

AN

ORATION,

ADDRESSED TO

AN ASSEMBLY OF UNITED CITIZENS,

AT

WHITEHALL, N. Y.

JULY 4, 1817.

BY ROLLIN C. MALLARY, ESQ.

RUTLAND :

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WHITEHALL, (N. Y.) July 12, 1817.

SIR,

We, having been appointed a committee, beg leave to return you the thanks of the committee of arrangements, for your excellent address, delivered on the 4th inst. and would inform you, that the general pleasure and satisfaction of the audience on that day, have induced us, respectfully, to request a copy of your Oration for publication.

We are, respectfully sir,
Your obedient servants,

JOHN BLISS,
M. WHEELER, } Com'tee.
N. HALL,

R. C. MALLARY, Esq. Castleton.

CASTLETON, July 19, 1817.

GENTLEMEN,

That any exertions of mine should give "satisfaction and pleasure," to so numerous an audience, and so highly respectable for the individual character of which it was composed, as that, which assembled, at Whitehall, on the 4th, affords me the greatest compensation.

I commit a copy of the address to your disposal, and present you, gentlemen, with the sentiments of my respectful esteem.

R. C. MALLARY.

JOHN BLISS,
M. WHEELER, & } Committee,
N. HALL, Esq'rs. } Whitehall, (N. Y.)

ORATION.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

OUR Republick stands conspicuous in the congregation of nations. It is surrounded with the richest blessings of tranquility and happiness, and crowned with the choicest emeralds of glory.

On this day, Freedom invites us around the altar of national love, to renew the vows of devotion to our beloved country. It conjures us to banish from our bosoms the spirit of political warfare, and to hail, with generous emotions, the resurrection of universal friendship and harmony. It bids us withdraw from our private employments and mingle in the wide ocean of national felicity, which, to day, rolls through the American empire. Was one of you, fellow citizens, in chains before the despot of Persia, commanded to present him with the sublimest of objects, with your life for the forfeit, it *would* be, our countrymen, at this time, assembled throughout their measureless dominions, and the incense of their hearts ascending to heaven. It must make des-

potism shudder at the view of the speechless sufferings of the realm he rules.

But, while we loosen the reins of enjoyment, let us never commit them to the hands of misruling licentiousness. Devote this occasion to the improvement of private friendship ; to exalt the charms that bind us to our native soil ; to heighten the pleasures of allegiance to that government, under whose guardian protection we now assemble.

The whole family of man are our constant monitors. From their sufferings and virtues flow the deepest streams of instruction to the American people.

Repair to the banks of the Dwina and Don. There you may see the Russian peasant, bending beneath the load of unmeasured debasement. He is chained by the hand of power to the field he cultivates, transferred with the soil, like the hovel he inhabits, and is placed in the bill of valuation, with the ox and the plough. But, when the spot, which forms the eternal source of all his woes and sufferings, is approached by the foot of invasion, as by enchantment, ten thousand endearments awake in his soul, and he rushes to resistance. Though trampled in the dust by the giant foot of dominion, yet a spark, in his bosom, glows bright with the love of his native soil. Napoleon remembers the flame it kindled. He remembers the host of peasantry, rising round him like a whirlwind of the north, the tremendous companions of their "frightful climate."

Switzerland is a name, dear to the heart of sensibility and pity. Her Alps and freedom were her heritage from heaven. The splendid vices of surrounding nations afforded no allurements to the generous and happy moun-

mineer. His table was spread by the hand of simplicity and virtue, and the altar of domestick felicity blazed bright with the eye-beam of beauty and love.

But Switzerland is the sport of ambition. Borne down by invasion, depressed with misfortunes, the day rises, but to shine on the accumulation of misery. Yet, take the Swiss from his country, though bleeding at every pore, and the world beside is a wilderness. The strain, that once echoed through his vallies ; the rock and cascade of his paternal inheritance ; the mountain, that poised the impending avalanche in the clouds, have thrown around his heart the indissoluble chains of attraction.

Scotland appears, girt with inhospitable shores ; her bosom ridged with tumultuous mountains, and shrouded with inclement skies. Go, ask the plaided Caledonian to abandon his moor and glen for more genial climes ; tell him, no longer to devote the noon-day and evening of life, on a stubborn and thankless soil. With an eye of tenderness, in the language of rapture, he pledges his soul to Scotia for ever. Does he contend with penury and want, and is he roofless before the march of polar storms, the fame of Scotland mitigates his woes. The songs of ancient bards, and their legendary tales ; the achievements of chivalry and arms, and the splendid heroism of her Wallace and Bruce, rivet his affections, steadfast as the Grampian hills.

