

Class of 1803
B. Whitman
AN
O · R · A · T · I · O · N,

PRONOUNCED AT

HANOVER, MASSACHUSETTS,

ON THE

ANNIVERSARY

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

JULY 4, 1803,

AT THE REQUEST OF THE OFFICERS OF THE SECOND REGIMENT, FIRST
BRIGADE, FIFTH DIVISION OF THE MILITIA OF MASSACHUSETTS.

BY BENJAMIN WHITMAN, ESQ.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY DAVID CARLISLE.

1803.

July 4th, 1803.

BENJAMIN WHITMAN, ESQ.

SIR,

THE Committee appointed by the Officers of the second Regiment in the first Brigade and fifth Division of Militia, and the Gentlemen collected at Hanover to celebrate the birth day of our nation, have chosen me to present you their thanks, for the Oration this day delivered before them, and to request a copy thereof for the press.

CHARLES TURNER, jun. Lt. Col. Comdt. 2d Regt.

Hanover, July 5th, 1803.

SIR,

YOUR note of yesterday I have received. The request of the respectable Gentlemen therein communicated I will answer, by resigning to public criticism those sentiments, which, however expressed, were well intentioned, and with great respect, am their and your obedient servant,

BENJAMIN WHITMAN.

CHARLES TURNER, jun. Esq. Lt. Col. Comdt.

AN

O R A T I O N. -

TO hold in grateful remembrance distinguished national blessings, and for a people to commemorate, in a decent, suitable manner, those great events in their history, which give existence to their body politic, is at all times their duty, and their best interest. We are therefore convened on this day, my fellow citizens, to retrace, in idea, the causes that led to our independence as a nation ; to enjoy the pleasures, which a reflection on that great event excites in the mind ; to contemplate its consequences to us as a people ; and to resolve on that future conduct, as citizens and as soldiers, which shall transmit its blessings to our posterity ; making that day always recollected with pleasure, in which it was declared, THAT THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ARE FREE AND INDEPENDENT.

The religious bigotry of the sixteenth century, which drove from Europe our virtuous and pious ancestors, furnished them with motives, while it gave them an opportunity, of forming their civil government by their wishes, directed only by their

wants. The distresses of those venerable heroes, who crossed the unmeasured Atlantic ; the common want and common danger, which sighed in every gale, and encircled their defenceless village, planted in the wilds of America, excited the greatest energy of their minds, while it prompted a harmony of sentiment, enabling them to adopt that system of civil jurisprudence, which, while it avoided the errors of the old world, might protect them against the evils of the new. Unshackled by any political creed, forced on them by the imposing hand of power, they were permitted to form a government, best adapted to their situation, and which was alone dictated by the weakness, imperfections, and necessities of man.

Our ancestors, taught in the improving school of adversity, civilized, and practically acquainted with social intercourse, combining the wisdom of the old world, with the unrestrained liberty of the new, possessing a purity of morals untarnished, and a piety unblemished, have been enabled to furnish the fairest experiment of a free government, of any people on earth ; and, in the fruits of their labour, we behold a wilderness blossoming like a rose, and the temple of freedom defended by an enlightened people, not corrupted by the residence of a privileged despot, nor polluted by the footsteps of the savage.

The government of this country, adopted by our fathers, and which they have bequeathed to us as our richest inheritance, was republican. It ought to be our care so to use it, as to transmit it uncorrupted to our children. A republican is the only legitimate government that can be adopted by man ; all others

arise from imposition. Man by nature is accountable to no one but his Maker. Whenever he associates with his fellows, he has then the right to stipulate, on what conditions his social intercourse shall continue. In this sense, *we are all born free and equal* ; but having become members of a body politic, and during our connection with any government, to attempt its destruction, or the subversion of its laws, is ingratitude, is treason. With a government, so correct in its principles, so legitimate in its nature, and so well adapted to the state and condition of man, our country increased almost beyond calculation. The astonished world beheld the American people outnumbering the trees of their forests, and possessing energies and resources much beyond their age. This excited in our parent country a jealousy of our rising greatness. Our increased manhood promised strength too great for the management of our brethren across the Atlantic, unless speedily checked. The desire also of independence, which began to manifest itself among our people, furnished motives to the British government to load us with impositions, unauthorized by civil compact or abstract right.

