

AN
ORATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE TAMMANY SOCIETY,

OR,

COLUMBIAN ORDER,

TAILOR'S, COOPER'S, HIBERNIAN PROVIDENT,
SHIPWRIGHT'S, COLUMBIAN, MANHATTAN,
AND CORDWAINER'S SOCIETIES,

IN THE

CITY OF NEW-YORK,

ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1811.

BY SAMUEL BERRIAN.

“Glorious, sacred day!
All hail! thou solemn period! thee the tongues
Of virtue, fame and freedom, shall record
And celebrate, in ages yet unborn!!!

GLOVER.

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ORATION.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

WHILE the origin of the most celebrated Republics of ancient and modern times is wrapt in obscurity, the Day which gave Birth to the Liberties of America is indelibly engraven on the historic page, and can never be obliterated from the memory of mankind. The custom of setting apart a particular day, for the celebration of some signal event, is not peculiar to the people of America; but the annual observance of a Day, on which was laid the foundation of a mighty Republic, on which a whole Nation unites in one general sentiment of Patriotism and Joy, is without a parallel in the annals of the world.

We assemble here, not to pay the tribute of extorted praise to the misdeeds of an usurping tyrant. We celebrate not the victory of a faction, but the triumph of a nation; not the anniversary of a weak and superannuated monarch, but the Birth-Day of our Republic.

No exercise of the mind so eminently contributes to enliven the zeal of the patriot, or to exalt and pu-

rify the feelings of an American, as the annual commemoration of this great memorial of our freedom: it accustoms us to the contemplation of all that is amiable, interesting, or dignified in the human character: it thrills the heart by the tender associations it awakens: it excites and engages all our benevolent and patriotic affections: it touches the chords of national sensibility, and rouses the energies of national virtue.

That venerable assemblage of Patriots, who first set their seals to the great Charter of American Independence, deserve the everlasting thanks and gratitude of Freemen. They entered the foremost ranks of opposition, against an haughty and exasperated power; they called into action all the virtuous feelings of our ancestors, and kindling into a flame their patriotic ardor, they bade them be free, and they were free; they regenerated a nation, and imprinted immortality on its struggles.

England, from the first settlement of the American Colonies to the period of the revolution, had in her general policy towards them, evinced herself inimical to their interests. She envied their growing prosperity, and endeavoured to dry up the sources of their wealth: she extended over them the withering hand of power, retarding their industry and crippling their strength: violating the principles of equal justice, and invading the sanctuary of individual liberty.

Why did our brave and pious forefathers quit the land of their nativity, and the tombs of their sires, to seek a distant home, amid the bleak and barren shores

of a desolate wilderness? It was to enjoy in repose and safety their religion, their liberties, and lives.— But did they long continue to find the peace, security and happiness they so ardently anticipated? No! the distresses of the new settlers soon laid the foundation of British encroachments. Such of the Colonies as were exposed to the inroads of the savages were compelled to seek protection from their mother country. While the enemy, however, was few in number, and hung like a dark cloud upon the distant mountain, their own strength and resources were sufficient to repel their incursions; but when different hordes became united by a common thirst for plunder, and spread over the vallies like a torrent of fire, carrying death and desolation in their train, they excited a spirit of universal alarm; when the tumultuary and appalling shouts of those sanguinary assassins, penetrated the solitary and unprotected cabins of the new settlers, and sounded the death-note of the brave; when their savage war-whoops struck terror and dismay into the heart of the trembling mother, and disturbed and affrighted the peaceful slumbers of the cradle; when their corn-fields were laid waste, their humble cottages invaded, their wives inhumanly butchered, and their children led into captivity, *then*, and not *till* then, did the proud souls of our forefathers stoop to supplication. In the season of their adversity, they were compelled to shelter themselves under the wings of foreign protection. England at this momentous juncture, yielded to the urgent necessities of the Colonies, and afforded them

ample means of defence against their sanguinary invaders. But the spirit which then prevailed in the councils of England, as her commerce and power augmented, became selfish and domineering. Her subsequent rulers imagined, that as the favors and obligations which had been bestowed on America, had in a slight measure counterbalanced the municipal hardships and commercial restrictions that had been imposed upon her, that no future exactions could be unjust or exorbitant. For a while the gratitude of the Colonies exceeded the demands of Britain: they generously offered in support of her glory, their fortunes and their lives. But no honorable submission could satisfy her pride; no reasonable concessions could avert her arms. A brave and generous people must be reduced to an humble and servile dependence on a jealous and irritated rival; must be ravished of their birth-rights; must surrender up every valuable privilege; every fragment of liberty.

