

NATIONAL DELIVERANCE.

An Oration,

DELIVERED

IN THE NEW DUTCH CHURCH,

IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK,

ON

The Fourth of July, 1806,

BEING THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

BEFORE

The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, Tammany Society, or Columbian Order, New-York Cooper's, Taylor's, Hatter's, Mason's, Ship-Wright's, and Hibernian Provident Societies,

AND A NUMEROUS CONCOURSE OF OTHER CITIZENS

BY P. H. WENDOVER,

OF THE MECHANIC SOCIETY.

NEW-YORK.....1806.

SIR,

THE General Committee of Arrangements for Celebrating the Thirtieth Anniversary of our Independence, have directed us, in their behalf, to return you thanks for your ORATION delivered on that occasion, and request of you the favour of a copy for publication.

We are, Sir,

With sentiments of respect,

Yours,

A. LABAGH.

SAML. L. PAGE, Jun.

DAVID BRYSON.

PETER H. WENDOVER, Esq.

New York, }
July 12, 1806 }

ADVERTISEMENT.

Those who are acquainted with the opportunities of the Author, will readily perceive, that a request to prepare an Address on so important a subject as that of the following, with a view to a delivery in the face of the Public, must necessarily be attended with a variety of difficulties, not easily surmounted—especially when it is stated that he had never before written a paragraph for a similar purpose.

The extreme shortness of the time allowed for the composition, amidst the arduous and indispensable engagements of a public institution, was an additional circumstance calculated to forbid an acceptance of the appointment.

He is sensible that the eye of the critic will meet with several expressions which a regular education cannot approve. Of these he might have taken the liberty to alter at least a few before the work was made public; but, relying on the candor of his fellow citizens, he has chosen to let it go to the press literally as it was delivered, notwithstanding all its imperfections.

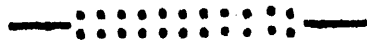
NEW-YORK, JULY 14, 1806.

ERRATA.

Advertisement—first line, for *unacquainted*—read, *acquainted*.

- | | |
|--------|-----------------------------------|
| Page 6 | line 7—groaning—read, groaning. |
| 6 | 24—revive—read, review. |
| 7 | 6—the—read, this. |
| 7 | 21—insationable—read, insatiable. |
| 8 | 3—For—read, To. |
| 8 | 5—Britain—read, Britons. |
| 8 | 23—threatened—read, treated. |
| 9 | 3—untought—read, untaught. |
| 10 | 15—the—read, their. |
| 10 | 25—be—read, continue. |

AN ORATION.



BRETHREN, FRIENDS, FELLOW CITIZENS!

WHEN you reflect on the occasion for which we are assembled, and consider for a moment why we have set apart this great anniversary; when you take a view of the scenes that are past, and retrospect to the circumstances which gave rise to our joys; while your hearts beat high with exultation, with me you will exclaim, the subject is highly momentous; the task too important for the Speaker of the Day.

Were I so vain as to flatter you that your hopes would be realized in hearing something to the purpose, or should I pretend to the exercise of talents equal to the duty assigned me, you would *smile* at my *folly*, and *pity* my *weakness*. Untaught in the rudiments of language; not versed in the embellishments of diction, or strains of eloquence, I claim your indulgence for a short season, while I presume to remind you that the purpose for which we are collected, is not to *criticise* on the abilities of the *Ora-*
tor, but for mutual congratulations that **COLUMBIA IS**
FREE!

The custom of celebrating important events, and holding national festivals, is so ancient, and become so common, that some have adopted it on the slightest occasions. The defeat of an army, the deposing of an usurper, and the coronation of a monarch, have all been made use of to encourage the practice; even when the people that pursued it were groaning under the *vilest oppression*.

Among the various occurrences in which civil society can feel an interest, the **EMANCIPATION** of a Nation appears to be the greatest; and the annual celebration of such an event is doubtless a duty of public importance. This duty is not only founded on rational principles, but is sanctioned by the oracles of truth.

If we compare our former situation and happy deliverance with that of the Israelites of old, who were commanded not only to keep a day as a memorial, but to inculcate on their children the propriety of the injunction; we shall readily discover, that while we prize our enjoyments, we are bound to *improve* them.