• The history of our world does not furnish an instance, where a colony, planted by the fostering care of its mother country, or raised up by the energies of its adventurers, has long submitted to that species of dependence on its parent state, which in its infancy was necessary for its increasing prosperity. *It is in the nature of man to revolt against all restraint*, and the lullaby of the cradle loses its charms in manhood. Whenever the moment arrives that any colony finds its strength and resources sufficient to protect itself,

it disdains submission ; and, like the individual arrived at full age, seeks to command rather than obey. It is also in the history of all governments, founded on the immutable nature of man, to increase its exactions with the ability to perform them. This state of things existed, when these American states assumed to be independent. The misunderstandings, jealousies, and suspicions between the old and new world, cankered the minds of both. The cup of attempted reconciliation had been drank to its dregs without effect, and the bold appeal to arms was made.

The ever memorable declaration of independence, proclaimed to the astonished world, that the Americans felt their strength and resources sufficient to give them a rank among the independent nations of the earth, and wave their standard of liberty in defiance of the British lion. Resistance then to Great Britain became a duty, and thousands of our citizens gathered round the standard sacred to liberty, and devoted themselves to the service of their country.

“ When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another ;” or when a government is to be dissolved, and a revolution effected, it becomes necessary that the leaders in such revolutions, should make their first appeal to the passions of the people. Sober reason, and even the prudence of mankind, must be smothered for a time, by the popular whirlwind excited by revolutionary characters. *The end will sanctify the means*, becomes the maxim of the day ; and all timid, cautious, or even *prudent* conduct is construed into treason, by the fu-

rious zeal of the populace. In our memorable revolution, we had to exhibit this scene in the drama of the human passions. Every art was resorted to that would inflame the minds of our people against their former brethren ; and no tale of distress or misery was left untold, that would serve to call forth against the common enemy, the most *relentless* passions of the human heart. To effect a separation from Great Britain, required the united exertion of a brave and magnanimous people. No temporising, timid, or even cautious conduct was to be tolerated. If any of our sober, steady, cautious, or fearful citizens, even paused at the hazardous and important enterprize, their fears were construed into opposition, and their caution into treason. Many men of the best intentions, and most perfect rectitude of character, with a sincere love for their country, but whose passions had not been heated in the furnace of the times, equal with the common standard, were proscribed, and denounced as *tories* and enemies of their country ; visited by the hand of persecution, they became expatriated, and the loss of every thing valuable to them in life, taught them, there is no middle path in revolutions, and that innocence of intention is no protection against the passions of men. If a man, in our day of revolution, shrunk appalled from the approaching danger ; if the black storm of civil commotion, that howled destruction in his ear, caused him to exhibit even timid conduct ; if a love for his country's peace prompted him to advocate pacific measures ; if a conviction of our inability to contend in arms, with so potent a foe as Great Britain ; if the horrors of sacked towns, the violation of female chastity, and the cries of murdered wives and children, were suffered to haunt his imagination,

or palsy his exertions ; if those scenes of misery and distress that usually attend civil war, and which oftentimes cause the stoutest heart to faint, and make the proudest spirit humble ; if any of these causes were suffered to unnerve the arm of a single American, such was the unhappy fermentation of the day, that the unfortunate subject of such caution or fear, became convict in the public opinion, and was at once marked as the victim of popular fury.

It is the unfortunate lot of man, that his passions, when excited, tend to excess, and often produce injuries to others, and in the end mischief to himself ; yet the exercise of our passions is at times necessary, as no great and hazardous enterprize can be effected without them. When a man is called to butcher and destroy his fellow being, he must, like the wild beast, follow *passion* rather than *reason*.

But thanks be to heaven, our revolutionary storm has past, and the glorious sun of peace, independence and national freedom, shines in full splendor on our happy land. With the return of peace ought also to be a return of our reason and correct feelings. We ought now, “ if angry, sin not, let the sun not go down on our wrath, or give place to the devil.” We ought now to remember the agitations of those “ days of unpleasant times,” only to correct our errors. We ought now to make those allowances, for the fears and mistakes of others, which candor and good sense demand. We ought, with fervent gratitude to heaven, acknowledge, that, though in our contest for independence, we had many timid and luke warm revolutionists, yet we had but few Arnolds. The sober and