Say, proud nation! say, ye boasted advocates of freedom, was it noble? was it magnanimous, thus to trample under feet, the weak and unoffending; a people who had ever been willing to succour you in your greatest distresses; who had bravely fought and freely bled in your defence? Europe beheld your injustice with astonishment; America with affliction and horror. She at first opposed your arbitrary measures by remonstrances, supplications, and prayers. Her cries for justice were wafted on the bosom of the western gale to the shores of Europe: Her humane and high spirited sons were penetrated with the ac-

cents, and took part in her cause. They ascended even to the throne of mercy. By a benignant Being they were heard with tenderness and compassion; by tyrant man they were mocked, despised and insulted. A corrupt and abandoned court, regardless of right, and deaf to the voice of humanity, triumphed in our humiliations, and revelled in our sufferings.

Were there none then among the sons of Britain, sufficiently bold and independent, to vindicate the rights of injured and oppressed America? to throw the gauntlet of defiance at the champions of despotism; and to turn the strong tide of popular indignation against the authors of our wrongs? Yes! the united voice of the generous and free in soul, declared the resistance of America to be just and magnanimous, and the struggles of Britain to enforce her demands, iniquitous and despotic.

In the councils of the nation, the thunder of a Chatham and the eloquence of a Burke, were brought in dreadful array against these determined and inveterate enemies of American liberty. They boldly assaulted, but could not destroy, this mercenary phalanx: "they knocked at the door of a sleeping and confounded ministry, but endeavoured in vain to rouse them to a sense of their important duties." In vain they urged that the subjugation of America was an impossibility. "You cannot, (exclaimed the illustrious Chatham, with all the enthusiasm of inspiration) you cannot conquer America. You may swell every expense, and every effort still more ex-

travagantly. Pile and accumulate every assistance you can buy or borrow, traffic and barter with every little pitiful German despot, that sells and sends his subjects to the shambles of a foreign prince: your efforts are for ever vain and impotent, and doubly so from this mercenary aid on which you rely; for it exasperates to an incurable resentment the minds of your enemy, to overrun them with these mercenary sons of rapine and plunder; devoting them and their possessions to the rapacity of hireling cruelty. If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms: no, never! never!" But the prophetic warnings, and enlightened counsels of England's genius were disregarded, amid the clamors of interested and ambitious statesmen. Hostility with America was a favorite object with the British ministry, for they vainly imagined, it would afford them a new opportunity to augment their wealth, and extend their empire.

No sooner were the infatuated counsels of Britain known in America, than the spark of resistance which kindled in the east, quickly spread its fires to the remotest habitation of the wilderness. It was then, *that* sacred love of freedom, which nature has imprinted on every noble heart, which no force can subdue, and no lapse of time obliterate, broke forth in actions splendid and sublime. It was at this momentous period, that the *Father of his country*, contemplating the ruin which threatened the existence of his children, spread over their infant liber-

ties the broad mantle of his protection. By the zeal and intrepidity of a WASHINGTON, we were enabled, through an arduous and protracted conflict, successfully to withstand the stormy ocean of human vicissitudes, to rise stronger from misfortune, and finally to triumph in the noblest cause for which man ever contended. Never was mortal more free from vice and error than this great benefactor of his country. The felicity of America was the most ardent prayer of his heart, his life was spent in her service, his talents were only exerted in the advancement of her prosperity, his sword only gleamed in the defence of her rights. Whatever is noble or sublime touched the soul of this illustrious warrior. He was prudent with valor, and brave without ostentation; in him were united the courage of a soldier, the intrepidity of a hero, and the humanity of a Christian. Yet Washington was human: he was ambitious of renown. Glory was the idol of his soul: there were but two things he cherished with more sacred ardor; his country and his God. He was our pride in peace, in war our shield. He towered above the race of men, and seemed immortal. Immortal! Oh, no—In common with the worm he trod on, his body was perishable, and it felt decay—his frame was corruptible, and it mouldered into ashes. Yet the memory of his virtues is indelibly recorded on the hearts of his countrymen: his fame brightens with the lapse of time: his ethereal part, his divine spirit still lives, and shall live forever.