With these ends in view, looking to the historian to record, with scrupulous exactness, the rise and progress of the revolution, and the improvements of our country, we shall, in a cursory manner, attempt to revive them in the following respects.

First; the wonderful deliverances wrought in our favour, and the invaluable privileges we have attained.

Secondly ; the obligations we are under to hand them down to *posterity unimpaired*.

It would not comport with our present engagements to enter into a detail of the situation of our progenitors who fled from the tyranny of Britain to seek an asylum in the *Western World* ; let it be remembered that their love of liberty was rational, and founded on the boasted professions of a nation where it did *not exist*.

Uncontaminated with the vices of the old world, and separated from the scene of pageantry and adulation by the waters of the Atlantic, they fondly imagined that *they and their children* would be permitted to cultivate the arts of peace, uninterrupted by the broils of Europe, and undisturbed by the *satellites of power*. Not over solicitous for the exercise of external self-government, and firmly attached to the country from which they had emanated, they were obedient to its sovereign, and respected its laws. Justly appreciating the blessings conferred on them by a bountiful Providence, their hearts glowed in high expectation of *future prosperity and long repose*. But, alas ! tyranny, ever insatiable, unhallowed ambition, for ever on the rack, not content to wave the sceptre in peaceful sway, the court of Britain seemed to suspect that the benignity of Heaven would lavish its bounties on these favored climes. Well aware that the happiness of the subject would not comport with the views of the monarch, a

pretext was sought to curtail our native privileges, and make us submit to terms of the *greatest degradation*.

For you, O America! is directed the threatened vengeance, and Britain resounds with the clarions of war. Unhappy Britain! Not called to repel from your Island a *proud invader*; not arrayed in defence of your country, and the rights of conscience; but tyranny is alarmed, and you are commissioned to enforce the dreadful mandates of the *Hydra of Despotism*. Behold

*The monster raves, determined to prevail,
And in oppression, takes a sweet regale:
Envy enrag'd, like dread Vesuvius burns,
The nations wonder, lo! Columbia mourns!*

Beholding in anguish a formidable armament preparing for the ^{de}struction, Americans pondered. Unwilling to enter on the impious work of slaughter, not disposed to imbrue their hands in a brother's blood, or to fall by the hands of their British brethren, they renewed their supplications, and again presented their entreaties to a cruel Sovereign, but presented them in vain! It suited not the designs of an unprincipled ministry to spare the lives of the subjects, who dared to believe that a *Monarch could do wrong*. The dictates of reason were threatened with derision. The voice of philanthropy was hushed to silence.

The Fleets and Armies of England, composed of the slaves of tyrants from home, and purchased vassals from

abroad, arrived in splendor, and debarked on our shores, with the instruments of death. Not inured to the tactics of war, un^ataught in the practice of barbarity, not accustomed to the clang of arms, America trembles; all awake to foreboding fears. All alarmed at the clouds that thicken, *Americans collect.* The crisis is truly distressing.—*Death is a terror, but slavery is death.*

Driven by dire necessity to act on the defensive, and conscious of the justice of their cause, the persecuted citizens of Columbia, appealing for protection to the SOVERIGN of the UNIVERSE, they prepared for the conflict, and met the merciless foe, already entered on the work of cruel devastation, attended with circumstances of unparalleled horror.

Flushed with a few successful attacks on an unarmed yeomanry, and elated with the pride of military prowess; with their hearts steeled to the voice of humanity, Britons exult in the hope of conquest. But, trembling Americans, mark the event! Those well disciplined armies, destined by Britain to subjugate your country, are stopped in their march—The valour of Englishmen is put to the test—Infatuated Britain must humble. Her armies must yield.—For WASHINGTON COMMANDS!

Frustrated in their hopes of conquest by open warfare—Failing in their application of the coffers of corruption; and finding the soil of America fertile to liberty,

the *minions* of *royalty*, in remorse and confusion, *departed* our shores, and *peace* and *independence* crowned our struggles.