correct thinking part of the community can now see, that many of our fellow citizens, who, in times of revolutionary trouble, we denominated *tories* and enemies to their country, had virtues blended with their defects ; and have demonstrated by their conduct since our revolution, that they prize liberty as highly, regard the rights of men as sacredly, conduct as citizens as peacefully, love their country as fervently, and support our government as willingly, as any of us, whose zeal in times of our country's danger, placed us in more active or conspicuous stations. We are now all members of the same community, our interest in the support and preservation of our government is now alike. We have alike characters to support, property to defend, and families to provide for and protect. The administration of our government applies equally to us all. Let us then banish the disgraceful, unmeaning epithet of *old tory* from the catalogue of our expressions ; let us think more like christians, and reason more like men ; let us recollect we are now supporting a government of our own, not destroying the impositions of a foreign one ; let us remember that the exercise of those passions and prejudices necessary to effect a revolution, are never to be used in the building up or support of any government ; let us consider that those men who make the best instruments to destroy power, are often the worst characters to support peace and order in society ; let us not forget that the sword is the implement of war, but the pruning hook that of peace. We are not to regard what men were once, but what they are now ; not what is past, but what is present and to come.

When we turn our attention to the consequences of our glorious revolution, the mind almost loses itself in raptures. We have thereby been enabled to sit under our own vine and figtree, having none to molest or make us afraid. Our country has arisen to that eminence and splendour, that strength and abundance of resource, as almost to defy all injury, except the chastisements of an offended Deity. Already have we multiplied like the sands on our seashore. The well cultivated garden now ravishes our senses, where not long since the wild beasts of the forest sat watching for their prey. Poverty and want have fled to their only proper residence, that of the idle and vicious. Our young men are nobles, our old men are kings. Our country is a paradise, and our blessings are those of the highly favoured of heaven. We have no foreign prince to dictate our laws, nor alien hirelings to eat our substance. The trifle we give to support our government, is enjoyed by our own sons; and the peace, security, and happiness we receive from it, is more than compound interest on the capital advanced.

If we consider the present prosperous and happy situation of our country, either by contrasting it with the infancy of its settlement, its slow and gradual rise under the impositions of Great Britain, the distressing period of its late glorious and successful effort for deliverance, by comparing it with the condition of any other nation on earth, or by contemplating the sublime, free and rational enjoyment, which, as individuals, we daily and hourly experience, the idea of our happy and flourishing condition as a people, swells with the thought, and brightens as it swells.

Here let us pause. "From whence do all these blessings flow?" And first our eyes will be directed to that Divine Source of all good, whose bounteous providence and almighty power directs in the affairs of men; next shall we pay homage to the sober, enlightened, industrious and moral habits of our venerable and pious ancestors, who left us, as our richest inheritance, their bright example; and lastly, shall we respect that glorious event we this day celebrate. If then we have a goodly heritage, if our lot has really fallen to us in pleasant places, let us next consider how we may deserve the continuation of the blessings we now enjoy, and transmit to our descendants the rich inheritance we have received from our fathers.

It is a part of the weakness and imperfection of our natures, to grow uneasy and restless in prosperity. Common want and common danger will unite a people, but prosperity divides them. In adversity we are brothers, in prosperity aliens. It is an old and a true proverb, that man was made for adversity. He is a philosopher in trouble, a fool in prosperity. The individual who banquets on the luxuries of ease and affluence, has his mind racked with uneasy cares, and his pillow is a bed of thorns; so also with nations, when they possess all that is valuable in life, when their situation is as eligible as the lot of humanity will admit, they become ungrateful for past favour, and continually sigh after some imaginary good. In the language of the wise man, "*they grew rich and wax wanton.*" They sport with their greatest privileges, as the child does with his rattle, until they lose them; and history will not furnish a single exception, where a nation or people, possessing all the liberty, affluence

and independence that would make them great and happy, have not finally grown uneasy and discontented under the enjoyment of such blessings, bartered away their rights and privileges for visionary good, and forfeited their liberty and independence, by prostituting those precious gifts of heaven to vicious purposes.