Other heroes and other patriots pressed forward in the same career of virtue and immortality. They were his partners in danger, his companions in glory. Most of them time has gathered to a peaceful grave. They have fallen, like the leaves of autumn, to mingle with their native dust. Yet long shall they live in the memory of their deeds, long shall the "turf that wraps their clay," be moistened by the tears of a grateful nation.

All that is amiable or dignified in human nature, shone with amazing brightness and purity, in the characters of these disinterested worthies. Attached to their native country by every tender recollection, endeared to each other by all the sacred ties of friendship, every spring which can set the human heart in motion, impelled them to unsheathe their swords. They had reiterated insults and injuries to avenge: they had their liberties and their lives to defend: they had parents to urge them on: children to claim their protection: wives to shield from insult and daughters from dishonor. Yet they resisted not, till resistance became a sacred duty. They were contented to remonstrate, to petition for a redress of grievances, till the myrmidons of power, exclaimed to an injured and oppressed people, surrender into our hands the charter of your rights! Perish! or live our slaves! Where is the heart that would not have resented the outrage? where is the hand that would not have grasped a sword in the cause of independence? Accursed be the heart that would yield to

oppression, and withered be the arm that would not rouse its strength, to crush the oppressor.

Scarce was the sword of desolating war unsheathed than the armies of Europe, and the merciless savages of the wilderness, were let loose upon our territories to murder, ravage and destroy. Yet the barbarous hordes that assailed us, were baffled, defeated, and finally driven from our shores, by a handful of heroes. Bunker-Hill, Lexington, the plains of Monmouth and Saratoga, witnessed the brave exploits of our patriot sires. They beheld the ranks of the enemy fall beneath the avenging sword of freedom, and yield to irresistible valor. Yourselves dauntless, intrepid, bold in your country's cause, rushed almost unarmed to the conflict, eager in the pursuit of victory or death.

Glorious, immortal spirits! even while the angel of death hovered over your ranks and smote you to the earth, ye were unmindful of your wounds, and unmoved by the horrors of the embattled field; for the delightful hope that your country would one day be emancipated, supported you through every human trial, and softened the terrors of the parting scene. No dangers could intimidate, no calamities overcome minds thus elevated by hope, thus fortified by virtue. No superiority of force was able to conquer the resistance of such men, animated by such motives. *Freemen*, whose bosoms glowed with a pure and constant flame, kindled on the altar of patriotism, an emanation of the divinity. *Warriors*, whose strength, lay in their undaunted courage,

united hearts, and a confidence in the justice of their cause. *Heroes*, who drew not their swords in rage or blind resentment, who fought not to subjugate and oppress their fellow men, who bled not to gratify their pride, vanity, or ambition; whose only desire, whose only hope was to rescue their country from impending slavery. In the prosecution of this noble design, they voluntarily encountered perils, hardships and death; they endured without repining all the complicated ills that mortality is heir to. Even on the verge of eternity they breathed forth the sentiments of heroes, animating their companions to die the death of the brave. How enviable is the lot of such men! whether perishing on the field of battle, or surviving to enjoy the fruits of their valor!

Through a seven years painful and calamitous war, our political horizon was continually involved in clouds of gloom and darkness. The genius of war, with ruthless strides, laid waste the rich and luxuriant fields of the husbandmen, destroying alike the humble cottages of the lowly, and the splendid mansions of the great. These, to the devoted sons of freedom, were causes of anxiety and sources of affliction: they disturbed their tranquility, but shook not their fortitude. Their hopes and their courage, remained unbroken to the last! their patience, overcame obstacles apparently insurmountable: their struggles were arduous, heroic, sublime—their victories, were unsullied by outrage, unpolluted by the blood of the suppliant, and their final triumph, the bright reward of exalted magnanimity.