Here we might point to the *instruments* of our deliverance, and with mingled emotions of gratitude and pain, remember their woes. Here we might rehearse the deeds of dauntless heroes, early fired in their country's cause : Who nobly ventured, and so nobly fell ! The faithful *historian* shall record their valour, while Americans inherit the price of their blood. Here we might descant on the services of our worthy sires, who for us contended, and for us prevailed. Spared for a season to reap the fruit of their labours, at the end of *thirty revolving years* we behold them mostly numbered with the ⁱⁿ kindred dead. How dear their *memory* ! How deserving our praise ! Ye venerable sages, who yet survive the ravages of time—called *this day* to celebrate the achievements of your veteran compatriots, you shall share our *highest plaudits* ! Your wasting frames and hoary locks indicate your short continuance, and speak to us a solemn lesson ! Long fatigued in the arduous warfare, and often burthened with the cares of your country—now looking forward to the hour of dissolution, you seem to say, “ *Beloved countrymen, continue virtuous—*
You'll long ^{continue} free ! ”—Ye soldiers of liberty, who braved the dangers of the raging battle, on this day of happy triumph we remember your sufferings, we feel for your

wrongs! Your *seven years* toil and valiant feats were known to your country—she sought to requite you, but, betrayed by the avarice of man, she became *ungrateful*!

Having struggled through a long and arduous contest, and obtained a rank among the nations of the earth; it was left for Americans to convince the potentates of Europe, that the end of all *just governments*, was the *happiness* of the *governed*. And finding by experience that a temporary compact could not be productive of permanent advantages, the Genius of America, ever watchful for the interests of posterity, suggested an improvement, exhibiting competent energy, combined with **FREE REPRESENTATION** and **EQUAL RIGHTS**.

Too long made the sport of ambition to invite the artifices of political adventurers; and having too long waded the fields of blood to risk the evils of anarchy; the sages of our country approached, with cautious steps, to the convocation of *statesmen*—while the hardy sons of liberty denounced *extermination* and *death* to the *daring* mortal who, with polluted hands, should touch the *repository* of their *rights*.

Thus enveloped in the shades of political twilight, and fearful the gathering clouds would burst in convulsions, the war-worn patriot wept for his country; while the enemies of man, filled with envy, counted on a triumph. But the event is known—The *assembled wisdom* of *Freemen*, and the *combined virtue* of *Americans*, over-

ruled by the goodness of PROVIDENCE, warded off impending evils ; and the invaluable rights of the Citizen were placed on a solid basis.

Advancing on in pursuit of peace and national felicity, we were again arrested with sursounding dangers.— The same year in which the government of the Union became consolidated, we beheld the commencement of a revolution, *sublime* in its *origin*, but dreadful in its *effects*. The subjects of the French King, having long groaned under the burden of oppression, taking example from the *courage* and *magnanimity* of Americans, burst their chains and nobly contended for the RIGHTS OF MAN.

Alarmed at the enthusiasm of a powerful people, the monarchs of Europe trembled for the consequences ; and the peaceful citizens of Columbia, sympathising with the advocates for freedom, feared an entanglement in the general *commotion*. But here we were again permitted to see a happy deliverance—*Peace* was preserved to our favored country, while, with indiscribable profusion, *all Europe* was drenched in human gore. Shall we digress for a moment to lament the *fury* of the nations, and the *wretchedness* of man? Shall we grieve for the departed glory of Frenchmen, once struggling to be free? O France, thy efforts for liberty were truly astonishing—but learn, that LIBERTY and VIRTUE are forever inseparable!

But, my countrymen, assembled to celebrate the *heroism* of our citizens, and to recount the blessings of our

Inheritance, let us remember the high obligations we are under to acknowledge that **GOD**, who interposed for our country, relieved us from *thraldom*, and saved us with an omnipotent arm. On every return of this happy day we are bound to recollect his **MERCIES**, and teach the rising youth to proclaim his *praise*.

Under his propitious care we have been permitted to raise up the fair fabric of **EQUAL LAWS**, and to cement our dear-bought rights under a **CONSTITUTION**, founded on the broad basis of *rational liberty*; unalloyed by hereditary absurdity, or regal power; and well calculated to promote the *happiness* of the nation, when *sceptres* and *despots* shall lose all their charms!