Imaginary evils will assail a people, where no real ones exist. They will foolishly introduce disunion, and seek for difficulties, where there is no cause of uneasiness. Idle hopes and fears, like the visions of a disturbed imagination, will haunt their peace. They will be induced to innovate on their government, until it becomes unstable, and frequently shift their administrations, until they weaken and render contemptible the strong arm of their union. Where are the ancient republics of Greece and Rome? What portion of the globe can we point to and say, There flourishes a republican government? Have Frenchmen in modern times proved an exception to this decree of fate? Let the inquirer read the answer from the page of history written by the sword of a Bonaparte.

And is this thy lot, O humanity! Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? Must America, like all other nations who have preceded her, be swept from her highly favoured station, and be buried in her own disgrace? Must the finger of after time point to the desolated spot, where once stood our fair temple of liberty and freedom, and notice only the ruins of our decayed honor and independence? Sad reflection! Can we not avoid some of those evils that tend to hasten on the decline of nations and of empires? Can we learn nothing from the destruction of other nations,

that will teach us to avoid their fate? Let us at least make the attempt.- Let us in prosperity adopt the maxims of adversity, and try the experiment, though a hard one, to oppose our own follies, throw aside our most favoured prejudices, and conquer our strongest passions. Let us well consider the causes of decline in all free governments, and avoid the errors which produce it.

Upon examination we find, that the natural and unavoidable evils of life are few, compared with those that arise from our imaginations, and have their origin in the abuse of our passions. No observation ever made is more just, than “that we are our own worst enemies;” and our most fervent prayer to heaven ought constantly to be, that we may be saved from ourselves. The wise man said truly, when he observed, “that he who conquers his passions is greater than he who takes a city.” It is easy for us to be persuaded of what our passions wish should be true; but extremely hard to convince a man against his prejudices. An orator, who addresses the passions or prejudices of his hearers, is sure of applause, but the man, who reasons against their follies or vices, will meet their displeasure; yet the honest politician will not cease to warn his countrymen of their danger, though by it he become unpopular; or cease to speak truth, though by it, he offend: for he is my best friend, who tells me of my faults, and he my safest director, who addresses himself to my understanding, rather than to my passions. We ought to begin our inquiry into the causes of the decline of free governments, by noticing some of the errors we are subject to entertain of the nature of civil government.

There is perhaps no words in our language more frequently repeated and less understood, than those of "liberty and the rights of man." Many persons suppose they never can enjoy true liberty, until they possess the power to gratify all their passions. Others will talk loudly of gag laws, and of the freedom of speech being invaded, if they are deprived of the liberty of lying or maliciously slandering their neighbour. Others suppose the dear rights of man are not enjoyed, unless they can monopolize to themselves all the favours of society and the blessings of heaven, while they regard not the superior merit, or the happiness of their neighbours. They make patriotism to consist in levelling all distinctions among men, and make the wealthy and the wise to walk on foot, while they place the fool and the beggar on horseback. Their envious, levelling passions are constantly at war with that natural aristocracy among men, which the God of nature himself has established ; and, like the tyrant of Syracuse, would make all men equal, by distorting nature ; not regarding the-almighty fiat, that gives to one man five talents, to another two, and to another one.

Some suppose that all government is a nuisance, and every species of restraint an infringement of the rights of man. Others run wild with the idea that whatever the sovereign people do must always be right, let them act as bad as they will, and think it no fault to "*follow a multitude to do evil,*" so they have but the advantage of numbers on their side. Others will tell you, that whatever is the opinion of a majority of the people under any circumstances, must always be just ; as though the maxims of right and wrong were to be

tested by the same rules, as we ascertain the number of our sheep, by counting them. Let such politicians remember, that until they make all men equal in understanding and integrity, and furnish them with equal opportunities for information, that what is right or wrong in government can never be determined *pr. capite* ; so also as it respects the maxim, "that the people will do right," it is true in the dark days of their distress, but it is generally reversed in the halcyon days of their prosperity. They then almost always act wrong, and for this reason, in prosperity they act from caprice and passion, in adversity from reason and judgment. An individual in perfect health, stops not to reason on the approaches of mortality, or notice the distant scene that awaits him ; he alike disregards the admonitions of conscience, or the inducements to a virtuous and regular life ; but view him in his sick chamber, see the last faint hope of continuing life fade in his view, he then thinks correctly, and, like the abandoned wretch, whose crimes against society have brought him to the fatal block, reasons like a philosopher and a christian. The same position we see exemplified in nations and commonwealths, in times of difficulty and danger. When an enemy is on their coast, when the flames of their sacked towns, the cries of their bleeding children, rouse the people from their lethargy, their passions, prejudices and whims, melt like the morning dew before the sun, reason resumes its empire in the mind, and they place only such men in power as deserve the trust, and appoint only such as their leaders, who merit to command. When the boat is sinking they can unite in the cry, "Help, Lord, or we perish ;" but carry them through the day of their calamity, and mark well their conduct in the midday of

