

MR. BARTLETT'S ORATION.

JULY 4th, 1800.

ORATION,

PRONOUNCED

AT SALISBURY, NEW-HAMPSHIRE,

JULY 4th, 1808.

BY ICHABOD BARTLETT.

..... "They, who lov'd
" Their country, and who fought their country's wars,
" Whose bones amid a land of servitude
" Could never rest in peace; should they yet see
" Their children slaves, would feel a pang in Heav'n."

CONCORD :

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1808.



Oration.

NATIONAL rejoicings, in commemoration of peculiar blessings, speak the grateful remembrance of a happy people. You, honored Fathers, are still mindful of former mercies ; you have not yet forgotten the fourth day of July, sevanteen hundred seventy-six. My fellow Associates, whose early age has yet prevented active exertion in our country's cause, you, with anxious attention, have frequently listened to "the story of other times." Urged by that patriotic ardor, which fired American heroes in "the days of peril," you have now united with a few surviving actors in our revolution, to celebrate the anniversary of that glorious era, the natal day of American Freedom.

On this occasion, ought we to question what sentiments should be nurtured, what feelings should pervade every bosom ? Were not your feelings the feelings of American freemen, it is possible the dictates of personal abuse might then be tolerated. Were we assembled to pay the last funeral obsequies to the Independence of our Country ; were we assembled to celebrate the triumph of faction or success of party ; then would the rancorous malice of political animosity be better fitted to our disgraceful purpose.

THOUGH this day, hallowed by the blood of freemen, has too often been devoted, by *mad* sectaries in politics,

to the abuse of patriotism ; yet such violation of duty has not established its innocence ; such contempt to the martyred heroes of America can never be welcomed by the surviving friends of Freedom and Independence.

Why should the dæmon Discord be the idol of our worship, in commemorating that happy change, effected by your concentrated exertion—in celebrating that Independence, maintained but by your *union*—in rejoicing for the establishment of a government, which rests solely on the pillars of political *concord* and *virtue*?

Never could the infant colonies of a wilderness world have met unmoved the disciplined phalanx of England, had not their “union been their strength.” Never could the breast of a Washington have proved the bulwark of his Country’s safety, had not the voices of a determined people joined in symphony to rouse a manly confidence, and nerve the arm of opposition to trans-Atlantic tyranny.

The struggle for right surely then met British hirelings on this continent ; but, had an open, systematic contradiction been altercated by Americans, we yet might be ornamented with the trophies of their contest—the manacles of slavery. The same vote of Parliament, which disposed of property, might have decided our future destiny, and a *Stamp Act* or *Tea Tax* have been but the prelude to a resolve, that Americans were born for servants to bear the luggage of an English nobility. Had party questions enlisted our citizens in domestic contest, when Britain paraded her power in hostile battalia on our shores, the fields of Lexington would have proved, alike the charnelhouse to our soldiers, our liberties, and even our hopes. Bunker’s hill would remain a monument of disgrace, and the tomb-stone of Warren serve but to perpetuate the remembrance of our national debasement.

FORTUNATELY for us, at that all-important moment, a conscious rectitude added energy to our first feeble efforts, and one same spark kindled the flame of patriot-

ism throughout the infant empire. When the haughty commands of a foreign monarch bade us be slaves, the "small voice" of oppressed colonists whispered *Liberty*—a nation caught the enrapturing sound, and reverberated across the Atlantic, the declaration of our Rights, Freedom, and Independence. The distinction of name had not then pointed out to our citizens opposite interests; nor do we celebrate a day, when the petty strifes of party marshalled Americans against each other, in an idle "war of words." Instead then of fanning that flame of faction, which, unchecked, must soon leave but the dust of your constitution to nurture the poisonous plants of anarchy and despotism; let us rather calm the tempest of popular commotion, and save our country from impending danger. While assembled to pay vows at the altar of Liberty, pollute not its sacred shrine with an unhallowed offering of private or political prejudice.

WHEN the good of our Country is the object of exertion, and obstinacy of opinion surrenders to conviction of public utility, it is then, all other distinctions are lost in patriotism—it is then, and only then, that "we are all FEDERALISTS, we are all REPUBLICANS."

WITH the common American interest, the umpire of action, let its magic charm still more firmly fasten affection, by viewing our superior advantages—guard us against foreign combinations, by considering our loss in such an exchange of circumstances—and by realizing our dangers, prepare us for the protection of our rights, by whomsoever invaded.

UNBIASSED by local circumstances, the legitimate sons of freedom limit not their affections to that peculiar spot on which they were nurtured. Their philanthropy has a more extensive range, to joy with him, who is blest with rational government; to lament his hapless destiny, who sinks despondent beneath the burthen of oppression.