When the storms of war had passed by; when the fervor of national enthusiasm, had in some measure subsided; and when a sense of common danger, no longer produced a sympathy of interests among the different states of the union, then did the good sense and patriotism of America, a *second time* display themselves in all their native vigor, and shield her from destruction. At the formation of the Federal Constitution, the world beheld the magnificent spectacle of a nation, emerging like a Phoenix, from the ashes of despotism, with renovated life and vigor. The sublime edifice of American freedom, which was then erected on the broken and scattered fragments of anarchy, is the noblest monument of human wisdom. Yet with all the specious beauties and theoretical excellence of our confederated government, it depends solely upon *you* my fellow countrymen, for its support and duration. Cherish and revere it, as the parent of your prosperity, preserve it uncontaminated by the breath of licentiousness, and unprophaned by the sacrilegious touch of foreign or domestic tyranny.

Should the free born sons of America ever prove as corrupt as the inhabitants of the transatlantic world, their government must inevitably follow the fate of their manners. Thank Heaven! that day of degradation has not yet arrived. America still retains a portion of that uncorrupted integrity and hardy valor, which once led her to defy the thunder of the British cannon, and gloriously to triumph, in effecting the emancipation of our country.

Although Heaven has heaped innumerable favors and blessings on our country, yet are we far from being in a state, which exempts us from care, anxiety and danger. We have much to dread from the injustice and aggressions of foreign powers, but more from the violence and ambition of our domestic enemies.

Although the existence of parties may be useful in maintaining public liberty, yet faction is that invisible and malignant poison, which is sure to corrupt the fountains of its life. It has been justly observed, that "party is to liberty, what air is to fire, indispensably necessary, to its existence and preservation;" while faction, or that disposition in any portion of the community, which prompts for its own particular advantage, emolument or power, the sacrifice of the interests and honour of the nation, is the deadliest evil with which a free people can be curst. Who, but the bold, aspiring and factious, have dared to disseminate the doctrines of disunion? Who but the factious, have circulated the slanderous tale of national corruption? Faction alone has exasperated weak and credulous minds against the most honest and illustrious of our statesmen and patriots. Beware my fellow countrymen of its insidious approaches and corruptive arts: it is a serpent more wily, than that which seduced our first parent; it is the fell destroyer of sincerity and truth; it is the cowardly assassin of republican virtue; it touches but to corrupt, it strikes but to destroy. Yet as dangerous and fatal as this spirit confessedly is, it rankles in the bosom

of the republic, it enters within the pale of national legislation; it approaches the awful seat of justice, and defiles the sacred altar of religion.

Should the disappointed and ambitious ever succeed in their projected schemes of disunion, a long farewell to the peace and happiness of America. Then would the fields on which are erected the proud trophies of our Revolutionary glory, be deluged with the blood, and watered with the tears of our friends and fellow countrymen. To prevent such a calamitous event becomes the solemn duty of every patriot and freeman. We should seek to soften and not to exasperate party violence. We should endeavour, by adhering to the principles of our Constitution, to extend and perpetuate those blessings of Republican freedom, so dearly and honorably acquired by the blood of our heroes, and the wisdom of our sages. Such men rocked in the cradle of freedom, and educated in the school of experience, should serve as our guides and models. We should not rest satisfied in celebrating their worth, but in imitating their virtues. Let us aspire to an union with them in feeling and sentiment. And let a glow of sympathetic virtue, warm and animate *our* hearts, with the same ardent attachment to country, and the same sublime devotion to the public good, which elevated *their* courage, and sanctified *their* zeal.

“Kindly separated by a wide ocean from the present seat of exterminating war and havoc,” we should rely solely upon our own strength, resources and virtue, for support. What have we to expect

from the belligerent nations of Europe, but fraud and injustice? they have reduced the whole code of national jurisprudence into the law of force. Honor is a bond they are weary of, and good faith is stricken from the catalogue of their virtues.