their prosperity. You will then see the warworn veteran begging his bread, and the virtuous patriot, grown gray in their service, treated with neglect, while the mushroom politician, who flatters their vices, is idolized as their saviour, and, buoyed up by their passions, enjoys the smile of their approbation. How often, at our elective board, do we witness this shameful prostitution of the dearest and most valuable rights of freemen! where, in the choice of our lawmakers and rulers, we are called to witness the outrage made on decency and good sense, by the influence of passion and prejudice. We there see ability, morality, integrity and talents, fall a sacrifice to the artful address of an ignorant, stupid flatterer of our passions and prejudices, or too often by a more disgraceful appeal to our corrupt appetites, by the bottle or the purse.

The base office seeker, or the envious demagogue, who, in the corner of our streets, or in the bar room of our inns, will declaim in favour of liberty and the equal rights of man to the gaping circle he has collected about him, will alarm their fears by imaginary evils, will flatter their pride by assumed distinctions, will vociferate against taxes and public burthens, appear to sympathize much with the poor, rail loudly against the learned professions, call all men in power or authority usurpers of their rights, infuse jealousy into their minds against their rulers, caution them to watch well the rich and learned men of the day, for they are all aristocrats, and want to introduce lordships, and finally to operate on their prejudices most supremely, and fix them effectually for the purposes of democratic rage, he will finish his harangue by the low bred, malicious, and unmeaning epithets of *old tory* and

British agent. This stuff, fulsome and ridiculous as it is, meets with too much currency in our country; we are too apt to be governed by first impressions; we are not willing to be at the trouble of examining a subject attentively, and reasoning dispassionately, but are disposed to act from the impulse of the moment, as it saves us the trouble of an examination; and as no danger is immediately apprehended, our country being at peace, and things going on, for aught we see, well enough, we see no harm in gratifying our whims or our prejudices; not recollecting as we ought, that after a calm comes a storm, that such conduct is the secret poison that destroys all free governments, and although the disease may not break out in immediate convulsions, yet the final dissolution of the republic is nevertheless not less certain.

To avoid the disgrace of having thrown away our rights by abusing them, and to preserve our liberty and independence pure and unsullied, we must “correct the procedure;” we must learn to have correct ideas of the nature and extent of our rights, otherwise we shall never know when they are invaded by others; we must remember we never can possess the right to do wrong; that our rights and liberties are nothing more, than a privilege secured to us by law, to pursue our own best good, in that way only, which is consistent with, and not destructive of, the good and happiness of others; that it is not an invasion of our rights, that fools and madmen, children, women, persons of no property or character, should be excluded from a share in the administration of our government, or the act of voting at our elections; for it would be dangerous to liberty and good government to entrust in their hands so valuable a pledge. It is no diminution of

our rights, that nature has made distinctions among men ; that poverty or ignorance is the lot of one man, while wealth or learning is the gift of another. This variety in the chain of human existence is best, it preserves the harmony and durability of the great whole ; we therefore produce mischief in society, and fight against nature, whenever we undervalue merit, or raise vice and ignorance to the seat of virtue and intelligence. Every man is to be protected in the sphere in which he is qualified to move, and equal justice is to be done to all ; but we must remember, that the servant is not greater than his master ; that we must give honour to whom honour is due, and always render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. We ought to remember that all free governments that ever existed to bless mankind, have ultimately been destroyed by the people themselves. *Power grows mild by age, when obeyed, but becomes a tyrant when resisted ; the rod of correction drops from the master's hand, when his scholars obey his rules, but "*a little finger becomes heavier than a whole hand,*" when they resist or rebel against his authority. We must therefore guard against that restless, uneasy, revolutionizing conduct, towards our government and its administrations, which is the bane of free republics, and which invites power to be tyrannic and authority despotic. We must learn to subdue our passions, and act from correct reason, rather than blind prejudice ; to prefer the good of our country to the gratification of our whims, and the merit of acting well in a humble station, rather than moving in a higher one. We must also be careful that we are not deceived by the professions of patriotism and virtue in others ; it is by the fruit we know the tree, and not by the appearance of the leaf ; it is not the man who worms himself into office by intrigue, or