Let us congratulate our country that, at *this* day, when the nations of Europe are *deluged* with *war*, and held in *bondage*, we enjoy *peace*. Governed by laws emanating from the people, and faithfully administered by the wisdom of a **JEFFERSON**—Excellent citizen—enlightened statesman! In vain shall cruel slander attach the epithet *Infidel*! Thy **FAME** shall live in the breasts of *Freemen*—Thy **VIRTUES** and **REPUBLICANISM**, shall be celebrated by the *world*, and, with the glories of **WASHINGTON**, descend to unborn millions; and the tongue of calumny shall confess, that *infidelity* in thee, consists solely in opposing the doctrine, that “*A government by Nobles is the most stupendous fabric of human invention!*”

Let us rejoice that, amidst the profuse blessings of an extensive and fertile country, we enjoy, unawed by tyrants, the sacred right of *elective franchise*. Let us ever recollect, that the *preservation* of our liberties depend, under *Providence*, on the *purity* of *legislation*, and the *morality* of the *people*. Can it ever be contended that *corrupt* measures will produce *pure* effects? Or that men, morally dishonest, may *safely* be trusted with our invaluable rights? Or will even absurdity insist, that citizens, vicious in their practices, are calculated to promote principles of *morality*, so very essential to public happiness? Let it be indelibly written in our political creed, that **PUBLIC LIBERTY** and **PUBLIC VIRTUE** are indissolubly connected—and that where the latter is extinct, the former must expire. Let our children be early and faithfully taught, that acts to be *rightful*, must ever be *just*. That republican principles and true patriotism, can only be promoted by the practice of the *moral virtues* and *conscious integrity*. Let Americans remember, with the Grecians of old,

That “ Wanting **VIRTUE**, life is pain and woe,
 That “ Wanting **LIBERTY**, even virtue mourns,
 “ And looks around for happiness in vain !”

But, fellow-citizens, shall we for a moment allay the ardor of our ecstatic joys, and on *this* day of national festivity, chide our countrymen for the encouragement

of a growing evil,* *impious* in its nature and dreadful in its consequences? Shall we weep over our beloved country to behold a people, who when oppressed by an open enemy gloried in sparing the lives of their *vanquished* foes—becoming signalized in barbarity, and in single combat, spill a brother's blood? Shall an American, contending for the right of government by the *voice of the people*, assume the prerogative to slay a fellow man? Shall our citizens be permitted with impunity to stain the heroism of Columbia, with the name of murder? Forbid it patriotism! Forbid it morality! No more let savage gratification, and pretended honor, be suffered to sacrifice the principles of *humanity*, and a sense of *moral obligation* at the shrine of *revenge*!

Let us ever recollect, that we are accountable for the improvement of our privileges to that GOD who governs the nations, and awards the destinies of men. And remember, that for our advantage he affords us the inestimable blessings of the GOSPEL OF PEACE—the precepts of which, above all others, are eminently calculated to inculcate that excellent maxim, of “doing to others as we wish them to do unto us.” These will not fail to promote the best *interests* of our COUNTRY and

* The Author intended, under a suitable head, to have mentioned some other vices of our day, which he has ever considered the bane of Republican principles—but having exceeded the limits originally contemplated, he ventured to make this digression to expose the practice alluded to as one of the most inconsistent.

the *happiness* of MAN, “How admirable,” (says an excellent author) “is that religion, which, while it seems only to have in view the felicity of the *other* World, constitutes the happiness of *this* !”

Friends and Fellow-Citizens !

Called to review the happiness of our lot ; and des-
 crying the nations from afar in shackles of bondage—let
 us sympathize with their sorrows; and solemnly reflect
 on the *astonishing contrast*. Saved from the chains of *in-*
furiated Monarchs, we *this* day hail our country **THE**
LAND OF THE FREE!

Constrained, by every endearing motive, to protect
 the sacred deposit of *civil and religious* liberty, may we
 and our children be a potent example of *virtue and mag-*
nanimity. May we soon realize the glorious era, in which
 the *banners of freedom*, unfurled in the *West*, shall tra-
 vel onward and encircle the globe. And may succeed-
 ing ages enhance the *intrinsic excellence* of the *Heavenly*
boon, **TILL THE LATEST POSTERITY INHA-**
BIT THE EARTH.

F I N I S.