Look at England and France, with governments erected on the ruined rights of mankind. The multitude of their subjects, the unresisting instruments of remorseless ambition. Their lives and fortunes are suspended on the tongue of requisition, and the demon of self-styled legitimate authority forbids them to murmur. To

the fields of Russia or Spain, they must march, in obedience to the relentless mandates of policy or power. The dungeon unfolds her doors, at the whisper of suspicion, and the gibbet extends her arm to grasp the accused. The hero, around whose brows, but yesterday, seemed to play the beams of a glorious immortality, to day is the victim of some momentary tyrant.

Peace returned with no millenium to their troubles. The chronicle of misery is wafted across the Atlantic, by every breeze. Their populace in sedition and tumult ; their manufacturers in beggary ; their husbandmen retiring from their fields unemployed, while an army of Prussians and Germans and Cossacs completes the flowing measure of calamity.

But, amid these scenes, are found a few of the noblest virtues. They are the props of a sinking nation and preserve the spirits of its people from despair. When every thing around them is weeping through the melancholly visage of devastation and ruin, the remembrance of their former renown alleviates their sufferings. They apply to the canvass of the painter, the page of the historian, where they find pourtrayed, the glory of their countrymen, in the sunbeams of art or the thunder of arms. To the Englishman, Trafalgar and the Nile, to the Frenchman, Jena and Marengo are like the waters of life to the pangs of the soul.

If, then, mingled with the servitude and misery of Europe, we still find unextinguished, the most magnanimous sentiments, the strongest attachments to the land of nativity, how exalted must the devotion of Americans be to their country of freedom ! We have a government which, long, has exhausted the language of eulo-

gy. Under its influence, the character of man “walks abroad in its own native majesty.” We have soils and climates, as exhaustless in blessings as the invention of desire. We possess an extent of country, which future generations must measure, and a commerce bounded only by the limits of the globe.

While grateful for the universal diffusion of the common enjoyments of life, have we no objects dear to our hearts, which we contemplate, in the rapture of national sentiment? While other nations are gliding down the current of time, adorned with the majesty of virtue and the splendor of glorious achievement, is our country wafted along, unnoticed and unknown? Our hearts, fellow citizens, reply in the negative. If vanity prompts that decision, it, *once*, is allied to virtue.

Who is weary with the story of the revolution? In that dark and gloomy period, begins our march, as a nation. It was a time fertile in calamity and danger, and rich in the fruits of heroick greatness.

The generation of our fathers, whose van has invaded the empire of death—whose rear is advancing, in the silent solemnity of age, to the same destination—inherited the birthright of bondmen. They were taught, in the cradle, to bend the knee of homage to foreign masters. They were recognized, as the stipendiary vassals of a crown. But the chains of servitude became the badges of disgrace. The spirit of emancipation snatched the redeeming sword from its scabbard. Heaven smiled, and to day we are feasting on the rewards of their toils and sufferings.

They rose, unaided by all, but themselves and the righteousness of their cause. The legend on their hearts

was, Independence to their country, or a grave for its people. Success or defeat aroused them alike, to redoubled exertions. Whether crushed beneath the vengeance of a merciless foe, or receiving the salutations of triumph, they displayed the same serene magnanimity. Prison ships, dungeons, and poison could demolish the tabernacle of clay ; but the soul of the patriot smiled, with disdain, on their efforts.

Cast your view over the wide spread theatre of their actions. From the walls of Quebec to Florida, ten thousand objects start into sight, the commemorating monuments of their fame. The evidence of their toils and sufferings is recorded on the surface of every hill top and valley.

Bunker's hill, Saratoga, Monmouth, and Yorktown, will stand conspicuous in futurity. They require no obelisks nor pyramids, to direct the unborn traveller to their scenes of triumphant greatness. They will remain for ever illuminated, by the lustre of genius and the splendor of American arms. Who would exchange those immortal fields for an empire ? Who would exchange them for the hills of Potosi ? They are mines of our country's honour, and every freeman enjoys their revenue of glory.

Nor does the field alone present us with subjects of admiration. American biography is rich with the records of private virtue. Demand of Greece or Rome to produce a more exalted name than WASHINGTON. No demi-god of her pantheon, *more* firm in purpose. *as* pure in soul..... Let France and England unfold the volume of ages and present to the world the fame of their best and greatest hero, and we challenge a comparison. The catalogue

of statesmen is adorned with a JAY, a JEFFERSON, and ADAMS. RITTENHOUSE, FRANKLIN, and DWIGHT were the favourites of science ; and for a constellation of illustrious men, "immortality points to the Declaration of Independence."