addresses himself to our weakness or passions, to enlist us of his party, that deserves our confidence; for merit is unassuming, and virtue makes but few professions. When you hear a man talk much of liberty and the rights of man, lamenting the misfortunes of the poor, reviling the characters of the eminent, endeavouring to unhinge society by destroying all distinctions among men, declaiming against public expense, and raging high in favour of national economy he does not understand, exciting jealousy against all all men in power and authority, cautioning you to beware of rich men, for they are all aristocrats, and avoid learned men for they want hereditary government, that it is among the *middling interest*, or the lower grades in society, that you must find your friends, and retailing out such stuff as this, that a poor man's vote is as good as a rich man's, that one man is as good as another, that such and such men are monarchy men, are learnt men, are *old tories*, are salary men, or are of this or that profession, and therefore you must not trust them in your councils; when you find a man addressing your passions, and feeding your prejudices with such unmeaning nonsense, calculated only to induce you to act without reflection, avoid the deceiver, as you would the poison of the adder. But if you want to place your confidence where it will not be abused, examine the *conduct* rather than the *professions* of men; see whether the candidate for your trust is a man possessing virtues in the private walks of life; is he just in his dealings with others? does he pay the labourer his hire? is he more anxious to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, than he is to flatter their vanity, or inflame their passions? is he a kind master, a faithful husband, an affectionate father, or an obedient son? does he respect religion and its

teachers ? does he attend to the natural distinctions among men, and make a difference between virtue and vice ? does he respect the sober and correct manners of his ancestors, and prefer the settled maxims of experience and truth to the visionary schemes of the speculating philosopher ? is he qualified to serve you ? has he talents and education, to enable him to be useful in the station you design him to fill ? if his conduct in society is a pledge of his possessing these properties, your confidence will not be misplaced ; and by promoting only such men to offices of power and trust, you will exercise your civil privileges with all that safety to yourselves, that the lot of humanity will permit. But if you pervert your liberty, by letting your passions rule, and suffer the prejudice of an old grudge, a word, a name, or the flattery of profession to guide you in the choice of your rulers, you will be deservedly sold to the destroyer, who will come upon you like a thief in the night, and your birth right will be exchanged for a mess of pottage.

It will always be a serious misfortune to any people, when they distrust the learning and education of their country ; a well cultivated understanding is the best preventative of vice, for “ wisdom’s ways will always be ways of pleasantness, and all her paths, paths of peace.” The thousands of our unhappy fellow men, who are called to expiate their crimes by an ignominious death, are generally found among the ignorant and untaught of our species. Why then are we told that men of education and abilities are not to be trusted ? Did our ancestors do wrong when they erected their colleges, and made provision for schools ? Do we find the seats of science tend to breed serpents ? or, Do we misplace our confidence, when we place it in

the education of our country? What gives America her high rank among the nations of the earth? Is it the learning or the ignorance of our nation? To what, under heaven, are we indebted for the preservation hitherto of civil liberty in our country? Is it to the vice and ignorance, or the virtue and education of our people? Who holds the scales of justice even among our citizens, and preserves our independence and freedom, is it the ignorant, or the intelligent and wise? Let us for a moment, in our imaginations, separate the virtuous, the learned and the wise men of our country, from the idle, profligate, vicious and ignorant, and what form of government would the latter adopt, or what species of civil jurisprudence would they need? Would their government be republican? Could they exist long without a leader? No; the club would be their counsellor, and the guillotine their judge. As well might savages exist without a sachem, or a Gentoo without a tyrant master, as the idle, vicious and ignorant part of our species, could preserve any traces of civil liberty or the equal rights of man. Shall we then listen for a moment to those idle, envious and malicious whispers too often circulated by unprincipled demagogues, against men of talents, property, education or the learned professions? Shall we not rather adopt the maxims of sound policy and good sense, and in all difficult and doubtful questions, or where, from want of proper information, we are unqualified to judge safely for ourselves, resort to the intelligence of our country for direction, and place our confidence in the wisdom and learning of our nation, rather than in its vice and ignorance? But while we lament the misfortune, that our fair temple of freedom and independence is attacked by many false hearted patriots; while we attempt to guard against the injury,