THOUGH, in viewing our advantages, as compared with others, every American must feel for the sufferers

of eastern servitude ; yet will an honest exultation elevate his soul, to find that government, founded by his fathers on the broad basis of equal right, still triumphing over the assaults of conspiracy ; unmoved with the general commotion, and amid the wreck of republics, looking undaunted at the vain threats of European Kings and Despots. But the fate of governments allied to us by similarity of principle, proclaims aloud the language of vigilance and caution ; as our present Independence is a solitary instance of republican greatness, yet unblotted from the annals of nations.

AMERICAN citizens could once find a few republics, with whom to rejoice in civil blessings—with whom to unite and offer incense of gratitude in the temples of our God. But, alas !—We have witnessed the abuse of privilege ! We have seen ambition heaping in a “splendid ruin” the fair fabric of political freedom ! We have seen usurped power opening an early grave to natural and civil rights, and leaving nought but kingly monuments, to point the plundered son of Liberty where he may weep his sorrows at her tomb.

In traversing that extended “waste of world” from George’s channel to the Chinesian sea, our prospect is varied only from the desolation of a French Emperor’s arms, to that wretched people, whose greatest privilege is to bow the knee to Mahomet, strew their garments to be trampled by despots, kiss the dust from the feet of a Sultan, or bear upon their necks the worthless burthen of a deified Mogul. On the European continent, there *once* were a few acres, yet unlocated by tyrants ; a few landscapes, where the hand of power despotic had not yet plucked the tree of Liberty, had not ingrafted the poisonous weeds of princely authority, or robbed a Swiss or Hollander of his boasted wealth, his civil right.—But where the bold sons of Freedom fought, and bled, and died—where the rights of man once found protection, and the fair Genius of Liberty said, “this is my country, this is my home”—even there, do we see tyrannic power trample on law, and wantonly sporting over the ashes of a William Tell and his heroic comrades !

LIKE the defenceless lamb before the monster of the forest, every government within his grasp is but the play-thing to a Bonaparte. Though ours be farther from the reach of him, who, amid "the sport and mirth of murder," with the thunder of war is sounding a last requiem to the manes of departed Liberty on the continent; yet, other than his deadly embraces, we have at one time to suspect the open insult and injustice, at another, the pretended affection and crocodile tears of an English ministry.

THESE are the only foreign foes from whom we have danger to apprehend. The dastardly menials of Barbary may join with a war of the elements to render more terrific the horrors of shipwreck; but a Sumner and Wadsworth shall elude their sharpened appetite for a feast of blood, and the savage aggressors do ample penance before the sword of an Eaton.

A SINGLE view of the situation of England and France will at once shew what are our inducements for an alliance with either; why we should forsake America to fight the quarrels of these contending powers; or whether our danger be not from a heedless surrender of our rights to their repeated aggressions.

WERE it the question, Shall we open our bosoms and meet the sword of Britain's foes, to save the stroke from that devoted nation? what would be the compensation, for exposing ourselves to an inveterate world in arms? Would it be the advantages secured to those of our citizens, whose blood should not be made the seal to this charter of national friendship? Would the advantage in an exchange of government be our reward? The mere nominal greatness of an empire, supported by oppression, and yet tottering to its fall beneath the weight of accumulated debt, can be but a sorry consolation to its servile dependents. Should we grant the constitution of that narrow sea-girt territory to be "the most stupendous fabric of human invention," the same decision must pronounce its administration the most finished performance of bribery and corruption.

ENJOY, but for a moment, the boasted privileges of an Englishman. Borne down with taxes, place yourselves a pedestal to support those bloated images of vice and dissipation, who, "*above the dull pursuits of civil life,*" glitter with the insignia of royal favor. Thus blest, raise your voices in unison to the wailings of distressed poverty, and in constitutional language proclaim the blessings of your government.

BRITAIN'S flag may wave triumphant in every sea, and victory light on the standard of her Nelsons; yet must the complaints of those wretches, doomed to a life, and death, and grave upon the ocean, speak louder than their ~~praises~~ of triumph or songs of conquest. Let the inhabitants of Copenhagen, let those who dwell on the coasts of India, say where is the justice, the mercy, the boasted blessings of an English government.

THE infatuated Hindoo may there please himself with an ideal Heaven, by thinking to cleanse his sins in that water, which is worshipped as his God; but never could the flood of the Burrumpooter, or the Ganges, wash the deep-stained crimes of British cruelty.