Our country, emerged from the contest, began its career as a nation. A government arose on the will of the people, and is pillared on their virtue. The ravages of revolution were suddenly repaired by the hand of industry and peace, and rapid have been its strides to opulence and greatness.

In its course of prosperity, it was again overtaken by the storms of war. The causes have passed by ; the domestick troubles it created have expired, and again we indulge in the reciprocal enjoyments of citizens and friends.

"National honour is national strength." While it inspires a people with confidence in themselves, it commands the respect of the world. Every event that elevates the character of our government, must be priceless in value, to the friends of American greatness. It will give future ages inspiration, in the days of danger and calamity, to see the early reputation of their country shining splendid on the pages of the past. Should they see it the wretched companion of baseness, cowardice, and infamy, they may sink in despair.

The name, we gained in the war of independence, had faded in the blaze of more recent events. We were known but in the annals of mercantile speculation ; as skilled in the ledger of wealth and profit, derived from contending nations. They believed us nerveless in arms, and insensible to glory.

England, the veteran of centuries in the field, the undisputed ruler of the waves, became our enemy. The champion of Gath turned the eye of disdain on the strippling of Israel.

But, fellow citizens, when we review the period of the conflict, does the mind wander through a dreary wilderness, unrelieved by a single object of admiration? Must the torch of disgrace light us down to posterity?

Misfortune, for a season, spread her gloomy mantle round the nation. Soon we saw its dissipation, in the radiant honours of our countrymen. The laurels of an hundred victories, on the fields of Europe, were exchanged, by our enemy, for the cypress, on the shores of Niagara. The father of rivers rolls his tide by the monument of Jackson's glory. It stands on the field of disgrace to invasion.

We remember the emotions that thrilled through our bosoms, when the Guerrier and Java were lighted to the grave of the deep. It was the funeral of British omnipotence, and the obsequies were performed by the Genius of America. We remember, when the Macedonian was welcomed to our shores, the tribute of valour to its country;—when the western breeze ran post to the fame of PERRY.

Brief is the time, since danger collected its storm on our northern frontier. Fresh in the recollection is the agony we suffered, in awaiting the dreadful issue. Our expectations were elated or depressed with the varying tale. Industry left the anvil and plough, turned her ear to the gale, in the silence of solicitude.—Bravery was on its post.—A torrent of ardent yeomanry was rapidly rolling to its assistance.—The foe rushed fearless to com-

bat.—The day of God was the time.—The devotion was in thunder and flames, and the blessing, VICTORY.

Provost, with the fragments of his host, escaped on the wings of flight, while the red cross of the proud Confidence and her attending consorts, kissed the wave in submission to superiour fate. The dark mouthed artillery sent abroad, to our mountains and vallies, the viewless herald of triumph. Joy sprang to the soul and filled the air with its wildest acclamations. Every tongue gave the homage of the heart, to MACDONOUGH, MACOMB, and their gallant associates.

For ages the field and the wave will be sacred. The bosom of every freeman, as he approaches the spot, will swell with pride for his country. In the involuntary flow of his soul, he will exclaim, there was fought the battle of the ELEVENTH OF SEPTEMBER.

Fellow citizens, it is among the purest enjoyments of this festival, to behold the once menacing squadron of our recent enemy, the harmless tenants of your neighboring bay.

From the solitary shores of Africa, the gloomy musulman emerges, the last of our enemies. While in dreamless security, while rich in the enjoyment of anticipated plunder, DECATUR overtakes him. Sudden as a flash from the cloud, the crescent of Mahomet is consumed in the blaze of the star.

Nor, has our cabinet been destitute of a corresponding character. The page of diplomacy is rich in the stores of intelligence and wisdom. The exertions of our ambassadors, which presented peace to this country, exhibit the vigour of manhood, contending with the decrepitude of age.

Fellow citizens, in these descriptions, imagination lends no aid. Fancy throws away her pencil, at the sight of the sober delineations of truth.

The present is the consummation of all our hopes and wishes. Not one generation passed away, and yet how complete the fulfilment of prophecy! Whether we repair to the field or the wave, to the cabinet or walks of science, the prospects are proudly animating. The malignant predictions of distant nations against our government, are once more blasted, when they see our citizens, long arrayed in political battalia, now throwing away the arms of contention, and pledging forgetfulness to the wounds of domestick hostility. While the potentates of the old world, though decorated with the badges of royalty, rely on the mercenary bayonet for protection, from the rage of their exasperated subjects, the American chief magistrate, in the delegated dignity of his station, in the mild and unassuming decorum of republican simplicity and virtue, mingles with paternal freedom among his undivided people. He is dangerless, in the protection of the broad shield of their love and veneration.

