN we behold you, thus clad in armour, bearing the instruments of death ; it recalls, for a moment, a portion of that spirit, which animated our citizens, in that perilous hour, which tried the patriot’s soul. When he was called, by the voice of his country, to relinquish all, that was dear in domestic life ; and change the soft music of innocence for the hoarse sound of the clarion of war, and the horrid din of battle. May Heaven forbid, that our country should ever

be called to experience a repetition of such mournful scenes. But so long as we enjoy the blessings of Independence, we must always be prepared for its defence ; for the happy period has not yet arrived, when the sword shall be converted into the ploughshare, and the spear into the pruning-hook, and man learn war no more : Since by directing our attention to the ensanguined fields of Europe, we there still behold “ nation rising against nation, kingdom against kingdom,” and man delighting in the effusion of human blood. The eye is there still dazzled with the glittering of the instruments of destruction, and the ear deafened with the groans of the oppressed.

SOLDIERS of liberty, to you is committed the defence of our country, therefore, be vigilant, ever prepared, and determined to defend the liberties bequeathed by our fathers, or moisten their ashes with your blood. While you remember that you are independent, let your bosoms glow with the pure flame of patriotism—listen to the voice of your superiors, and though your beloved WASHINGTON is no more, yet while you supplicate peace to his ashes, and happiness to his soul, let there be none amongst you who would not lay their hands upon his silent tomb, and swear by its mouldering contents, that the fruits of his mighty labors shall not be destroyed—That the independence, won by his valor, and deposited in their hands, shall not be wrested

from them but with their existence—that led by him, to whom he shall have left his military mantle, and on whom shall rest his martial spirit, they will emulate the glories atchieved by our military fathers, who have, long since, fallen victims in freedom's cause.

BE YE sons of freedom, deign not to behold our country bow the neck to foreign domination—submit not to see her thus degraded—“rather rouse and be victorious ; invoke the guidance of those who fell on Bunker's awful mount,” and those whose blood crimsoned the snows of Quebec. Remember, that should you die thus gloriously in the support of the liberties of your country, your departed souls should wing their flight to the peaceful abodes of WARREN and MONTGOMERY ; while o'er your tombs should be raised the laurels of applause, and your memories embalmed in the grateful recollection of the future sons of Columbia.

END OF THE ORATION,

TOASTS,

Drank at the celebration of the Anniversary of American Independence, at Wareham, July 4, 1804.

1. *Union.*—May a spirit of general *amity* throw a mantle of oblivion over past political differences, and all, without distinction of sect, offer and receive cordial felicitation.

2. *George Washington*—“ Our late file leader, may we follow him in flow time to the permanent cantonment, and be all found near his headquarters at the final roll-call.”

3. *Benjamin Franklin*—Who wrested the sceptre from the tyrant, and the thunderbolt from Heaven.

4. *The Heroes who fell in our Revolution.*—May their posterity never be destitute of their valour, and their virtues.

5. *John Adams, late President of the U. States.*—While he forgets and forgives the ingratitude of the people ; may serene tranquility and happiness attend him the remnant of his days.

6. *Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States.*—May his actions verify his assertions, that we are all *republicans*, all *federalists*.

7. *Governor Strong.*—May his *strength* ever be superior to that of his enemies.

8. *The citizens of the United States.*—May the first moment of their *slavery* be the last of their *existence*.

9. *The State of Massachusetts*.—First in the cause of liberty, may she be the last to relinquish it.

10. *The American Eagle*.—May it never be frightened by the roaring of the British *Lion*, nor the cackling of the French *Cock*.

11. *Captain Decatur and Crew*.—May their daring exploit be long remembered by the United States, and by their enemies.

12. *The Clergy*.—May they ever deservedly be respected for the purity of their doctrine and manners.

13. *Literature*.—May knowledge, both human and divine, be soon diffused throughout the world.

14. *The American Fair*.—May they love their country as we love them.

15. *The Old Colony*.—May those noble principles, which induced our renowned Forefathers to land upon its then inhospitable shore, ever be displayed by their posterity, until the memorable *Rock* which first received their wearied limbs, shall melt with liquid fire, and mingle with the general conflagration.

16. *The Fourth of July, 1776*.—May that wisdom and patriotism, which led to that glorious event, which we this day celebrate, ever be conspicuous in the councils of the United States, and preserve them from anarchy and tyranny.

17. *The Federal Constitution*.—May that arm be

palsied, and that tongue be *withered*, which shall attempt its violation.

18. *Louisiana*.—May she enjoy all the blessings of free enlightened citizens ; but never tarnish her glory in the traffic of slaves and the souls of men.