FROM such scenes shall we turn abhorrent, and be tempted to entrust our lives and liberties to the care of a French cabinet?—Our God forbid it!—We pass only from systematic oppression to the wild vagaries of a military despot's cruelty. We leave the shelter of a throne, whose base is sapped with the tears of widows and orphans, but to seek protection of a tyrant wading in the blood of innocence.

LIBERTY may be echoed with the dying groans of Frenchmen; it is the mere sound they learnt to utter, ere the Corsican usurper, under pretence of bettering their condition, had left them no other liberty, than, prostrate before him, to exclaim *Vive l'Empereur*.

WHATEVER may be the pretended object of Bonaparte, it is too evident, his designs are unfavorable to general happiness. His steps mark the progress of a

relentless tyrant, nor can the calls of suffering virtue summon his feelings to compassion. As well might you attempt

“ To lead the tyger in a silken string,

“ Hush the loud storm, or clip a whirlwind's wing.”

Through the vitals of humanity he is cutting a way to the temple of military fame. To-day, we see him an obscure Corsican boy—to-morrow, receiving adoration from the Mamelukes of Egypt—again, he lords it over the provinces of Italy—France hastens to obey his mandates—Europe is desolate before this conqueror—A world trembles at his nod!—His unbounded ambition knows not the restraints of national virtue, nor need we expect mercy, if trusted to his power. No success in conquest can satiate his thirst for domination, till his sceptre shade the farthest boundaries of the earth, and subjugated nations worship in that temple devoted to Napoleon.

AMERICANS, long accustomed to the blissful ways of peace and happiness, are again summoned, by these rival enemies of man, to rally round the constitution of their country, and renew the oath of allegiance to Liberty at her sacred shrine, at the tombs of our martyred ancestors.

ENGLAND, once taught the prowess of cis-Atlantic soldiery, has imagined an insult, never to be forgiven, while we exist free from the curse of Kings, and uncontrolled by the arbitrary will of Parliament. Striving at supremacy by the strength of her navy, she would fain wrest from Neptune the trident of his empire, and with the besom of destruction sweep commerce from the ocean.

WE would not commend the savage sport of hewing down the Olive tree with the hatchet of war, or striving for greatness in human butchery; yet when the laws of nations are set at defiance, and the obligations of humanity despised, a redress of injury may justly be demanded by an appeal to arms. And there is evidence

for the assertion, fellow citizens, that you would rather incorporate your bones with the dust of this soil, than survive to cultivate it under the direction of a foreign task-master. The spirit of patriotism will so strengthen the arm of power, that in wresting our liberties from the reach of "His Royal Majesty" we may not tumble them at the feet of the Imperial conqueror; nor shall the Gallic bird of morning ever frighten the American eagle to seek protection within the British lion's grasp. We need not court the aid of any earthly sovereign; but, under God, "within ourselves collected" remain a lasting fortress against the secret cunning, or open attack of every enemy. And think not, fellow citizens, that it is here intended to vibrate the harsh string of political discord, in noticing that measure of government, by which we are sheltered from the tempest of foreign war, our property plucked from ocean plunderers, and our Independence secured from a prostration to blockading decrees and council orders. Think not, that an individual can exult in the inconveniences attendant on the suspension of our commerce, or that in consenting to this prohibition you originate the warrant of your own distress. Not a citizen of America but must sorrow for his fellow sufferers; yet will he view the cause, and count present troubles as blessings, compared to the horrors of war, or servile submission to foreign authority.

Do any yet ask a cause for complaint? Could our murdered brethren of the Chesapeake again raise their voices, their cries for vengeance should arouse every American from St. Lawrence to the Mexic Gulf.—Do any look indifferently on the picture of foreign injustice? Let them see our property glutting the rapine of hostile cruisers! Let them catch a last glance at our commerce sinking beneath the weight of lawless taxation! Let them look at that *order*, which demands of independent Americans, what neither supplications, or menaces could extort from dependent colonies! Then say if there is no essential injury done us; or, if there is not rather an attempt to annihilate our national existence! A principle asserted, which once assented to, will leave our sovereignty an immolated victim to this naval law of nations.

SOME measure of preservation or compulsion must be directed toward such nations, as will comply with no rule of right, but the dictates of self-interest, who confess no other law of justice, than the mandate of necessity. In vain may we prate of negociation, while their ships are permitted to float as patronized pirates in our harbours. As little could such useless bustle do in securing our rights, as did Diogenes, by rolling a tub, to protect his native city from the ravages of a Macedonian monarch.