Americans, such was the past—such is the present. On you and advancing posterity, depends the responsibility of preserving the republick.

The manual of political instruction should be found in the hands of infancy and age. Let the freeman well understand the boundaries of retained privilege and delegated power. The eye of discernment must be turned, with dimless vision, on the exercise of authority. The best of men are liable to error; the fairest semblance of patriotism, but the mantle of depravity.

But, while the conduct of rulers is regarded with scrutinizing jealousy, let it not be the jealousy of unreasonable prejudice. Their duty is arduous. They are surrounded with a myriad of embarrassments, incapable of transmission to our notice. The effects of important measures flow tedious to palpitating impatience. The grand machinery of government seldom moves with velocity. Extravagant expectation outruns its dilatory motions. We should reflect, that the ripples of the pool run in rapid undulations, while the mountain surges of the deep roll on their lingering way.

How often has the illustrious statesman been sacrificed to the eagerness of haste; how often driven from his country, a victim of the measures that saved it!

But, in the exercise of a rational patience, let magistrates never forget, that your penetrating look is fixed, fast, upon them. The fruits of reposed confidence will be demanded.

Governments were created for the general good. While they protect us in our property, lives, and liberty, their duty extends through a wider range. Their value will be displayed in a rigid and faithful economy of the publick resources. Not in that parsimonious narrowness which suffers millions to be squandered, while saving a penny, but in that just and liberal economy, which saves or expends, as the public good may require.

Among the means of national security, a navy stands conspicuous. For a time, in the recent conflict, it saved the perishing honour of the nation. It has been twice victorious. Once over our enemy, next over the prejudice of its country. It is the pride of America and will flourish.

An army, compatible with freedom and commensurate with its legitimate objects, must be preserved. It has gained the admiration of the people. While it continues to be distinguished by the discipline of the soldier, the scientific skill and manly deportment of the officer, a just devotion to its interests will be secure.

Navy yards, arsenals and fortifications, on our frontier and sea board, are among the earliest offspring of political wisdom. They avert the calamities of war or resist its efforts. Wretched must be the condition of a nation, when the distant rumour of hostility hurries, headlong, the terrified population from our maritime towns and cities; when the sound of invasion rolls back the tide of emigration, from a defenceless frontier.

While the government affords us individual and national protection, other objects of superlative importance demand its attention. America was projected by Providence on the scale of immensity. Its soils and climates, its rivers and inland seas are the result of capacious design. To second these grand calculations of nature, is the noblest employment of a liberal power. Roads and canals were the earliest inventions of enterprize and wealth. While they distribute the comforts of life and the advantages of commerce, they bind, in one solid mass, the great and ruling interests of a nation.

But, fellow citizens, although governments afford universal security and spread the bounties of wealth and affluence through their wide dominions, imperfect, still, would be their character, unadorned by the embellishments of science and art. Not by the splendid prodigality of

courts; not by erecting a Rhodian Colossus, nor imitating the senseless pyramids of Egypt; but by those noble institutions, which exalt the genius of a people; which subdue the stormy passions of the soul; which refine, while they invigorate the mind, and extend it to the widest bounds of intellectual capacity. To uncultivated talents, whether found in the abodes of poverty, or reclining on the cushion of opulence, unfold the gates of science. Intelligence is the guide, the companion of freedom. Divide them, and your boasted liberty will expire in the giant embrace of despotick barbarity.

While the American is surveying, with emotions of pride, the illustrious course of his country, painful must be the reflection, that its glories will be consigned to the grave of a century. Are Greece and Rome to be remembered, while America is forgotten? Is no vestige of her greatness to stand centinel on her ruins? Is this republick to be plunged in oblivion's dark wave, and not a fragment to float on its surface? The genius of its people has the power to forbid it.

Then let our governments, let riches and influence give encouragement to the means of preservation. They are, not only the productions of science, but the liberal and elegant arts, the polished attendants of freedom, refinement, and taste. The pencil, the graver, and chisel afford inspiration to the noblest exertions, by spreading their fame through the world. They disarm death of its terrors, and triumph over perishing nature. They lend the wings, on which the offerings of time are presented to eternity.

Then, fellow citizens, when the republick shall have terminated its magnificent journey, may its memory be preserved. May nations, as they emerge from the womb of futurity, be informed by the splendid monuments of science and art left behind,

“How sublime was the tide, which had swept us away.”