That nation which at present fills the largest space in the eyes of mankind, has attained to her present eminence and power, by perfidy and violence. She has been more profoundly skilled in the arts of intrigue and corruption than her neighbours, and has consequently laid a more extensive foundation for the magnitude, if not the duration of her Empire. The struggles of the French Revolution, formed the nation to deeds of blood and conquest. Her rulers and statesmen, since the execution of their unfortunate monarch, have united to every principle of fraud, violence and oppression, a bold and daring valor, that has led them to defy opposition, danger and death. All the nobler feelings of our nature, and all the tender charities of social life have ceased to flourish, among a people, who have leagued with sacrilege and murder to prophanate, tyrannize and destroy: who have overturned the strong pillars of society and have marched to universal empire, through universal desolation.

How awful! how impressive! is the lesson which the prostrate liberties of Europe hold out to us! They teach us to be guarded in our attachments, and cautious in whom we repose our confidence. He who now directs the springs of European politics, was once the sworn advocate of freedom. That

man who has cloven down the bravest troops of Christendom, whose chariot wheels have overturned the proudest of her monarchies, who has rolled the flood of calamity over the fields of her glory, and who has torn and scattered, in wild confusion, the noblest structures of her freedom, was once the hollow hearted champion of the rights of the people. This great disposer of kingdoms has long since discarded the virtues of a Christian and the feelings of a man. He now sits proudly enthroned on the car of despotism, decorated with military trophies, and striding over the wreck of prostrate nations.

Of those mighty fabricks, which the labour and wisdom of ages have erected, a few only have perished through the weakness of age ; by far the greatest number have crumbled into ruins under the weight of their crimes. Italy, Holland, Germany, Prussia, and Denmark, have all submitted, with the tameness of slaves, to the yoke of French domination. Austria, with all her pomp and power has been “dashed from off her wide ambitious base,” has lost her rank among the nations of the earth, and forever tarnished her military fame, by the prostitution of her warriors, and the sycophancy of her chief.

Switzerland was almost the only innocent victim, that fell a sacrifice to the overwhelming ambition of France. Switzerland ! at whose proud name, but fallen fortunes, humanity heaves the sigh of regret, and drops the tear of sympathy, in the hour of confiding friendship, was robbed of her Independence.

Amid the vallies of her repose, the friends of anarchy, began the inhuman work of indiscriminate massacre. No regard was paid to age, sex, or condition. There

“ Vengeance, in the lurid air,

“ Rais’d her red arm expos’d and bare,”

to strike the unoffending bosom of virtue, and to pierce the heart of unyielding patriotism. There murder, coward like, rushed to the couch of unsuspecting innocence, and plunged in the gloom of eternal night the generous and the brave. Her ferocious invaders, not content with tearing asunder the bonds of filial affection, with expelling the natives from their fire-sides, and the tombs of their fathers, with despoiling them of their property, and with consuming their cultivated fields, seemed determined to extirpate their very race and name.

Unfortunate survivors of your country’s freedom ! may those fields on which your gallant fathers signalized their valour, which are moistened with their blood and whitened with their bones, again witness the brave exploits of a patriot people, struggling to be free : and as you traverse the wide scene of desolation, which on every side surrounds ye, and stay your course, to drop over the ashes of some much loved friend or parent, the tear of affectionate remembrance, may the sacred spot which inurns the brave, remind you of the groans and struggles of your unfortunate countrymen : rekindle your patriotism and arm ye for battle. May those deep and heartfelt imprecations which are poured forth on the tombs of

your martyr'd heroes, ring in the ear of Imperial France, "like the trumpet which gives the signal to the warrior ; like the thunder which disturbs the sleep of the coward : " and may the arm of retributive justice, inflict in the heart of your oppressor, a wound which shall rankle, till the wrongs of your bleeding country be redressed, and her violated liberties restored.

The genius of freedom, driven by the ruthless sword of despotism, from the peaceful vallies and stormy cliffs of Helvetia, in vain sought a resting place on the treacherous shores of the European continent. An exile from his native home, he retired in despondency, to the green fields of Erin, amid a people, though borne down by misfortunes, high spirited and proud ; though oppressed by the iron hand of power, yet fearless and erect. The gallant sons of " Ocean's gem " received him with smiles of grateful exultation. But short was their hour of triumph. The enemy soon dashed from their lips the cordial of hope. A system of unfeeling persecution and bloody warfare characterized the genius of her invader. The conflagration of towns and hamlets, and the despoiling of innocence, were the only achievements of her victor, the only trophies of her glory. Fatal were the struggles of Ireland, but not hopeless her prospects ; for she had that spirit within, which may be oppressed, but cannot be overcome, a flame of patriotic resolution, that may be smothered for a time, but which cannot be extinguished. Sunken and depressed, she mourns in