those base disorganizers would bring upon us, by driving us blindfold before the whirlwind of our prejudices and passions, let us make all that allowance for the imbecility and weakness of human nature, which candour demands ; let us suppose there are many among them, who, like the erring apostle of old time, verily think they are serving the cause of freedom, and doing God service, while they are demoralizing the world, and unsettling the foundations of all civil government ; towards such mistaken patriots, let our pity, rather than our vengeance be excited, and in the mild, forgiving temper of our Divine Master let us exclaim, " Father forgive them, they know not what they do."

FELLOW SOLDIERS,

I cannot feel willing to close the exercises of this day without a particular address to you. Twenty seven summers have already rolled away, since our country took its rank among the independent nations of the earth ; and although time has drawn the shade of obscurity over many of the scenes, exhibited during our revolutionary war, yet sufficient have been preserved, to serve as lessons of experience to us, and teach us how to defend, what was then so valiantly won, our nation's honour, liberty and independence. Let us frequently recur to our declaration of independence, and preserve its principles inviolate ; let us remember we therein most solemnly declared, that "*we would consider Great Britain, like every other nation, enemies in war, in peace, friends.*" All prejudices against our former enemies ought to cease with the contest ; it is against our plighted faith, as well as our true interest and policy, to preserve any. A nation can never pursue her true interest, while she suffers any predilections or antipathies to mingle in her councils. Our

immortal Washington, in his last legacy to us has said, “*we must have no excessive partialities or dislikes for any foreign nation ; for if we have, we shall see danger only on one side, and by that, second the arts of influence on the other.*” Such is the mutable state of empires, of nations, and of all human affairs, that those who are our warmest friends or bitterest enemies this year, may be in a reversed position the next ; we ought therefore to confine our love to our own country, and our resentment to its present enemies. As soldiers, it is with pleasure we reflect, that we are not the mercenary tools of a despot, whose object is the conquest of defenceless states, the pillage of opulent countries, the revenge of sacked towns, the murder of helpless infants, the violation of chastity, or the reward of plunder ; nor are we commissioned by an infuriated populace, to violate the rights of humanity, by destroying all social order and distinctions in society. We do not feel it to be our duty to break through the ties of nature, to exhibit our patriotism, or produce before a revolutionary tribunal, the heads of our murdered parents to prove our love of liberty ; but as *citizen soldiers* we recognize the laws of our country as our commander in chief, and the preservation of our free constitutions and governments as the objects of our defence ; we venerate the policy of our government, that permits every citizen to place among the implements of his trade the arms of his defence ; with his plough he is encouraged to cultivate his farm, and with his sword he is permitted to defend it. While we participate in the glory and share the blessings of our independence as a nation, shall we forget those heroes who bled in the cause of their country, and paid the solemn debt of nature to establish our freedom ? No ; forbid it nature, forbid it heaven ! Rest unoffended ye sacred spirits of our departed he-

roes! whether ye now inhabit the purer regions of heavenly mansions, or art commissioned to hover round our earth as kind guardians of the living, witness the humble tribute of our respect! your deeds of valour, with the tragic scene of your departure shall live in the memory of Americans, while Americans exist. The father shall point to the moss grown stone and hollow earth, and tell the melancholy tale to his listening son, recount your virtuous and valiant deeds, and transmit your tragedy to posterity. And thou too, our sainted Washington! on this day will thy memory be doubly dear to us; to imitate thy example, is the soldier's proudest hope, and to live and die like thee, would be an angel's highest praise; we will remember, that Washington was once our commander, and we will acknowledge no standard but his virtues.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

Let us all on this anniversary, unite in the amusements and pleasures of the day, with cordiality and friendship; let us dismiss all our unpleasant prejudices, and collect around the festive board in harmony and social intercourse; let us subdue our passions, cultivate our understandings, and unite in the promotion of the prosperity and happiness of our common country; let us, by cementing our friendship and practising the virtues of peaceful and good citizens, at least attempt to render our freedom and independence immortal; qualifying ourselves for that blissful period, when the lion and the lamb shall feed quietly together, and peace, harmony and friendship pervade the universe.