SMALL is our security for slumbering in careless indifference, because American trade might awhile longer feed those ravenous vultures, which have fattened on the spoils of our merchantmen. Though we might possibly survive this first stroke at our national being; tho' a lucrative commerce might, for a short time, afford to pay a tax of thirty-three per cent. in buying permission to spread American canvass on the ocean; yet, by such submission, we should invite insult from the smallest canoe that rides upon the water, and pay tribute to the commander of every fisherman's boat. By our silent consent we should sanction a law, the destruction of neutrality its object, and the lowest mark of servile debasement the limit of its extent. We should suffer an enemy to wrest from us the grand trophy of an eight years war, the exercise of national right. And what did our ancestors contend for, but the mere principle of right, to secure this rich inheritance to their posterity? America, at that time, could hardly have been an object worth contention. An uncultivated soil; the map of a wilderness without a name among the nations; it presented but tribes of warlike sayages on the frontiers of its settlements.

UNITED causes now operate in stimulating us to preserve this inheritance, once paid for with the price of life. Here is the residence of that liberal and rational policy of government, which is exiled from every other quarter of the globe—Here is happiness, so far as can be secured by political wisdom—Here are the tombs of our ancestors.

In preserving our possessions, too much must not be entrusted to the mere ceremony of forms. Too much must not be expected from the excellence of laws. Our constitution, however good, cannot effect miracles. Though a form of government were fashioned by the all-perfect hand of God, and sent by angels commissioned from Heaven for its administration, if met by the determined enemies of order, in disciplined columns of faction, its operation must be the drama of confusion.

THE enemies of America, by the division of political sentiment, calculate with great confidence on our hasty compliance to an invitation of servile submission, or unhesitating surrender to the lifted sword of authority; knowing that a republic, when its subjects cease to act in harmony with their constituted authorities, is but a palsied, gigantic form, too feeble for its own support. Its energies are counteracted, and every struggle for existence is an unwieldy effort, which serves to exhaust the vital principle.

WHILE in the cradle of infancy, America could vanquish the monarchic greatness of England. Now grown the object of envy or source of terror to other nations, our strength has increased with years, and we can be endangered only from a decay of that spirit, which then inspired our patriots. They once have taught us the lesson *to be free*.

THOUGH all of us cannot boast a stand in those ranks, which braved danger, and faced the engines of death in fighting for freedom; though untutored in the misery of war; yet has that "wretched tale of woe" planted deep its impression on our every bosom. And often has the secret tear of sorrow stole in silence at mention of your sufferings. Imagination, unmindful of distant years, suddenly places us amid the storm of martial thunder, with the expiring heroes of seventy-five.—The battle on Charlestown heights, the alternate hope and despair, which vibrated with each pulsation of life! Our dying citizens imploring protection for America! And the joyous bacchanals of British soldiery, in triumph at the

burning of our sea-ports! All in characters crimsoned with blood, and lasting as time, are painted to our view! Connecticut, the scene of desolation, is at once before us! The cries of countrymen, of friends, of brothers perishing in the confinement of an enemy, yet thrill the cords of humanity! From the tocsin's hoarse alarms, and din of battle, we are carried to bear the solemn tidings of defeat or death to the partner of our soldier, to his waiting family!—Alas!—We turn to behold the continuance of this tragic display of savage barbarity! The war-whoop arouses our attention! The flames of an unprotected cottage flash upon the eye! A helpless infant gasping in the arms of a mother, who with the struggles of departing life is imprinting her last cold embraces on the pallid cheek of her darling child! These, *these* are scenes our fathers witnessed! Such were the sufferings endured for our Independence. A privilege so dearly purchased will not, cannot be forgotten; nor will our citizens sit idle to witness its abuse. The recollection of its worth must inspire such a love of country, that a temporary sacrifice of private interest for public utility will be cheerfully submitted to; nor can an American wish for the trinkets of a foreign toy-shop, if to be purchased with the price of national honor.

THE encouragement of this public virtue is far from being confined to one sex alone. While the arm of the soldier strikes vengeance on the enemies of Columbia, her fair daughters are not indifferent spectators. *Their* patronage prospers the arts of peace, and from *them* shall the hero receive the reward of his toils—the ever verdant laurel of fame. While their charms add new lustre to the temple of the graces; though ministering at the sanctuary of filial or parental duty, their example shall continue an instructive lesson of patriotic economy. Their encouragement of American industry will at once entwine the thread of domestic manufacture around the neck of foreign dependence, and pull down a barrier in our way to greater glory.

To the militia of the United States, there is necessity for no other spur to action, than an infringement of our

rights—no other direction, than to point them the enemy. Then, with a voice of valour, attuned to the feelings of every American, we may exclaim, in Spartan language, “*Why should we fear our foes? They cannot hinder us to die for our COUNTRY.*”