silence the woes of her persecuted children. “Sad is her sleep, and her dreams are troubled and gloomy : her enemy has come, he has come in the hour of her slumbers, and stolen the emerald off her brow : Yet Erin has not awakened : No ! she still sleeps. Purple is the field where she lies, and her garments are sprinkled with blood ; for the wounds of her sons are groaning around her, and the ghosts of her heroes are crying for vengeance. Yet Erin has not awakened ! No ! she still sleeps.”

Sons of Hibernia ! do I awaken sad recollections ? do I recal the memory of guilt that can never be expiated ? of wrongs that can never be atoned ? Suppress the muttered curse of indignation, which is ready to break from your lips ! Swear not on the altar of revenge, eternal enmity to your oppressors ! Though they have murdered your parents, butchered your children, laid waste your fields, and given to the flames your peaceful habitations ; yet rise superior to the weakness of humanity, and forget your wrongs. No ! ye cannot forget them ; the groans that burst from your hearts, are the groans of nature, and they cannot be suppressed, till ye are laid low in your graves ! Freely indulge the sensibilities of your nature : dwell with mournful recollection, over the sad and hapless fate of your fallen countrymen. They are entitled to your sympathy, they are deserving of your gratitude. Cherish, fondly cherish the memory of their toils, their valor, their heroic devotion to the cause of persecuted humanity.

The pride of ocean, the land of your nativity, for centuries assailed by the storms of oppression, has at length fallen, like a Colossus, overthrown by some dreadful convulsion of nature. Heaven grant, that Erin may yet arise from her night of slavery, and dazzle the astonished world, by the bright track of her glory, and the splendour of her political career !

Thus rapidly in perspective have we glanced over the enslaved nations of Europe. On contemplating the unhappy dissolution of those kingdoms and republics that have been blotted from the map of Europe, and tracing their downfall to internal dissensions, and misguided ambition, we should pause over the monitory lesson, and gather wisdom from experience. And while we drop a tear of pity over the sad monuments of fallen greatness, let *us* carefully guard against those errors, which cost *them* the price of independence. Let the constitution of our country be the rallying-point of freemen. It is the bulwark of our defence, the rock of our safety. Let us ardently strive to emulate the virtues of those exalted heroes, who have bequeathed us the charter of our liberties, written in their blood.

Illustrious dead ! heroic defenders of your country ! ye that have descended to the mansions of your fathers, happy and renowned, eternal rest be with you !

“ May you remain forever dear to fame !
 May time rejoice to name ye ! and may peace,
 With gentlest pinions hover o’er your urns !”

May those virtues you delighted to honour, and those principles you perished to defend, be handed down to the remotest posterity, uninjured by time and sacred from corruption : and may that benignant power, who hath thus far sheltered us from those storms and tempests, which have overturned the fairest fabrics of European independence, and which have dashed into a thousand fragments, the mightiest empires of the globe, still continue to watch over our destinies, and preserve from destruction, this last hope of the universe, this only remaining asylum of persecuted freedom.

FINIS.

District of New-York, ss.

BE it Remembered, that on the eleventh day of July, in the thirty-sixth year of the Independence of the United States of America, Joseph Harmer, of the said district, hath deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words and figures following, to wit; “An Oration, delivered before the Tammany Society, or, Columbian Order, Tailor’s, Coopers, Hibernian Provident, Shipwright’s, Columbian, Manhattan, and Cordwainer’s Societies, of the City of New-York, on the Fourth of July, 1811.—By Samuel Berrian.—

“Glorious, sacred day!

All hail! thou solemn period! thee the tongues
Of virtue, fame and freedom, shall record
And celebrate, in ages yet unborn!!!

GLOVER.”

In conformity to the act of the congress of the United States, entitled “An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned.” And also to an act, entitled “An act, supplementary to an act, entitled an act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.”

CHARLES CLINTON,
Clerk of the District of New-York.